

MISSION FIELD.

DO FOREIGN MISSIONS PAY?

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(Conclusion.)

An American missionary, Dr. Jonas King, was chiefly instrumental in promoting the introduction of the modern Greek Scriptures into the schools of Greece itself.

When in the town of Serampore, not far from the city of Calcutta, a few months ago, I saw in a bookcase of the Baptist College of that place a most astounding monument to the perseverance and genius of one man. There on a single shelf, were piled high, one above another, no less than forty Bibles or portions of the Bible in as many different languages and dialects, all of them the work of the pioneer missionary of the nineteenth century, the Rev. Wm. Carey, a name revered and honored in all Christian circles. He was the man whom Sidney Smith sneeringly called in his early days, when he wielded the shoemaker's awl and hammer, the "consecrated cobbler," became the greatest Sanscrit scholar of his time. He became professor of Sanscrit in the college at Fort Edward, at a very large salary, all of which he devoted to missionary purposes, and, as I have said, left this monument of Bibles of his own translation behind him. Most of these are in use to-day, for no better translations have ever been made, and yet this was only a small portion of the self-denying labors of this missionary hero. No wonder that an eminent writer of the Ethnological Society of New York enthusiastically declares: "Missions enable the German in his closet to compare more than two hundred languages; the unpronounceable syllables used by John Eliot, the monosyllables of China, the lordly Sanscrit and its modern associates, the smooth languages of the South Seas, the musical dialects of Africa, and the harsh gutturals of our own Indians." "But for the researches of our missionaries," says another, "the languages of further India," and he might add of most of the rest of the world, "would be a *'terra incognita.'*"

The contributions of the missionary to the science of philology naturally lead us to consider his relations to the general subject of education. But this is too vast a field to enter upon thoroughly in such an article. Surely no one will be hardy enough to deny that it pays to educate the human race. It pays not only the race that is educated; but every civilized nation and race on the face of the earth; for education means civilization, and civilization means progress, science, art, commerce, the interchange of ideas and the interchange of goods, larger markets, greater stability of government, more enduring peace.

Who can doubt, for instance, that if the Latin republics of South America were brought to the same level of education as the English-speaking republic of North America, the commerce of our country with those nations would be increased many fold, and a vastly larger market would be opened for our manufactures? Even more strikingly would this be true of Africa and Asia in their relations to Europe and North America, if the same standard of civilization prevailed in all quarters of the globe.

The reader, untravelled in missionary lands, would be surprised to see the extent to which these representatives of our churches have carried out their ideas of education. The school-house, to be sure, in their opinion, is subordinate to the church, but, as with their Puritan ancestors, the schoolhouse always comes next to the church, and often stands by its side. Speaking in a general way, it is not too much to say that there is not a missionary on the field to-day, among all the nine thousand who have gone out from Protestant lands, who is not also an educator.

Under the care of the Protestant missionary societies of the world, there are almost a million pupils under instruction, or to be exact, according to the very latest statistics, 913,478. It is probable that every three years at least a million new pupils come under the instruction of our missionaries. Who can estimate the tremendous life-giving power, constantly exerted in all the dark corners of the world, through this agency? So thoroughly is the vast utility of missions as an educative force recognized by those who have looked into the matter, that in India and other British possessions the appropriations for educational purposes which are made by our missionary boards are doubled by government grants. That is, for every dollar, which the church people of America contribute for missionary schools in India, the British government adds another dollar on condition that the pupils pass a reasonable examination and show ordinary proficiency. These government grants it must be remembered, are not made because of any partiality to the tenets and doctrines taught by the missionaries, not because of any great love of British statesmen for evangelistic services, not because they

are philanthropists, or yearn for the conversion of the heathen, but because, as hard-headed men of business and politics, they see that the cheapest and best way of civilizing their subject races, and of fostering their own commerce and the prosperity of the empire is by working hand in hand with the missionaries. In the opinion of the British Foreign Office evidently missions do pay.

But the educational work of missions is not confined to elementary schools or to the lower classes of the population. The colleges and universities which have been built up through the purely philanthropic gifts and labors of the lovers of missions are some of the noblest monuments to the value of this great nineteenth century movement. There are missionary colleges in many parts of the world which would compare not unfavorably with Dartmouth or Williams or Rutgers. There are colleges in all missionary lands with fine buildings, modern equipment and fair endowment, and the number of whose students is limited only by the possible accommodations. Such institutions are the great colleges of the Free Church of Scotland in Madras and Bombay, the Methodist College in Lucknow, the Presbyterian College of Beyrout, and those most useful institutions started by the American Board, Robert College in Constantinople and the Doshisha in Japan.

The influence of these universities—for some of them are little less than universities in the best sense of the word—has been widespread and beneficent beyond calculation. The educated classes in India to-day are the product of these missionary colleges. There is no other educating influence worth comparing with them for a moment. The graduates of Robert College are influential in half a dozen nationalities of southeastern Europe, and the Doshisha of Japan is one of the mighty influences which, within a quarter of a century, have brought old Japan out of the middle ages into the brightest electric glare of nineteenth century civilization.

If all this is true of the more civilized nations of the Orient, it is doubly and trebly true of the darker and more benighted tribes to which our missionaries have gone. Consider the condition of the Hawaiian Islands now and in the days when Titus Coan first landed upon their coral shores. Consider the revolution wrought in the Samoan Islands and in Fiji and many other Islands of the South Pacific by a few undaunted missionaries.

In most of these remote islands there have been absolutely no other civilizing uplifting influences at work. Commerce has brutalized and degraded the people. It has brought "fire-water" and tobacco and lust and disease. It has enfeebled and almost annihilated the weaker races when it has touched them. The missionary influence alone has kept them alive and given them the large measure of prosperity which many of them to-day enjoy.

One of the islands of the Pacific, which a little more than a generation ago was inhabited by cannibals of the lowest type, during the recent famine in India sent no less than four thousand dollars to relieve the sufferings of their far-away neighbors. Had any one predicted at the beginning of this century that before its close Fiji would be occupied by a civilized, God-fearing, benevolent people who should give four thousand dollars of their hard earnings for the relief of the sufferers in India, he would have been laughed to scorn as a foolish visionary.

Were there space it would be pleasant to relate more specifically what peculiarly large dividends missions paid to our own country. The few millions of dollars which during the century our people have contributed have returned many thousand per cent. in actual cash dividends. Hawaii alone, whose civilization is entirely due to missionaries, and which to-day would be a desolate waste in the Pacific if commerce alone had been left to have its way, has sent back to the United States in trade returns more millions of dollars than have been spent by our people in all foreign missionary operations the world around.

One very large section of our country was saved to the Union by reason of a missionary's forethought, enterprise, and indomitable pluck. The story of Missionary Whitman's thrilling ride from the Northwest Territories to the city of Washington need not here be rehearsed. In this his centennial year the story is too well-known to every well-read patriot to be recounted. It is sufficient to say that, for a wide grasp of the possibilities of empire, for prompt decision, for self-sacrificing heroism, for far-reaching consequences upon the history of our nation, the mid-winter ride across the Rockies of that noble missionary has never been equalled in the annals of our country.

Had it not been for Whitman, a vast section of North America, comprising those marvellously productive states of Washington and Oregon, would inevitably have been lost. To all intents and purposes, Whitman was a foreign missionary, having left his home to convert the Indians of the then unknown Northwest, and his famous ride, so far as America is concerned, will go far towards answering the question, Do missions pay?

Many a devout Christian, perhaps, will be almost impatient with us for not considering the matter in its spiritual aspects. He will say, "Here you find the true value of missions. From this standpoint alone can the question be answered, Do missions pay?" But this is beyond the scope of this paper. A thousand sermons and articles deal with this view of the subject. We are looking at the matter solely from the more material view-point. But even in this light, considering what missions have done for the arts and sciences, for geography, and geology, and meteorology, and archaeology, and philology, for education and civilization in their largest and broadest sense, for the building up of schools and colleges, for the leaving of nations with the yeast of modern civilization, for trade and commerce, and the widening of our empire, there can be but one answer to the question of our title, and that a strong, sweeping, unconditional, uncompromising Yes.