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WITNESSES UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH.

(From Rev. C. H. Brent's "With God in the World.")

THE breadth of the Christian's vision is exceeded only by its height, and his influence is coterminous with nothing less than the human fabric of which he is a part. By faith man penetrates into the heaven of heavens and reaches the very presence of God himself, a privilege and duty which belong not to a favored few but to the race.

"Too low they build, who build beneath the stars."

is a truth of universal application. But just as the stars must not limit man's vision as he gazes up, neither must the horizon limit his vision as he looks abroad. Christian energy is not doing its full work unless it aims at touching the uttermost part of the earth. That which is recorded in Acts i, viii, (Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth) tells of an abiding principle and not merely of a historic fact. Our Lord is speaking through that group of representative men who witnessed His ascension, to all who become His followers. Not the Apostles alone but all Christians are destined to be His witnesses "unto the uttermost part of the earth." It is only to be expected that those who have the power to explore the secrets of the divine Being, will also have this lesser power of world-wide influence which after all, great as it is, is infinitely less aspiring than the former. The same faith that enables us to love and serve our Lord in heaven, equips us to love and serve the men of the remote parts of the earth. To have the former is to be heir to the latter.

Men who imbibe this principle and make it part of themselves are said to have missionary spirit. But it cannot be too strongly insisted that this spirit is not something over and above the common Christian character; for it is not a possession which we are to claim simply because we are bidden to do so, spurred to it by the "very purity of the law of duty." The missionary spirit is inherent in Christianity. Even though Christ had never said, "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations." (St. Matthew 28, xix), even if he had not assured His followers that they were to be witnesses "unto

the uttermost part of the earth," it would have made no practical difference in the final issue of Christian truth. The Church would have been missionary just the same—St. Paul, St. Augustine, St. Columba, St. Francis Xavier, would have striven for the Gospel's sake none the less boldly, none the less zealously. The missionary is not a missionary because of a few missionary texts in the Bible. He is a missionary because he is a Christian. All Christ's commands are invitations, which merely put into concise language what the heart already recognizes as its privilege and joy. The missionary commission (St. Matt. xxviii, 19, 20), is the Church's charter, telling all men of her right to dare to make Christianity coterminous with humanity, arresting the attention of those to whom the missionary is sent rather than acting as the sole motive power of the missionary; from it we get definite authority, and so a measure of inspiration, but we do not rest upon it, as though it were by an arbitrary fiat of God that a Christian were converted into a missionary. (The following remarkable phrase occurs in St. Andrew's Devotions: Who (*i.e.* Christ) hath manifested in every place the savour of His knowledge . . . by the incredible conversion of the world to the Faith, without assistance of authority, without intervention of persuasion.) The latter term tells of one aspect of the Christian character, that is all. Whoever accepts Christ's Christianity—the redundancy is necessary—forthwith becomes a missionary. (The Brotherhood of St. Andrew is nothing more than an organized effort to fulfil a common Christian duty.) Andrew needed no injunction to seek Peter; he did it because, being a follower of Christ he could not help it. And if he had refrained he would have ceased at that moment to be a disciple. Christians, whether considered individually or corporately, who are not missionary in desire and intention, are Christians only in name, getting little from and contributing nothing to the religion of the incarnation. If the foregoing contention be true, the definition of "missionary" stands sadly in need of revision. A missionary is an honorable title not to be reserved only for those who work for God in the waste places of his vineyard, but the coveted possession of every Christian who strives to bear a wide witness, as well as deep, to Christ among men.