

THE FAITH ELEMENT IN MISSIONS.

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This subject, so admirably treated in a recent article in this REVIEW, may be worthy of still further consideration. No doubt the work of the Gospel in foreign lands is exposed to the same danger as that work at home—the danger of becoming mechanical and perfunctory. One of the most alarming symptoms of our nineteenth century Christianity is the secular symptom—the tendency to substitute other forces for the original motive-power of the Church, the ever-present Holy Spirit. Faith is the coupling by which we become attached to this Divine motor, and unless we are absolutely sure of our spiritual connections, we cannot be certain of our spiritual successes. We accept the sentiment which the editor of this REVIEW quotes from the Bishop of Ripon: that “*the story of Modern Missions is a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles, with all its essential supernaturalism.*” But there could have been no Acts of the Apostles without the faith of the apostles; it was because they wrought in God by the Holy Ghost, that as they went forth and preached everywhere the Lord worked with them; and since what gave them power can still give us power, therefore we urge more faith.

As to men.—Where can we get the missionaries to occupy the fields now white to the harvest? We find but one direction in Scripture concerning this question, “Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest.” The choice and commissioning of His evangelists the Lord has reserved entirely to Himself. Woe to the Church if she shall rashly undertake the enterprise of manufacturing missionaries either by her sacerdotal or by her educational machinery. Mere hand-made ministers, thrust forth from under the fingers of the bishop, and mere school-made ministers, fashioned by the training of the college, are alike inadequate for executing the great commission.

Without the call of God vain is the culture or the consecration of man. Unless, therefore, we can be assured that the *Holy Spirit is really recruiting*, the Students' Volunteer Movement may prove injurious. We strongly believe in this movement; but the very enthusiasm and magnitude of it constitute such a call to prayer as has not till lately been heard—prayer to the great Head of the Church that none shall be suffered to go without His appointment. Would it be rash to say that the deficiency of missionaries is due most of all to the deficiency of prayer in the Church, that the Lord will send forth laborers? And not only the deficiency of missionaries, but the maladjustment of the ministry to the needs of the world. The same constituency which has *seven thousand* ordained missionaries on the foreign field has a *hundred and twenty-seven thousand ordained ministers* on the home field. While many a laborer in China and India has a parish of millions or hundreds of thousands, three or four pastors are often found in a single little New England village, jostling and elbowing one another in their