

## Motives for Conquest.

(An Address by Rev. Z. L. Fash at the Joint Young People's Convention St. John N. B., Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 1903.)

The biggest word in the world to-day is conquest. It is written in flaming letters on the sky. Men are irresistibly attracted by this magnet. Nothing withstands its influence. The two mightiest nations on earth a little while ago proclaimed peace within extended borders. Other nations, jealous of their progress, are thirsting for opportunity, and embittered because conscious of their lack of vitality. Europe stands staggering like David in Saul's armor, and kings imagine they are ready for any emergency. The lesser nations would be rapidly absorbed by the greater, but for mutual suspicions. Lord Salisbury spoke emphatically during the Spanish-American war concerning decaying nations; and Mr. Chamberlain did not hesitate during the Boer war, to declare that the day for smaller states had passed. It is a time of federation and centralization with the governments of the world, and imperialism is the statesman's guiding star.

This is increasingly true in the business world. Great corporations manipulate nearly every branch of industry. Projector are constantly trying to increase the dividends of stockholders by new combinations. The small earnings of the working man are combined to give him a larger income, and place him more nearly on an equality with the great capitalists. Man never before moved so rapidly. He is caught in the mighty, swirling tide of human endeavor. Eager, restless, ambitious, he scans the heavens, digs the earth and drags the sea for new forces to hasten his purposes. Gigantic engines do his bidding and multiply results, and yet he is never satisfied. An imperative impulse impels him forward. The spirit of conquest is wide awake in the world to-day.

The church of Jesus Christ ought to be fully abreast of the times. There never were such mighty forces at her disposal. She never had such a gigantic task to harness all this energy to God's chariot. She must adapt herself, without change of fundamental principle, to the new conditions of every age, so that every man of every clime, as on the day of Pentecost, shall hear and accept the gospel in his own tongue. If the church had followed more implicitly through all the centuries the teachings of Christ, we would have to-day a mightier engine, more economically connected with the throbbing world about us.

We make a tremendous mistake when we regard the Church as a Hospital, or "The Spirit Everlasting Rest." She is not. She ought to be a restless, impulsive, progressive, persevering power, not satisfied with small subjects, yet persistently holding what she acquires for future conquests. The words of Napoleon in reference to himself are just as true concerning the church. "Conquest made for me, and conquest must maintain me." Jesus Christ came into the world to conquer its forces. Earth and hell combined, and at his death and glorification they victory. Satan seemed to be on the side of the heavenly battalions. But the defeat of Christ was his triumph. His cross was his crown, his resurrection his proclamation of kingship, and his ascension his coronation. The prostrate disciples suddenly leaped out of their despair and went through the world flaming evangelists, working at a white heat. Their one aim was to make Jesus Christ supreme in every heart. They moved like an army to the conquest of the world. Each believer was a regiment, and in himself feared not to face the most overwhelming opposition. They were conscious of the leadership of their divine commander, and one with him as always a majority and can chase a thousand. His parting counsel remained more than a pleasant memory. It was an impelling inspiration. Ever ringing in their ears was the epoch making edict, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. . . . And to I am with you, always even unto the end of the world."

What moved these early Christians to such glorious conquests? We marvel now as we look back. For three centuries it was a triumphal progress against the most overwhelming odds. Principles never change. What moved the early disciples will move the Church of Christ to-day. I am convinced that all the moving motives will crystallize around two centers:

### I. THE FIRST MOTIVE FOR CONQUEST IS POSSESSION.

A soldier cannot fight without weapons, but a regiment may be splendidly equipped, and sadly lacking. We must have modern guns with long range and penetrating power. Our generals must understand military tactics; but the situation demands more than good peace officers. Lady-smith was held by the spirit of General White. It is the spirit that counts. That made our Canadian contingents in the South African war, of superior value. It placed them on an equality, and even at a premium with the regular British troops. The peit up passion of loyalty to the Empire found expression on the battle field. The Imperialistic spirit moved some of the best young men of our land to leave home and rushed them to the front where British territory was invaded and British liberty outraged. The Empire is safe so long as this spirit of loyalty remains latent or expressed.

The Church of Jesus Christ is safe so long as her young people possess this spirit. "For Christ and the church is the motto of Christian Endeavor; "Look up and Lift" of the Epworth League; and "Loyalty to Christ in all things

and at all times," of the B. Y. P. U. Proudly these banners wave over us. But we must have more than the waving of banners; we must have more than splendid equipment and perfect organization; we must be moved from within by the sense of the possession of a personal Christ. The new birth stands at the gateway of spiritual conquest. Our young people can never conquer unless they are thoroughly converted; and they can never be prevailing unless they are prayerful. We do not need new morals but new motives, and these can only come from regeneration. The main spring is the presence of the personal Christ. It is not speculation we need, but inspiration and incarnation. Right action can only spring from right motive. And moving motive in the Christian conquest can only originate and continue as the believer rejoices in the possession of the incarnate Son of God. It is not more Bible we need but more of the Christ whom the Bible reveals. We are not satisfied simply to drink from the living fountain, we want the fountain itself. That would be impossible if we had only the bodily presence of Christ. The early disciples were stronger in faith after the death of Christ than during his life. They did greater works after his ascension than during his ministry. They lived more in his presence because they had more of him in their hearts.

Some way or other this blessed truth of a living personal Christ was lost for centuries to the Christian church. An individual believer here and there surprised his contemporaries by his achievements in spiritual welfare, because the true Apostolic succession remained with him. Within the last few years a new feeling has grown up for Christ. As Dr. Fairbairn says concerning the historical Christ, he breaks in upon us with "the surprise of a discovery." It is for this age to recover more fully and reveal more truly the living Christ as the dominant force in every walk of life. In Christ are untold resources for every one. Here are vast gold areas waiting prospectors. We ought to invest more heavily in a personal Christ.

But if we simply possessed Christ and he did not possess us, we would have salvation with one wing clipped. Our little grasp could not permanently hold him. We would soon fire and retire. We would be very much like the clergyman, who, when asked to pray in the time of great drought, replied, "Oh it is no good to pray for rain so long as in the wind is in the west." We would be very much like the ancient geographers, who accounted for the flow of the Nile by tracing the source back to the melting of the snows on the mountains of the moon, instead of going back to Albert Nyanze. Left to ourselves, we are apt to forget that Christ is the originator and animator of Christianity, and that believers are purchased and possessed by him. The half-witted boy was right. They were having a great revival at Ragot House. As he swept the crossing, he kept shouting "hallelujah." What is the matter a passer-by asked him. "Glory," he shouted, "God is making new disciples and sending old ones." He was right. It was God's work. That elevates the word possession to the highest pedestal, so that all the world can see. That brings Christ into practical life and the weakest may have his divine strength. Possession of Christ means to be possessed by Christ.

### II. THE SECOND MOTIVE FOR CONQUEST IS LOVE.

Possession without passion is powerless. It is an electric magnet with only one pole. It can neither attract nor repel. What kind of a religion do the young people of these Maritime Provinces need? I will tell you, "one big enough for the conversion of the world." The only religion that can do anything for me is the one that wants me to do something for you.

We have too many parlour soldiers in our churches. They can plan a campaign on a cracker box in a country store, they can criticize Roberts and Kitchener; but like Gideon's rabble when the battle is joined they view it from a safe distance. They are around for parade before the fight. They come up to shout when victory is won; but they are always for peace and parade. They are Dead Seas, always receiving, but never giving. Their life is brackish and unrefreshing. No thirsty traveller ever slaked his burning thirst for God at their door, and no three hundred ever lapped the crystal streams of their encouragement. They are frigid Christians and never go into raptures over anything. They never get excited. Nothing moves them out of the little groove which is sure to be their grave. A sense of security has filled them into slothful, sinful, sleep. They possess Christ, I suppose, in a kind of way, but they have no passion for him. They have not yet awakened to his stirring commands. They are fever stricken patients in the hospital and wounded soldiers in the camp of an aggressive conquering commander. They are too weak to march and so must be carried. There are far too many in our Churches and Young People's Societies on the sick list.

The Church needs to-day the burning hearts of the early disciples. They were seized with a sudden impulse. Like the Union soldiers at the battle of Lookout Mountain, when all seemed lost, they snatched victory from defeat. Genuine inspiration means perspiration. Stagnation is starvation. Jesus Christ never commanded us to cling to the cross, but he did command us to carry the cross.

That means that we are to take up work which we would not if we had our own way. The self-abandoned life which is hateful to us is welcome as the path of God,

We go willingly wherever he commands. The spirit of the Lord is upon us and "we is unto us if we preach not the gospel." We grow perennially hopeful as we walk the way of the cross. We yearn to help our unseeing and discouraged brother. Helen Keller was born deaf and dumb, and blind. She is no longer dumb. When not quite ten years old she startled her teacher by saying upon her fingers, "I must speak." For the last eight or nine years she has employed articulate speech as her sole method of communication with those around her. When the Christian has a genuine passion for Christ, he "must speak." Nothing can keep him from declaring the unsearchable riches of Christ. This it was that fired Peter the Hermit to preach his Crusade. It was said of Robert McCheyne, the young Scottish preacher who burned out his life in zeal for Christ, that he seemed almost dying to have you converted." It was a common remark when Charles G. Finney was moving like a flaming meteor in his evangelistic course, "you might as well be converted now as later on, for you are bound to get converted anyway during the meetings." Nathan Hale the young hero of America, was only twenty-one when he gave his life for his country, and yet he expressed regret that he had only one life to give, "I wish I had ten lives to give for my country."

I suppose no man for several generations has more impressed himself upon the imagination of the world than Cecil Rhodes. This colossal figure believed that a life to be conquering must be mastered by a great purpose. He took for his the making of the British race supreme in South Africa, that he believed was for the good of humanity. He set his titanic powers to this passion. Like Moses he was only permitted to see the promised land from afar, but to-day his lonely grave at Mastipo looks over a united British South Africa, which his vision and unswerving passion made possible.

When Constantine the Great was reproved for laying out the new city by the Bosphorus on such a large scale, he replied, "I am following one who is leading me." When the wife of John Walsh expostulated with him for breaking in upon his sleep to pray so long and frequently during the night he answered, "how can I be at ease, when God has committed one thousand souls to my charge, and I know not how it is with some of them." The personality of Napoleon on the battlefield never swayed men as Jesus Christ has for ages. No other motive has been so masterful as this passion for Jesus. St. Paul flung away all that he held dear that he might know Christ. Men and women were given to the wild beasts, and their bodies were burned to fight Nero's garden rather than deny the Christ of God as their personal Saviour. This sublime passion did not die with the martyrs. It is alive in our young people, and is only waiting to find expression and direction. It is vital and potential. Let us put it into operation for the salvation of the lost.

We may have different theories about atonement and incarnation, but these ought not to keep us from the living Christ and his service. The Quaker believed in non-resistance but when the burglar demanded his money in his own house he said as he pulled down the old blunderbuss, "This had better get out of the way, for I am going to fire right where thou standest. Why quibble about little things when the salvation of the world is at stake? We do not need a deeper passion for creed, but for Christ. This is what overcomes the world."

## Kindness in Unanswered Prayers.

BY REV. J. R. MILLER, D. D.

There are some of our prayers which God loves us too well to answer. If he did what we plead with him, sometimes agonizingly, to do, he would withdraw from us great blessings. But he would rather resist our pleading and disappoint us than impoverish our life by letting us have what we want.

In one of St. Peter's epistles is a little phrase of three words which casts a world of light on many things in life which seem hard. The writer is speaking of trials, and says: "Now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief." "If need be" is the illuminating clause in this sentence. It shines like a star with heavenly light upon the darkness of pain and sorrow. There is a Divine reason for the trouble which we long to get rid of. There is a blessing in the thing which is so hard to bear. To take it away would take a good, a Divine gift out of our life.

A marginal reading of an oft-quoted promise tells us the secret that

OUR "BURDEN" IS THE GIFT OF GOD TO US.

This thought changes the meaning of the experience in our life which is hard for us to endure. A burden is something heavy, something hard to carry. It weighs us down, crushes us, so that we feel as if we must faint beneath it. It is natural for us to want to get rid of it. We say we could go on much more easily, with much more celerity if only we could lay off our heavy load. So we pray God to take it away from us.

But just then our eye catches sight of the alternative reading, "gift"—our burden is God's gift to us. This unlovely uncomfortable, heavy crushing thing, under which we are bowing in weakness—it is a gift from God to us. A gift from God! Then it must be good; there must be something gracious and loving in it. God would not give