

A HEART AWAKENING

to a new conception of love (Rom. 13. 10), which is only the old Gospel one after all. Ah, I wonder if thousands of us are not living in the night gloom indicated by Christ, when he said, "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye?" Sure I am! I am that few of us have got beyond the Sinai gloaming of, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Believe me, the day is at hand when we must awake, in practical earnestness, to the new commandment of Christ, "That ye love one another, even as I have loved you." How much did he love us? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." Have we yet loved as he loved, by putting our very life into the loving? Never, until in some sphere of mission activity we cast in all our living. Are we sending the Christ energy out into this sad world of sin?

It is not hard to understand, then, how all this is fundamentally essential to

A CHURCH AWAKENING

anew to an apostolic conception of the administration of thy Holy Ghost in her midst to-day. The record is that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. Some, we trust many, have a measure of the Spirit; a few are filled with the Spirit, but the sleep from which the Church must awake, ere the world is saved, is that we are not all filled with the Holy Ghost.

Now see how Peter emphasized the universality of this gift. His answer to the scoffing mockery of the crowd was, "For these are not all drunken, as ye suppose. . . . But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams, and on my servants and my handmaids I will pour out of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." And the maid in the kitchen, and the man out in the yard, are not forgotten under this marvellous dispensation. This is the exalted privilege and solemn responsibility of absolutely all within the gates of Zion.

Has this dispensation of the Spirit passed away? If so, have we something superior? This we cannot have until the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.

And now see how quickly the new organization became a missionary agency under divine guidance. Philip is sent by the way of the desert to feed the hungry eunuch with the bread of life, and Ethiopia receives the Gospel message. Peter is sent to the Roman centurion, and the light begins to dawn on Europe. A little later the Sublime Gospel speaks in the Church at Antioch, and Paul and Barnabas are sent forth under that wonderful guidance. Follow out the record carefully, my young friends, and see how in a few years the fires of evangelism were blazing on three continents, and that seemingly without any organized Missionary Society.

Contrast this, I pray you, with our modern church life, in which Dame Society, with her brilliant social functions, is enthralling so much of our wealth and intelligence, so that there is no room for the meek and lowly Jesus, except for one formal hour on Sunday. Give a lady in Canadian Methodism said to her pastor, "I'm sorry, Mr. So-and-So, that you and I cannot see eye to eye on card parties. Progressive eunuch might be made such a means of grace." Is it not high time to awake out of sleep! "Awake, thou that

sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

And is it not high time to awake out of our sleep of formalism, in which such a preponderance of the religious life of the Church consists, in moral living and going to church on Sunday? All right enough, but, "What do ye more than other?" Do not even the publicans so? Beloved fellow leaguers, I pray you remember that nothing can possibly atone for a neglect of earnest, aggressive, personal work for Christ in actual soul-winning; and ask yourselves the question, Is not this the exception rather than the rule?

Is not the Church also in gloom of a modified heathenism in the matter of the consecration of material wealth to the service of Christ? Would God we, as a whole, had emerged into the twilight of Sinai, and were giving our tenth! But what shall we say of our relation to the apostolic standard, in which they sold their possessions, and came, voluntarily, as laymen, to the apostolic feet? It may be remarked that this was Utopian; but, granting even this, it is not a fact that in our home and in our own church luxuries we are spending ninety-nine one-hundredths of our material prosperity, and doling out the veriest pittance to world-wide evangelism? Is this, think ye, the administration of the Holy Ghost?

But do not misunderstand me. This is no wall of the pessimist.

"He hath sounded forth a trumpet which shall never call retreat,

He is sifting out the hearts of men before his judgment seat;

Be swift, my soul, to answer him! Be jubilant, my feet;

Since God is marching on."

THE WORLD AWAKENING

has come! Ethiopia has stretched out her hands to God. Every door of the heathen world is open. Among India's millions the movement toward Christianity is so phenomenal that it beggars the ability of the missionaries to keep pace with it. Put the native Church of Japan, enjoying the Pentecost in which the evangelistic movement has gained a strength and permanency never known before. The soil of colossal China has been consecrated afresh by the blood of the martyrs, which is the seed of the Church; and the travail of the ages, which wings earth's systems to and fro, is hurling to the ground those mighty walls of pride and prejudice. The hosts are marshalling to the field everywhere, and scores of our brightest and best of both sexes are saying, "Here am I, send me!" "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem!"

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FEBRUARY 2.—"FIDELITY AND ITS REWARD."

Mat. 25, 31-46.

The exposition on this topic, which was expected, has not come to hand. At the last moment we have substituted some hints and illustrations, which have been selected from "Peloubet's Suggestive Illustrations on the Books of the Bible."

SINS OF OMISSION.

Some were condemned, not for positive crimes, but for refusing to do the good they might have done. We are responsible not only for our sins, but for all the good that might have flowed from our lives, for the opportunities of usefulness, the possibilities of growth in character. Nothing is so improvable as the human soul.

SHEEP AND GOATS.

Though the two kinds of animals are often mixed together when out in the field grazing, yet to the shepherd's eye they are never confounded; and when, for any purpose, they require to be separated, it is effected unerringly.

THE JUDGMENT.

Dr. Bonar had a dream that the angels took his zeal and weighed it, and told him that it was excellent, for it weighed plump 109,—all that could be asked. He was greatly gratified. Next they wished to analyze it. They put it in a crucible and tested it in various ways with this result: 14 parts were selfishness, 15 parts sectarianism, 22 parts ambition, 23 parts love to man, and 26 parts love to God. He awoke humbled, and determined on a new consecration.

"I WAS HUNGERING."

The acts of kindness here mentioned are but specimens and illustrations of the good deeds of God's children. The good deeds are not substitutes for faith and prayer, and love and honesty, but they are the proofs of a right heart from which all virtues grow. The fruits of the spirit are the proofs of the spirit. Flowers and fruits are not substitutes for seeds and culture and the life of the tree. All these are the means by which flowers and fruits may be gained. The Church is not afraid of good works. They are what a church is for. But it is opposed to imitations which are substitutes for love of God and man, like the paper flowers fastened on trees.

UNCONSCIOUS GODNESS.

"When saw we thee?" Unconscious goodness is the highest form of goodness. The beginner in music counts his measures, and studies on what note he shall place each finger, but the perfect musician strikes the right notes and expresses the right emotions, almost as naturally as he breathes or as the birds warble their morning songs. We are apt to estimate the merit of our good deeds according to the struggle we make in doing them; whereas the greater our virtues the less we shall have to struggle in order to do them, and it is purely the weakness and imperfection of our virtue that makes it so hard to do well. Accordingly we find that he who does no duty without being goaded up to it, is conscious of much more virtues than he has; while he who does every duty as a thing of course and a matter of delight, is unconscious of his virtue simply because he has so much of it.—Hudson.

THE HOLY GRAIL.

The Holy Supper is kept, indeed, in whatso we share with another's need,—Not what we give, but what we share.—For the gift without the giver is bare. Who gives himself with his alms feeds three—Himself, his hungry neighbor, and me. —Lowell.
(See November Epworth Era.)

ONLY A THOUGHT.

We never know how small a thing may become a benediction to a human life.

Only a thought, but the work it wrought could never by pen or tongue be taught; For it ran through a life like a thread of gold.

And the life bore fruit a hundredfold.

WAST OF THOUGHT.

Hood has a poem called "The Lady's Dream," where she saw the funeral procession of one who had died through her neglect; and the sick, the starving, whom she might have helped—their sad eyes burned her very soul.

So Hood observed the British world in