

BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

The most effective and devoted brotherhood of man ever seen in this world was the little band of fishermen Jesus gathered together on the shores of Gallilee. The faith that He placed in this little group is truly amazing. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that He placed in their hands, so far as a thing of such moment could be placed in human hands, the destiny of the human race. With this little band of untrained helpers He dared to throw a bridge over a stream that humanity never before had crossed. With this little group of unknown, untrained followers He attempted things that the greatest kings, philosophers, and law-givers had tried in vain to do.

There is no doubt they launched the greatest spiritual awakening ever seen in this world. And they did this in an age that was the most materialistic and the deadest spiritually since the beginning of civilization. They laid the foundations for a deep and satisfying spiritual life. But aside from their spiritual leadership their influence on the human race can hardly be told. In this little group genuine democracy had its birth. Bartholdi's Statute of Liberty represents a woman holding aloft a torch to guide men out of darkness. It was the task of these men to hold aloft the first torch of liberty ever lighted for men. For certain classes there had been a

measure of liberty before their day. But theirs was the first blow ever struck at the shackles that bound the masses of humanity. Theirs was the first faith ever to catch the vision of a human society transformed. No other band of men of their strength and numbers ever accomplished so much.

It is true that the way of life, the vision, the new value of human life was His. They did not claim credit for a single thought or a single ideal. It was His vision of a better world that they proclaimed to men as the Kingdom of God. But it was their task to carry it to men. At His death He had never been a hundred miles from His native village. No great city of the Roman Empire had ever heard of Him. Outside of this little group not a single line had ever been written of Him. Had it not been for them His burning words, that had so deeply moved the throngs on the shores of Gallilee, would have soon been forgotten.

With what great qualities of leadership did Jesus inspire these men? We know they were divinely lead and inspired. But God never does anything by divine agency that can be accomplished as well by human. In training these men Jesus must have brought every force to bear upon human power that would make it more effective. What great human qualities did He develop in this little group that made it the most effective and powerful organization of all time? If we could correctly answer this question we might point the way out of the dark valley of

materialism and spiritual deadness of our own age. In the correct answer to this question we might find the golden key that would unlock for men all the treasures of the kingdom of God. If we could correctly answer this question, and could convince men that we had, we might start humanity on the march to universal peace and a plane of righteous living beyond our wildest dreams.

What was the great dynamic force of early Christianity? Where could we find the answer better than in Jesus' own words? When they told Him that His mother and brethren sought Him He answered, Who is my mother, or my brethren? Then looking round on the little group of faithful ones He said, "Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." Here was a band of men united in a holy unselfish cause that transcended all ties of family or blood. The world had never seen such a thing before. It is doubtful if it has since. Here was a holy cause that transcended all racial and social lines and bound men closer than a brother.

At first He found among them all the petty jealousies, envyings, and divisions that have been like anvils on the feet of marching humanity. But His own noble unselfish example had put all such baser aims to shame. He left them with all such discord trampled under foot. They loved each other to the death, they trusted each other with interests dearer than life itself. Humanity needs such a ties as that

worse than anything else. In unity of purpose, in unselfish devotion to a holy cause, in complete self-forgetfulness it is doubtful if the world ever saw a band of men united as they were. It was not by the power of wealth, for they were very poor; it was not by the advantage of high social position, for they were from the common ranks of life; it was not by force of intellect, for they were not learned in the arts or sciences; it was in the fidelity of their union that they shook the world.

If some great cause could unite Christianity today as their hands were united nothing would be impossible. Such a union would lead men into a life so rich and full that it would make all known life on earth appear poor and beggarly indeed. We could drive poverty from the face of the earth. We could drive back every disease and every scourge that threatens human life or human happiness. We could make a pallid cheek or a withered limb so rare that men would be shocked at the sight. In such a union all thought of war would be utterly abhorred. In the strength of such a union we could make the naked desert more fruitful than the fairest valley today. Then even the winds and the sea would obey us and the stars in their courses would fight for man's good!

The greatest weakness of humanity is, and has always been discord, division, strife. A divided humanity kept man in barbarism for untold ages. It has been the chief obstacle to every forward step toward a better human re-

lationship and a fuller and happier human life. A brotherhood of man is, and has been from the beginning, the greatest need of man.

Many times a group of men have been united for a selfish cause that transcended all ties of family or blood. For riches, for glory, or for power men have turned their back on all earthly ties and espoused a common cause unflinchingly in the face of death. Such a union is always invincible. The only thing that keeps a group of men like that from ^{triumphant} riding high over a divided humanity is that their own ranks are soon divided by strife. Their own thirst for riches, glory, or power soon divides them.

When men are united by force they can be terribly dangerous. Hitler has proven to the world what a united Germany can do. I am glad there is three thousand miles of ocean between his shores and ours. So far he has gotten everything he asked for. The only limit to his power, unless he meets another force like his own, is how long he can keep Germany united. With democracy divided as it is, is it any wonder that the whole of Europe trembles every time he stamps his foot? But such a union as Hitler's Germany or Mussolini's Italy can only raise up mighty empires to destroy each other.

Oh for a holy unselfish cause to unite humanity! a cause that would knit the hearts and souls of men together! a cause that would transcend all earthly ties, all geographical bounds, and all racial and social lines!

Jesus bequeathed to His followers such a cause. If Christianity would only grasp it it would lead us into a life so rich and full that heaven and earth would meet. In the strength of such a union the Kingdom of God would indeed come on earth!