

THE CHRISTIAN.

"FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD."—Paul.

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The Christian.

THE MARCH OF THE MESSIAH.

M. B. RYAN.

(Concluded.)

II. The work to be done. We must not think that because so much has been done and so much is doing, that the problem of the world's conversion is solved and the work accomplished. There is a dark side to the picture and we need to look at that to realize our duty. There are a thousand millions of men in all lands who need conversion to Christ. Japan has 40,000,000 inhabitants, the majority worshipping idols. China has 350,000,000, and but a handful know the true God. There are 200,000,000 women and girls in China who need to be rescued from the tyranny and degradation of a false religion. In India there are 600,000 widows under nineteen years of age, who are prohibited by the laws of the country from marrying again; and of these 200,000 are less than fourteen years old, and 78,000 less than nine!

Here is a task gigantic enough to arouse all our energies. Is Christ to rule over this billion of unconverted men? Is His religion to revolutionize society in heathen lands, softening the hearts of men and protecting the innocence of childhood and the purity of womanhood? And is His law to govern the now degraded hosts and mould them into a high and holy manhood? Then His people must be His instruments. Each must say, "Here am I, Lord; send me." It is high time that, in view of a world perishing in rebellion and despair, every Christian heart should throb with excitement and every Christian hand should be stretched to the rescue. The magnitude of the work, and the importance of prompt action, are intensified by the fact that this billion of men will soon be beyond our reach. What we do must be done quickly. The short span of a human life is the measure of our opportunities. The life-time of one generation will witness the decks swept clear of all this human freight. And where to, if we do not reach them? Out into the dark unknown. Without a hope. Without remedy. Into the awful scenes of the judgment-day. Can we be indifferent when such a picture is before us? Can we fold our arms when a world is perishing? Far from us be such a crime. Let us buckle on the armour and follow our Captain in His march. Let us throw our lives into the fray, that the day of triumph may be hastened.

III. The necessities of the case.

1. Workers are needed. The living messenger must carry the life-giving message to the dying. The word of truth can neither be wafted on the wings of the wind or dropped by birds of the air, but consecrated men and

women must go to their fellow mortals with the proclamation of peace. The waters of salvation must flow through human channels, and the first great crying need of the cause to-day is men and women who will lay aside all else and labor in the interests of souls. They are needed everywhere. In civilized lands there is a dearth of preachers. Fields that have once been cultivated into fruitfulness are compelled to lie dormant because no husbandman can be found. The dense populations of the large cities are but poorly supplied with gospel facilities, while large tracts of country are entirely destitute of workers in the interests of religion. And what shall we say of the needs of heathen lands? Where are the laborers who will sow and reap in this white harvest-field? Should we supply a competence of workers for the full occupation of heathen territory we would entirely absorb the present force of effective workers in Christian lands. This condition of things ought not to exist. There ought to be more laborers in the vineyard—more public advocates of the claims of Jesus. Were every member of Protestant Christendom to-day to turn preacher and go to the unconverted there would be ten souls for every worker to convert. There should be a larger proportion of Christian men and women who would give themselves to "the ministry of the word." There are many buried talents that should be dug up and burnished and multiplied by use. The condition of the world demands it. The profession of the Christian demands it. If a man have the ability to advance the reign of Christ and does not do it, he is like that unworthy son who, when his father commanded him to go work in his vineyard, said, "I go," but went not. Here is a field for the noblest achievements. No other sphere of labor presents such possibilities for the exercise of philanthropy and the performance of great deeds. Young man, do you aspire to true greatness? Do you want to use the splendid talents which God has lent to you in making the world better? In elevating humanity? In advancing civilization? And to be accounted a benefactor of your race? Then by all means take with you as your instrument that most potent of all means for the enlightenment and advancement of men, the gospel. Make the world better by making it more like Christ. Elevate fallen humanity by leading it up to the cross. Advance civilization by bringing men under the benignant rule of Jesus; and bless men by inducing them to drink from the fountain of all blessing. You will find scope here for all your energies. Your most brilliant powers of mind will find themes worthy of them in the story of a Saviour's love and the problem of a world's redemption. While the glory which will crown your work will not be ephemeral as the sparkle of the dew-drop or the beauty of the butterfly, but undying as the silver sheen of Niagara or the golden rays of sunshine.

2. Money is needed. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn." "The laborer is worthy of his hire." The man who devotes his time and energies to the work of the gospel at home, must be supported by those who devote their talents to secular pursuits. And missions in foreign lands cannot be undertaken or sustained without money. God intends that money shall be given for this work. He has taught the Christian that he is but a steward. Whatever he has he holds only in trust. "The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts." When God's cause demands it God's money ought to be given. Jesus has said to His people (Luke xvi. 9), "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness: that when it shall fail, they may receive you into eternal tabernacles." There is an imperative demand for money to carry on the "colossal enterprise of the world's evangelization." And, in view of the work to be done, and the urgency of the case, the gifts for this purpose are shamefully meagre. The total sum spent annually on Foreign Missions by the Protestant world is about ten millions of dollars. This is about ten cents apiece for each member of Protestant Christendom. Do you say that is doing pretty well? The whole amount averages about one cent per year for each soul of this thousand million of the lost and dying. Is this doing a great work for humanity? Is this using our Lord's money wisely? Let us compare this with the expenditures on self—expenditures that are wholly unnecessary to comfort. It is said, and doubtless with truth, that the money now buried in jewellery and plate in Christian households would, in twelve months time, give to every unevangelized soul on earth the Word of God in his own tongue, and leave enough besides to give one missionary to every three hundred souls on earth, and to educate the children in Christian schools throughout the dominion of pagandom.

There are on this continent three residences, each of which represents a sum sufficient to support three hundred missionaries and one thousand teachers and native helpers for one year.

The internal revenue tax on tobacco in New York alone in 1879, was over \$7,000,000, while the whole Christian church gathered only \$6,000,000 to evangelize the world.

The most moderate smoker consumes from five to thirty cents worth of tobacco daily. If every Protestant would give one cent daily for missions, the magnificent sum of \$365,000,000 would be raised yearly and the conversion of the world would soon be accomplished. Do you say Christians are doing well in missionary work? How much better could they do if they give as much for Christ as they spend on self? How shall we meet the Judge when we have so dishonored Him with our substance?

There is no plausible excuse for withholding