

Mission Field.

THE "QUARTERLY REVIEW" ON CHURCH OF ENGLAND MISSIONS.

[From the S.P.G. Mission Field for April.]

In the *Quarterly Review* for January there is an article on "The Progress and Prospects of Church Missions," which no doubt not a few of our readers have already seen. It gives a truthful summary of the facts, and a yet more valuable indication of their significance. Beginning by quoting the command of our Blessed Lord, the writer shows how in fulfilling it a "great variety of secular consequences are involved, such as are of the deepest practical interest to the statesman and philanthropist, and which touch at almost every point the highest moral and intellectual ideals."

An argument of this kind is of great value. It may suffice for those of us who are helping the missionary cause at home to know that we are acting in obedience to our Lord, and to be impelled by a desire for His honor, and for the completion of His earthly Kingdom. At the same time, reasoning such as this article offers is necessary if the number of the helpers of Foreign Missions is to grow.

For what can explain the extraordinary apathy of many in this matter? How can we account for the neglect of a command so plain, so impressive in the circumstances of its utterance, so essentially connected with every principle and every aspect of Christianity? It were a terrible answer to say that the reason is to be found in the spiritual deadness of those who do not help the cause of Foreign Missions.

In how great degree such a reason would be true we refrain from inquiring. The reason can be expressed no less forcibly if we simply state the indisputable fact that for the Christianity of all of us there is the danger of being maimed and dwarfed, inconsistent and unreasonable, shortsighted and selfish. It is possible for a man to ignore a thing that all his Bible reading, the prayers he utters, and each of his communions should make him feel in heart and mind and soul, and yet to be devout in his personal religion, as well as earnest in helping the cause of the Church in his own parish, his own diocese, and his own land. To the rest he shuts his heart. He leaves that to "missionary enthusiasts," or to those who happen to "take an interest in Foreign Missions." To the intimate relation between this work and the Incarnation and the Atonement, and to the fact that the winning of the whole world for Christ is preeminently the work for which the Church was founded and exists, he manages to blind himself. He thinks Foreign Missions are rather sentimental. He hears somewhere that they are failures, and that it is a hopeless sort of business altogether,

and that there is much more practical work to be done.

To such a man the following passage should be wholesome reading:

"There is hardly a branch of human study, as there is no exercise of lofty and self-denying effort, which has not found ample scope on the Mission field, or has not been enriched in the pursuit of missionary work. Philology, geography, and ethnography, our recent science of comparative religions, our extended knowledge of the world's surface, our clearer comprehension of the primitive state of man, have all been widely indebted to the labors of those who have gone forth to carry the Master's message into the depths of continents hitherto untrodden by Europeans, or who have been nerved to penetrate into territories where death would probably be the portion of the intruder. Nor have the material advantages of missionary work been less conspicuous. The extension of Christianity means the extension of a civilisation which brings new ideas in its train, before which the walls of the most inveterate exclusiveness are falling, which opens out new markets for the world's products, and which, by the introduction of more humane and progressive principles into the government of savage and stationary races, ameliorates the condition and augments the happiness of a large proportion of mankind. Such blessings inevitably follow in the track of Missions, and it would seem therefore to be the height of folly to sneer at missionary effort, and the mark of culpable ignorance not to know what is doing in this noble field of human enterprise. It is too late to speak of efforts as futile or fanatic which have literally girdled the globe with a chain of missionary stations, and those who now speak scornfully of Missions are simply men behind their age."

(To be Continued.)

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