

but death that was a triumph. It was not strange that they did not understand Him.

Just then the mother of James and John, evidently a bold ambitious, strong-minded and wordly woman, broke in with her self-confident and unseemly request. With all that was offensive in it, her request had merit. It was motherly; it was energetic; it was simply misdirected. We do well to be ambitious and seek greatness, but our aim should be to serve others, not to be served. It is not great to be dependent. The highest greatness is to be able to do all things for oneself, to ask nothing from others, but to dispense aid to others in absolute forgetfulness of self. Christ set us the highest example of such greatness in giving His life as a ransom for many. We can at best but follow Him afar off in this, but we are expected to drink His cup and receive His baptism, in other words to share His sufferings, if we would sit by His side in His kingdom. Our lives must be spent for the blessing of men. We must seek to ransom them from their sins and to minister to their needs. To do this is Christlike, is the height of greatness, and should be our controlling ambition.

In this view of what constitutes greatness and what should be our ambition, there is a charming coincidence with the character of God and the pervading law of the universe. God is love and love is the fulfilling of the law. In other words love is the essence of the divine nature, and love is designed to be the great motive power in the spiritual world. It is like gravitation in the physical world,—the force that holds all things together and keeps them in due relation. But love in God leads him to seek the well-being of man, even to send His Son to die for our salvation. So love should enter into man, control his actions and lead him to forget self and to be ambitious to be as helpful as he can to his fellow-man.

The parable of the pounds illustrates another phase of the same great truth. It teaches that.

#### FAITHFULNESS INVOLVES USEFULNESS.

Christ, as a great nobleman, goes into a far country to seek a kingdom and return. What is to be done by us until His return? He gives to each a trust. In one sense it is the same thing, a single pound. We all have our opportunity, an opportunity of usefulness, an opportunity to be utilized in Christian service.

We are tested by what we gain from this opportunity. There must be an increase. It is not enough to return our opportunity uninjured but unimproved to God. That would be folly. There is no special occasion for gratitude when the contribution box is passed and comes back empty, that the box is returned. We are expected to be useful and are not faithful to our trust if we do not improve our opportunity for the blessing of man and the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom. Every man is bound to leave the world better than he finds it. The divine plan is for every Christian to sow the Gospel truth broadcast and thus extend the area of divine influence. Year by year this work goes on, until at last all the world is conquered for Christ.

Christ's awards for faithfulness are based on our usefulness. To him that hath, more; to him that hath not, even less. He that increases his trust has proved his trust worthiness and ability. He is the safest to trust and is advanced accordingly, not only by God, but by his appreciating fellow-men. He that leaves his opportunity unused, loses his power. His lack of exercise causes his skill to wane and his muscles to shrivel. No one wants his service. Here is, then, blessing or curse by natural law, chosen by each man for himself.

The parable contains a secondary but most important truth.

There are these who not only fail to utilize their opportunity, but oppose Christ's claim to direct their lives. Such opposition is fatal. The day is coming when Christ's kingdom will be fully established among men and then all who have opposed Him will be destroyed.

#### The Religion that Sings.

Christianity is the religion that sings itself. Atheism has no songs; agnosticism is not tuneful. We have never heard of a Brahmanic hymnal, or a Confucian psalmody. The Moslem, indeed, has his metrical exercises, rather than his music, but the airs that he chants are of the weird, labored, mournful kind. In the case of the savage of African forests or the South seas or the Indian of the American plains, the explosive and unmelodious cries or grunts that he may periodically emit can hardly be regarded as indicative of any great

degree of religious feeling, even though a vague aspiration after the things that are higher than he may occasionally breathe in his wild vocalization.

At all events, the metres of heathendom or savagery, so far as paganism is vocal at all, are not once to be compared with the lively heartiness, with the freeness, fulness and depth of Christian song. There is a spontaneity and abandon to the singing of Christians, when they sing with an adequate realization of the worth of their own religion, that is sadly lacking in any of the musical exercises of paganism. When pagans sing at all, they sing as though they ought to sing, but the believer in Jesus explains his own songfulness in the conclusive question: "How can I keep from singing?"

We are, therefore, quite justified in claiming that Christianity is not only a religion that sings, but also that it is the religion that sings. If it has not an absolute monopoly of all the metres it is in so much greater degree than all other religions the generator of a moral melody as to render it distinctively the source and soul of song. No other faith is so the cult of carols and the school of praise.

And the explanation is not far to seek. The Christian sings because he has something to sing about, that is, a Christ, a redemptive grace, and a hope of glory. Since life for the believer is lit up with a pre-paradisiacal glory, therefore, the believer's face is aglow with joy and his speech inevitably quickens into song. When Jesus Christ put Himself into the world, He put song into it too, not in the sense that He then and there created clefs and notes and musical vibrations, but because by His advent He gave song a spiritual substance and carolling a content. Christ made His meanings musical and music meaningful. By saving men He saved their music, too.—*New York Observer*.

#### Waldensian Presbyterian Church, Uruguay, South America.

Few, perhaps, even of the best informed Presbyterians are aware of the flourishing offshoot of the Waldensian Church which exists in Uruguay, South America. Some years ago, an emigration movement led a number of families to leave their Italian valleys and to seek for homes in that remote district. The difficulties that perplexed the new arrivals were most formidable, so that more than once it seemed as if the effort to establish a Waldensian Reformed or Presbyterian Church would not be overcome. At length, the turn of the tide has come, and through the blessing of the Head of the Church on the efforts of the Waldenses at home and on the field, there is now every reason for expecting the formation of an aggressive Presbyterian Church in that land.

The Second Annual Conference of the Waldensian churches in South America, was held in the building of the church of Colonia Vaudoise, in Uruguay, on the 28th of last February. The Conference numbered twenty-two members, five being pastors, and seventeen lay delegates, representing the churches of Colonia Valdense, Cosmopolitana, Artilleros, Richuelo, Ombues de Lavalle, with S. Salvador and Colonia Belgrano, in the Argentine Republic.

The work has thus already a dimension not suspected by many at a distance. The congregation of Colonia Valdense, for instance, has at present, a communicant's roll of 500 church members, seven Sunday schools and 250 scholars, seven week-day schools and 200 pupils, a Young Men's society, a Young Women's society and is now about to build a new church. In the parish of the church of Cosmopolitana, there are 250 families, but scattered over a large district, on which, however, it sustains five Sunday schools.

The opening services of the Conference were conducted in the Spanish language, such being the language of the district, and its very use shows the determination of the Waldensian brethren to nationalise themselves as soon as possible. All the reports as to the growth of the congregations were most encouraging, but there were many a complaint as to the non-observance of the Sabbath and the disastrous effects of the general desecration of that day, even on Waldensian families. The Conference was not unmindful of neighboring Christian brethren, and resolved to send a deputation to Buenos Ayres, to express its interest in the opening of the new church building of the Church of Scotland in that city.