

The Growth of Truth

ASSOCIATIONAL SERMONS OF N. S. WESTERN ASSOCIATION.

BY REV. C. C. BERGERS.

"But the Word of God grew and multiplied."—Acts 12:24.

The words of the text were spoken by way of contrast, and are intended to show the difference between Herod's sudden and awful end and the glorious advancement of the Word of God.

This growth was, and is, peculiar. It did not grow as runner, but as a conqueror who invades new territory, conquers his enemies, takes possession of the country, and establishes his dominions.

God Himself purposed that it should grow, "for as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be as the rain and snow, and it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it."

It is also according to the nature of the Word. "The Word of God is not bound." The secret, yet mighty pressure of it in the soul, compelled the statement, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Once springing located in the heart, the language of the "weeping angels" is inevitable.

Another helpful element is self-denial. The first Christians knew what that meant. When their property was confiscated for government, or destroyed by the mob, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

The student will forego all the privileges of home, and curial expenses, that he may be successful in the pursuit of knowledge; because he knows that in the end it will turn to his advantage; that the gain will be greater than the loss.

The results of self-denial are twofold: a being healthier in body, and a being more diligent in his studies. By foregoing means to carry the Gospel into "the regions beyond."

Resurrection follows as a mighty means by which the Word of God may grow. We have great reason to speak with the confidence of some individuals and churches, but what the Word of God demands is that, "upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

The religious teacher has no more difficult task to perform than that of educating the soul to perform the duties of citizenship, and to give of their worldly substance to sustain and send the Gospel at home and elsewhere. We may well carry the subject into our Sunday-Schools and families. It is worthy of being taught everywhere.

If it is work, however, which cannot be delegated to any other organization than the Church. We have a benevolent Gospel, and a benevolent Redeemer and shall not His follower have "the same mind which was also in Christ Jesus?"

"God's love hath to us wealth upheaped, Only by giving is it reaped." The body withers, and the mind, if kept in by selfish mind. Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give self. Give love, give tears, and give thyself; Who gives not is not living. The more we give.

The Bible teaches that poverty attends the man or the body of man, who withhold more than is needful. May not the social depression to much some of the result of penuriousness? Do we not find an explanation of it all in the words of the prophet when the Lord declares, "Ye have robbed me."

Each individual added to the church should consider himself an agent to approach his neighbor with the news of salvation, who in turn will communicate it to others, and thus the Word will be carried along, until living voices shall ring the world with praise, and the earth be made white with an everlasting joy offered to the great Creator.

"Teach me to live. No idler let me be, But thy price, hand and heart employ; Be prepared to do thy bidding, cheerfully, Be this my highest and my holiest joy."

Let every member feel himself to be consecrated, by his profession, to the great work of giving the Gospel to the world. Whether men are sensible of it or not, every follower of Jesus Christ is summoned to witness for His Saviour, and to give of his substance for the dissemination of religious truth.

Holding forth the Word of life is the present privilege of every Christian. In this way they may throw a hallowed radiance far over the rebellious sea of human life. It does not seem that we need more resolutions on the records of our churches, but we do need that all alike shall come up to that standard to which the scriptures upon our attention, when we find the principle, and action shall be in union with the life and letters of the Son of God.

The Word of God in the care of such men and women as we have described, cannot fail to grow. The master passion of the Christian is to see the world redeemed from the power and perishing of our race. Having this one object, the feeling and action should be intense; knowing as we do know that this is the time and place for this great salvation to be received, and that the Word of God is being spread by such knowledge and life are conjoined.

Be encouraged in this work. We have a wide and hopeful field in which to plant, as well as the precious nature of the seed to be sown, to cheer us. It is the living Word of the ever-living God, the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth forever, which liveth in an ever-expansive life, shooting forth new roots and branches, and yielding seed for new planting long after the planter may be laid in the grave.

Contributing, either by labor or money, to carry the Gospel into contact with the mind, is not only a duty, but a privilege for glorious harvest, and are making known the joyful remedy provided by heaven for the deadly wounds of sin. True, some of the seed will be devoured by the devil's fowls, some will be choked with thorns, and yet the seed will not be disappointed in the general result. The purpose and promise of God insures him. "It shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it, and among the great events yet to transpire, no event will compare with the lustre of that which is the glory of His own truth."

To us belong the duty and privilege of making the Gospel familiar to every man. We would not speak comparatively, but we do state that we have the truth, and teach it in all its significance and bearing upon the life of the individual. Let us, then, by gifts, by example, and by voice, labor to set in motion the water of life, and circulate the messages of grace through wide and remote regions. In this way the church will not only be strengthened, but also the world will be made white with the truth.

Brethren, I feel sure that this Association will bear me out in the statement that we are deficient in duty. We are not doing what we ought to do, and we are not using our resources. We act not in accordance with our knowledge of the wants of an apostate world and the will of our Sovereign Lord. We seem to lose sight of the precepts that encourage and demand Christian labor and liberality, reluctance to trust the graces for a long time or a large amount.

The early Christians did not suspect the Master's ability or frailty. We need more of the spirit of fraternal enterprise, the questless spirit of love, to glow in our hearts at home, and to be ready to spring from sympathy with the people, committed to us, and an assurance that we have the co-operation of the mightiest agencies in the universe. We need a zeal that shall be kindled by an unclouded view of the mission and prospects of a guilty world; and that shall be kindled by the visions of the cross, that no discouragement can depress, and shall admit of no repose. Then may we expect answers to our prayers, and the benediction of our God, not only upon our hearts, but upon our work.

While we feel the duty of giving the Gospel to others, let us be careful to drink deeply from its spirit ourselves. "Be ye also enlarged" is addressed to us, and means enlarged affections, benevolence, hopes, desires and confidence. "Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small; Love's little house of joys, my life, my all."

"Reader therefore to all their dues, tripartite to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; tribute to whom tribute; honor to whom honor." "Reader therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, but unto God the things which are God's." The Gospel will finally prevail. God is the author of it; and the means to be used for the propagation of truth are of His appointment. The sins and tears of our world had heart up to heaven, and God had fixed his gaze on man's redemption. For this He formed the plan, sent His Son, accepted the sacrifice of His blood, and in His name upon the cross, made a proclamation of pardon and peace to this great family of rebels. And shall not this plan go into full effect? Will God leave His noble edifice half finished? "Hath he said it, and shall He not do it?" For the restoration of the world God has adopted a system of agencies, and it is His object to be accomplished. The Gospel is "the power of God add the wisdom of God." It is just what the dying millions of our world need. And it is committed to us, my brethren; and there is no aspect in which the matter can be viewed which does not urge, in the tenderest and most powerful manner, our duty and our responsibility upon us.

"The Word of God" is the gift of heaven, and is put into our hands, not that we should imprison it in our own souls or land, but that we should to the very uttermost of our power, and to the end of the morning, and bid it fly to the uttermost parts of the earth. The wants of our dying world, the nature of the Gospel, the command of heaven, the principle of benevolence, and the seal of God upon all our hearts, all urge us to stand by this cause and one another, according to our

views, and do as the Word of God and conscience would have us do. O let us lift our eyes and hearts to "the hills from whence cometh our help," until we shall become more intensely engaged in that work, the completion of which will fill the world with shouts of triumph.

May God inspire us for the work, and take the glory to Himself forever. Amen.

To the Churches Composing the Nova Scotia Central Baptist Association.

Dear Brethren,—In this, our annual letter, we desire to call your thoughtful and prayerful attention to the intimate relationship that exists between the several members of a Christian church; and to urge the importance of giving recognition and expression to this relationship by cultivating a kindly interest in each other's welfare.

When Kate Holden entered the sitting-room to greet a stylish caller, a glance revealed the disorderly condition of the room that had been made tidy by her own hands but a few hours before. Three pairs of overshoes lay before the polished grate; a waterproof covered the best chair, slates and books were scattered about the parlor table; several dolls with ample wardrobe occupied the sofa, while fragments of bread, doughnuts, and apples told of a lunch suddenly interrupted. Poor Kate could not conceal her annoyance, and the cloud that rested upon her forehead sunny-faced depended as she passed from her bedroom and returned to her mother's room. It was not a neutral; Kate's wisdom and patience had been sorely taxed during the protracted illness of her mother, and the five children, missing the mother's restraining hand, were getting beyond her control.

Mrs. Holden listened patiently to Kate's oft-repeated story of thoughtlessness on the part of the children, and realized that something must be done to assist her in enforcing habits of order. Kate's ingenuity soon developed a plan, and she decreed next forth that all mislaid articles would be speedily transferred to a certain broad shelf in the attic, from which none but the owner might remove them. The novelty of the plan interested the children, while father, Kate, and even Bridget promised to submit to its conditions, so long as Kate, in consequence, made haste to appoint a place for everything, and to put everything in its appropriate place.

For a few days order reigned in the house. Mary's dolls were carefully returned to their drawer, the boys' hats were hung upon the hat-tree, Jenny's aprons and ribbons were no longer awed broadcast throughout the house, and even Charley's blocks and toys were carefully guarded from threatened exile. But careless habits had too long prevailed to be overcome at once, and the first rainy day of the season, which brought with it a deluge of water, and an umbrella to the broad shelf. The same evening, as the children gathered about the table to prepare lessons, Harry's books could not be found.

"Where did you leave them?" asked one. "I know where you will find them," said Jenny, and amid peals of laughter, Harry, with more than necessary energy, ascended the attic stairs. This was a valuable reminder to the other children; but soon Harry's dolls disappeared from the parlor, and his blocks from the dining table, even Charley's soldiers exchanged their camping ground in mamma's room for the greater seclusion of the broad shelf in the attic. The children usually submitted cheerfully. Jenny sometimes pettishly complained of the inconvenience of a rainy day, but she was willing to accept of it, as John, when time pressed, preferred to do without cuffs and gloves.

"It is all fun," said Mary one evening, as she timidly entered the dusky room in search of her composition book; "but I can only catch Kate's pill not complain."

An opportunity occurred at length, Kate, preparing for a drive, sought in vain for her muff. She hurried from closet to drawer in search of the missing article that no one had seen, while her weeper restrained the tears on the gate. "Charley must have taken it," she said fretfully, and finding him in the kitchen, she repeated her question.

"Yes, papa, dear," replied Harry, sweetly; "I saw them last night in the attic, on the broad shelf."

A look of astonishment, not unminged with displeasure, passed over his face, as he repeated, "In the attic?" "Mary saw the half-frightened looks of the children, the cloud upon her father's face; and fearing she had ventured too far, quickly sprang up, saying, 'Forgive me, papa. I'll go and get them.'"

"No, no," said Mr. Holden. "I had quite forgotten the new law; but if I have broken it, I'll pay the penalty." As his heavy steps ascended the stairs, he repeated with a merry laugh, "I used it when I was young, but I have heard of it since. You'll find it on the broad shelf in the attic," shouted Harry; the piazza is not a proper place for a broom."

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Bridget also mounted the stairs. "She's the worst," said Jenny, "it's doing us lots of good, and I don't mind going every day for the fun of seeing others go."

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