

## REASONS WHY PRAYER SHOULD BE PRE-EMINENT.

1. Prayer keeps us constantly in mind of what the true basis and the true character of our missionary work is. He who prays for missions never forgets that the work is God's. Prayer puts God first. It reminds us that only in so far as we follow the line of His will can we have true success, and it inclines us to wait on God that He may reveal His will to us.

How important all this is, especially to our missionary committees and missionary boards. We are often tempted to take the management of the work into our own hands. The carrying on of a mission involves so many business details that unless the Church is full of prayer, men will be tempted to forget God, and will try to do God's work in their own way. Prayer, therefore, keeps the eye towards God, the ear ever open to His voice, and brings the heart more and more into sympathy with His purpose.

2. Prayer supplies the means by which the needs of our missionary work may be met. The first great need of missions is *men*. If the harvest-field is to be reaped we must have labourers. But how are these labourers to be secured? Surely by prayer. Is not this what the Lord told us? "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." The surest way to get missionaries is by the throne of God. In the evangelisation of the world, the missionary prayer meeting is a greater force than the missionary public meeting. A praying church never lacks missionaries. If missionaries are not forthcoming to carry on the Church's missionary work, it is a sure sign that that work has not the place it ought to have in the Church's prayers.

The second great need of missions is *money*. The apostle puts the two together when he says, "How shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent." The silver and the gold belong to the Lord, and in answer to believing prayer He can bring it forth from the purses and the pockets of His people: And He will often begin with those who are praying. This is what we have to learn. Teach your people to *pray* for missions, and you have already taught them to *give* to missions. People will always give for the support of a work which has a real place in their prayers. If our missionary committees and boards were only half as anxious about the prayers of our people as they are about their gifts, if they took as much pains to stimulate prayer as they take to stimulate giving, our missionary treasuries would be full to overflowing.

3. Prayer meets needs in connection with missionary work which can be met in no other way. This is a matter to which I invite most serious consideration. Have we ever realized how much has to be done in connection with our missionary work that can only be done by prayer?

(1.) We appoint a committee or board to manage

our foreign missionary work. How can we secure that the committee will act wisely, and will judiciously employ the means put at its disposal? Only by prayer. Nothing else will secure that the men we appoint are kept in touch with God so that in the work the Spirit of God as the Spirit of Wisdom shall rest on them.

(2.) We invite men to be our missionaries in the foreign field. What provision shall we make that they be men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost? We send these men out into the heathen field. How shall we preserve them against discouragement, against faint-heartedness, against unbelief, against laziness? Only by prayer. Nothing else will do it. The best men that can be obtained for this service need to be continually upheld, and a church has no right to send out any man unless she is prepared to uphold him by prayer.

(3.) We gather out from among the heathen through the work of our missionaries groups of men and women, and bring them into the fellowship of the Christian Church. But how are we to encourage them, and keep them true? Only by prayer. Our missionaries cannot do it. They may be far away. Our money cannot do it. It is not money they want. Needs like these can be met in no other way than by prayer. This is an absolute necessity for the proper carrying on of missionary work. If it is to prosper it must be steeped in prayer.

## THE CHARACTER OF THE PRAYER NEEDED.

Let me say at once it must be prayer which *costs us something*. We must not in this matter offer to the Lord our God of that which costs us nothing.

1. Prayer for missions must be *intelligent*. Many pray for missions whose prayers are practically valueless because of their ignorance. They have a zeal in this matter perhaps, but it is not according to knowledge. How can our prayers be real, if we will not take the trouble to inform ourselves about that for which we pretend to pray? Missionary prayer burns hotly only when fed with the fuel of missionary information. Prayer must be based on knowledge. The knowledge which leads to true missionary prayer is twofold. It is the knowledge of the *principles of missions*. This can only be obtained by honest, earnest, prayerful, long-continued study of God's Word. It is a knowledge of the *facts of missions*. This is to be obtained only by painstaking study of missionary literature, and diligent attendance at missionary meetings.

2. Prayer for missions must be *definite*. While we endeavour to keep ourselves informed as to the course of the movement over the whole field, we should have a special interest in some particular corner of the field. The missionaries working there should be known to us by name. We should, if possible, make their personal acquaintance. Their