

CHAPTER V.

THE MISSION WORK.

"That one saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,' has done more for suffering humanity, more for the masses of guilty perishing men in this world than all the schemes of benevolence that have originated in any quarter."—OLIN.

AFTER the establishment of the Mission, months rolled away, months of unceasing prayer and effort by those most deeply interested in its welfare; much was accomplished, very much. The temperance movement was abundantly successful. The day and Sunday schools were in successful operation. In outward appearance the reformation of that region was truly great; yet, at the close of the first year, we were constrained to write thus:—

"We are standing now at a point of intensest interest. The way has been clearly opened, the ground is marvellously prepared; mature plans are in operation, warm hearts have enlisted all their energies, the necessary funds await our call, and yet we pause. Why? We ask the question, we wish the question asked—Why? Because, as yet, 'the Spirit has not been poured out from on high.' The anxious inquiry, 'What must we do to be saved?' is not heard. We are waiting,

watching, and praying for the sigh of penitence, the manifestation of remorse, the fear of judgment. The seed is sowing; there is a struggle in many a heart, tears are shed in secret places; but brethren, friends of the mission, until all this issues in clear, undoubted conversions, we have no sure footing."

This was the abiding feeling of the missionaries, class leader, and the ladies' board, as month after month the former toiled, and the latter listened to reports of alternate discouragement and hope. Conversions were cautiously reported, because of the peculiar ignorance and degradation of the subjects.

At a quarterly meeting, held during the second year, the class-leader, Mr. North, gave a most interesting account of the class, of their gradual increase in knowledge, of their advance week by week in spiritual light and experience, from the first faint conviction which led them to join, through the successive stages of penitence, faith, pardon, and the exulting joy which followed. He said, it had been clear, marked, decided in every instance, and expressed his most entire confidence in their present religious experience.

Two weeks after, the members having stood their six months' probation, the Church was organized by the Rev. Mr. Luckey, and they were received into full membership. The 23rd of November dawned clear

and bright, and many friends hastened to the mission room, to be partakers in a scene which fulfilled their warmest hopes, which realized their fondest anticipations. The Sabbath school was convened as usual, and was remarkably quiet and attentive. The room was soon filled by an audience of a mixed description, but the utmost solemnity and decorum prevailed. We could not restrain our emotion, as the emblems of redemption's finished work were, for the first time in that region, spread before the eyes of the people,—there, where sin had reigned—for years had had unbroken triumph—had slain its thousands and its tens of thousands, as though the Saviour had not died, and lived again. But now the spell was broken, redeeming grace had shown its utmost power, for here were men and women rescued from the most sottish intemperance, from the deepest moral degradation into which human beings can sink, reformed, converted, made “sons of God, and heirs of everlasting life.”

Mr. Luckey preached a most appropriate and impressive sermon, from “Do this in remembrance of me;” after which the names of ten persons were called who immediately surrounded the altar, and after a suitable exhortation, received the right-hand of fellowship

After the usual service was read, Mr. Luckey requested the new converts to surround the first table together. Together they had wept, and striven, and prayed; together they should commemorate their deliverance, and anticipate their blood-bought victory, when together they should drink new wine in their Father's kingdom. A solemn influence rested upon the congregation; the children seemed awed into perfect silence, and even at the “Five Points,” we said, “Lo! God is here! let us adore,” and with feelings too deep for expression, the friends of the Mission succeeded those with whom they were thus made “one in Christ,” in commemorating the dying love which had rescued each and all. With a solemn, earnest benediction the scene closed, never, never to be erased from the memory of some, to whom it will ever remain an era of solemn feeling, of realized hopes, of joyous anticipations.

The New Mission House.

THE New Mission House is a substantial five story edifice, built of brick, seventy-five feet front and forty-five deep. The entire expense of ground and erection of building cost \$36,000, of which \$23,000 have been paid. The principal building is the chapel, which will comfortably seat five hundred persons. It is neatly fitted up and in every way suited for the purpose for which it is intended—the worship of God by the outcasts redeemed from the streets. Services are held here three times each Sabbath day, and on three nights in each week. Adjoining the chapel is a neat parsonage where the Missionary and his family reside. Over the chapel are twenty tenements, consisting of three rooms each, in which poor and deserving families are provided with very comfortable accommodations at the low rent of five dollars a month. Beneath the chapel is a large school-room, fitted up with handsome desks, one for each pupil. A School-room for the Infant Class where from fifty to seventy are in daily attendance, and two rooms for the bath and wardrobes, occupy the remainder of the ground floor.

With enlarged accommodations, the Society hope to

employ other agencies for the moral and social elevation of the degraded poor. They intend, as soon as the benevolence of the public allows them to enlarge the sphere of their operations, to extend their building in the rear, and there to open a room where work will be given to the poor, and a temporary hospital, where those who are suffering from disease, or are without shelter, may be taken in, visited and cared for. Another plan which the Missionary intends to carry into effect this winter is the opening of a reading-room, to be supplied with papers, periodicals, and useful and attractive volumes, where the laboring man may spend an hour so usefully and happily that he may lose all taste for the low haunts of ignorance and vice.

These plans, "the past being the best prophet of the future," we hope to see effectively carried out, and working their kindly mission—in this, the lowest strata of society. We give some of the present aspects of the Mission in a simple narration of what we saw and heard there on the third Sabbath in November.

As we entered, the children of the Infant Class were singing their sweet hymns, and twelve or fourteen men and women were seated in the Bible Class room, listening attentively to the instructions of their teacher, Mr. Fessenden. The school was smaller than usual, and on

inquiry, we found that the Missionary, the Rev. Mr. Adams, had been invited to address a Missionary meeting in the Pacific street church in Brooklyn, and to bring over a delegation from the Mission Sunday school. Accompanied by Mr. Peet, the teacher of the day school, he took a number of the children over. Most cordially and kindly were they received. A donation of \$100 was given to the Mission, and the innocent face and sweet singing of little Charley, one of the infant scholars, attracting general attention, a kind thought sprang up in some generous heart and met with ready favor, and a hundred dollars a year for four years were pledged to educate some hopeful child to be selected from the Mission School.

The chapel was filled with a large congregation representing all the phases of social life, when Mr. Adams returned in time to commence the afternoon service. Every eye was fixed upon the preacher, and tears flowed freely, as he spoke to them simply but touchingly from the words, "Lord, evermore give us this bread." As the body cannot live without bread, the soul can have no spiritual life without that living bread that cometh down from heaven—we need this bread daily—there must be a daily communication of grace from above—bread is the food of all the nations

of the earth, and so this bread of life, Christ in the heart of man, is adapted to all tastes. Of bread we never tire, the old man eats it with the same relish that he did when a boy—it never cloy the appetite, and so this bread of life, this grace of God is always new, always satisfying the hunger of the soul. As bread gives strength, so this living bread gives life and immortality. These were his leading topics, and the abundant and appropriate illustrations with which he illuminated his subject evidently went home to the hearts of his hearers—even the children listened with an eager interest which showed that they too could understand the words of the preacher. The whole congregation joined in the closing hymn and quietly retired.

In the evening when the people assembled for prayer-meeting in the large school-room, the place was found too small for them, and the chapel was lighted; more than two hundred persons, most of them "genuine Five Pointers," being present. There were the children, who after being at church and Sunday school twice in the day, were all there uninvited in the evening—there were the members of the Mission, respectably dressed, showing by their outward aspect and bearing, the change religion had wrought—there were seated together ten

or twelve lads, from sixteen to eighteen years of age, who had strayed in, and were very serious and attentive—and there were heads grown gray in the service of sin—poor wrecks of humanity. The story of the Prodigal Son, as related by Mr. Adams—his want and misery in that far off land—his determination to come to his father in his rags and wretchedness—was singularly appropriate to that assembly, and after the close of the services one man without a coat and with a face bloated by intemperance, lingered till the congregation had retired, and then walked up the aisle and asked the Missionary to pray for him. “Sir,” he said, “when you told of the Prodigal Son, I did not breathe for two minutes.” Mr. Adams had some conversation with him, and he left, promising to be there again on Tuesday evening.

It was interesting to look at the group of faces solemnized by the influences of the sacred services, and to remember from what depths of sin they had been rescued. It was comforting, too, to remember that as their “day is so” their “strength shall be,” and that the merciful Saviour who breaks not the bruised reed, will be especially mindful of these returning wanderers. One old black woman who has repented of her sins

and believed in Christ, is letting her light shine even in Cow Bay, and from that den of iniquity she brought six of her neighbors to the evening prayer-meeting. With another woman from the same vicinity familiarly known as “Debby,” the Missionary had conversed upon the great truths which he holds forth to these people, and which she professed not to believe. In his sermon, a short time after, having dwelt on these truths, he earnestly asked as he looked around upon the people, “Do you believe this?” Debby imagining herself to be addressed, rose up, and solemnly said, “Yes, I do believe every word of it.” “Then will you try and be good?” said the preacher, somewhat amused at the interruption and touched by the simplicity and sincerity of the poor ignorant woman, who replied—“By the help of God I will,” and took her seat. “Elsewhere,” said the missionary, “I should have been disconcerted by such an incident, but here one is not astonished by slight deviations from the ordinary laws of propriety.”

But to return to the prayer-meeting,—among those who prayed, and spoke with simplicity and feeling, was one whose “father’s prayers had reached over the ocean,” and had been heard in his behalf—another, who, trained in a Methodist Sunday school, in the old country, had, on his arrival here, made shipwreck of

his prospects and his hopes in the great gulph of intemperance—he came to a prayer-meeting last summer, partially intoxicated, and signed the pledge, and was wretched the next morning when he found that he had committed himself. After some conversation with Mr. Adams, he became a regular attendant at the chapel, and the blessed influence of other days softening his heart, he resolved once more to seek the God of his fathers. From that time, he has been steady and prayerful, and though his wife is sadly intemperate, he has ceased to do evil, and is learning to do well. There was an old blind man too, who said that praying without the Spirit, was like wandering in the woods without a compass, or like a blind man seeking the door of a large building.

The class-meetings on Thursday evening are still more interesting than the prayer-meetings. They are attended only by those who are walking in the good path, or who are seeking to enter it. About thirty of these people meet together to speak of their difficulties and trials, or to express their gratitude for that heavenly grace which has delivered them from the yawning destruction, and has given them a good hope of eternal life. It is surely the great power of God that can work such changes even here, that can enable

these people to break away from their habits of sin, and to walk in the narrow way that leads to eternal life. These social meetings are for them peculiarly needed. They must be watched over—and warned, and counselled that they turn not to the right hand, nor to the left—and the weekly class-meeting brings its hour of close self-examination, to see whether they be in the faith—to prove their own selves.

Varied are the demands upon the Missionary, leaving him scarce any time of preparation for the pulpit—his former preparations availing him nothing here, as he has been obliged to simplify his modes of thought and speech to be fully comprehended by his hearers. They complain when strangers occupy the pulpit, that they do not understand the sermons. “The common people heard Jesus gladly” as He spake to them in parables, and this messenger in Christ’s name has found that truth can be better understood and retained in the minds and hearts of this “peculiar people,” when he conveys it to them through some anecdote or familiar illustration. During the week, as the almoner of public bounty, he has constant applications for relief, and he is brought into contact, at every point, with the vice and misery of this wretched place. Great need has he of patience and careful examination as to the real ob-

jects of charity, and while much that is scattered, is like "bread sown upon the waters that may only be found after many days," in some instances, he is cheered by reaping the present reward of his labors. One of these instances was related to us by the Missionary.

"Not long since," said Mr. Adams, "as I was sitting in the office, a poor-looking Jew, with the longest possible face, and most wo-begone expression, came in and asked me if I could do something for him." I told him that I did not know what he wanted. He said, "I wants some clothes to make me look so as people will like me, and give me work." "What is your business?" said I. "I am glazier; but my diamond is in de pawn-shop, and I has not de means to get it out, so as I can work." "Where do you live?" "Around in de next street; but I is very poor, and cannot get any sleep all tree nights. I wish you could give me some place to sleep." I told him I would help him in some way. He brightened up at this, and I asked him, "Do you love Jesus?" "No!" "Do you believe in him?" "No!" "Do you believe in God?" "Yes! but not Jesus. No! no! not Jesus!" "Do you believe the New Testament?" "No!" "Well, come with me," said I, as he followed me to the wardrobe, where I clothed him, and then enquired: "Do you think Na-

ture a sufficient teacher?" "Yes! do you know my faith?" I said I did not. "Well, den, I am pantheist, and don't believe noting." "It was the religion of Jesus," I replied, "that put it into the hearts of Christians to send these clothes to me for you, and then put it into my heart to give them to you, and (handing him some silver) gave others and me a heart to give you this? Do you not think there is something in the religion of Jesus?" "I don't know," he said, shaking his head; but as he was going out, I saw the big tear roll down his cheek. I was deeply moved with his cold, cheerless unbelief, and as I knew not how to meet his many objections to the religion of Jesus, I the more earnestly prayed for him.

It was some time before I saw him again; and when I did, he said he was sick, and I sent him to Doctor McNaire, who examined him, and found his liver somewhat affected; though convinced, as he has since told me, that his trouble was more of the mind than the body. He came back to me from the Doctor, and said he "felt very bad." I at once began the old story. "You must be converted—the blood of Jesus can alone take away your sins, and without it, you will be lost after all your good thoughts." He sighed deeply, and I spoke earnestly to him, showing him that imme-

diate reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ was his only way of escape. I was called away, and when I came back, he was gone.

Some time elapsed before I saw him again, and then I met him in the street. I asked him how he felt, and to my great surprise and wonder, his only answer was, "I tink I need de blood of Jesus." Without another word, I went on my way, thinking that the Spirit was doing the work, and needed me not. Some days after, I met him full of smiles, with the queerest expression of face imaginable; a tear standing in each eye, and his mouth in a half laugh, half cry form. "How do you do?" said I. With deep earnestness, he replied:—"I feels such a loveness to Jesus, I could not sleep last night." "Do you believe the Bible, now?" I asked. "Yes! I believe, but I do not understand." "Are you sure your sins are all forgiven?" Laying his hand on his breast he said, "O, yes! I know it here."

Mr. Adams closed the narration with a prayer that this stranger who, "feeling after the unknown God," had found a compassionate and mighty Saviour, might be kept from all evil—and with a thanksgiving for the power which made so few words fitly spoken, so wondrously efficacious.

He gave another incident of his Mission work.

On the morning of the 26th of July, as Mr. Adams was seated in his office, a woman with a little girl came in, shabbily dressed, and looking wo-begone and dejected. After a few moments' conversation he found from her simple and elegant language that she must have known better times, and he told her that he thought that she was more than her appearance indicated. She burst into tears, and told him her story. She was born in Dublin, of respectable parents, and had the advantage of a good common education. She married at an early age with very good prospects for happiness, but her husband unfortunately contracted bad habits, and the consequence was that a snug fortune of sixteen hundred pounds was very speedily dissipated. He died three months before the birth of her youngest child, and at the invitation of her brother then doing business in this city, she arrived here. This brother paid her rent, and she took a few boarders, but he fell into habits of dissipation and soon neglected her. He married a woman of bad character and sank lower and lower in vice—then left the city, and she had not heard from him since.

"Woes cluster, rare are solitary woes." At this time her eldest daughter, a fine girl of sixteen, her comfort and her pride, was taken ill of typhus fever, and after

wearisome days and nights the broken-hearted mother closed her eyes in death. She too, worn with watching and sorrow, was seized with the same disease, and with no kindred or friends to smooth her pillow and minister to her wants, she was under the necessity of going to the hospital.

She recovered and returned to her room, but found that during her absence many of her things had been taken away, and were not to be found. Since that time she had lived by selling and pawning her articles of furniture, till she was now utterly destitute. She occupied a room in buildings which were being torn down, and as boys came at night and tore away the bricks to get at the wood, she lived in constant fear.

The Missionary looked at her wan pale face, and asked her how long it was since she had tasted food. For two days she had eaten nothing. He had just dined, and he took her at once into the dining room, and seated her and her little girl at the table. There was a nice beef-steak, and as he filled their plates, and saw the appetite with which they almost devoured the food set before them, he experienced a satisfaction which he said, he was sure those who fared

sumptuously every day never experienced at their lordly feasts.

Mr. Adams at once gave her a room in the Mission building until some permanent measures could be adopted for her relief. A situation could easily have been obtained for her, but she could not bear the thought of being separated from her little girl, who was only six years of age and needed a mother's care. She is now in a good place in Brooklyn where she has plenty of work—sewing and embroidery, in which she excels.

A little timely relief, like a word spoken in due season—how good is it! and daily opportunity is afforded to extend such relief in visits to these houses with their “teeming load of life”—in “many a garret,” where one may see “the patience, and the fortitude, and the self-sacrifice, and the love stronger than death shining in those dark places of the earth.”