

MISSIONS NOT A FAILURE.



ON this subject the Right Rev. A. G. S. Gibson, Coadjutor Bishop of Capetown, formerly Missionary in Kaffraria, writes:—

"To say that, 'Missions are a failure!' is utterly contrary to fact. Possibly they are a failure, if the whole end of Missions is to produce servants who will work at a cheap rate for white masters, as long as those masters want them, whether the servants care for the service or not. But they are emphatically not a failure if the aim of Missions is to raise the native in body, soul, and spirit.

"Granted, we must have patience. Is there no patience needed in England also?

"Granted, there are some failures here and there; are there none in white congregations also? No agnostics, none unsatisfactory, none vicious, no criminals?

"Granted, that the heathen is often more attractive to the superficial view, as the blanket is more becoming to the Kafir than European dress. Is it not the case that the transition stage is almost always unlovely?

"Granted, above all, that education (so called) without Christianity is infinitely worse than ignorance, and that many of the so-called 'school natives' are not, and never have been, Christians at all, however much they may have received a smattering of learning and have put on the garb of civilisation.

"Granted, I say, all this, there can be no question that the Christian native is, as a rule, incomparably better than the heathen native. I was much struck once with the remark made to me by a newly-arrived clergyman in South Africa. 'I have only,' he said, 'to mark the difference in the very look of the Christian and heathen native to be convinced of the reality of baptismal grace.' Or if any one should say that clerical testimony is necessarily prejudiced, let him inquire of the magistrates who live among the Kafirs; he will

find that, whatever their particular religious tenets may be, they invariably (I believe) support Missions, and declare emphatically that it is ordinarily among the heathen, and not among the Christians, that criminals are found.

"Travel through the country, and wherever you see the square house substituted for the round hut, where you find gardens fenced in and water-furrows let out to irrigate them, you will find that it is the Christians who live there. It may be the case for sound reasons, that the majority of those who go out to work for the white man are heathen; but that the Christians are in themselves the more industrious there can be no question. Let me give you but one proof of this. I recall very well how one year, when there was great scarcity of food, owing to partial



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