

# 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.

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"He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law."—Is. lii. 4.

This quotation is a portion of a prediction concerning the work of the Messiah. It reveals the final purpose of His work; it is to "set judgment in the earth;" in other words—to judge or rule over the earth; even to extend His law to the islands of the sea. And we have here the encouraging statement, a sharp rebuke to all doubt in the Christian, that He shall not fail nor be discouraged until this work is accomplished. What a magnificent assurance of the ultimate triumph of the Christ! How stimulating to the Christian to know that the banner under which he fights will one day wave in victory over a ransomed world!

But when rejoicing in the assurances of such statements of the word, do we ever pause to consider our own relation to them? Do we, as followers of Christ, sustain any relation to the fulfilment of those prophecies? We certainly do. But I am constrained to think that we too often mistake our relation to them. We too often act as though we thought the triumphant march of Christ was a pageant to gratify our eyes; and His final triumph an exhibition of power of which we could be but the spectators. And so we read those thrilling prophecies as a man takes an opiate, and settle down to a complacent inactivity, while we watch the conquest of the world. This is a mistaken view. It is a dangerous, a God-dishonoring, a self-dishonoring estimate to place upon the matter. We should read those prophecies as a tonic instead of sedative. We should realize that Christ has committed the work of the world's subjugation to His people; His subjects are to extend His rule; the blessings of His love and the majesty of His power are to be made known to the race through the medium of His followers. And when we read a prediction of His growing power, and final triumph, let us read between the lines the prediction of our fiery zeal and heroic effort to enthrone Him in the hearts of men. Let us realize that it is through us that He will "set judgment in the earth" and give the isles His law.

A lack of zeal in the evangelization of the world is a crying shame of modern Christendom. It is the shame of men who avowedly acknowledge Jesus as Lord of all, but who make no effort to establish His rightful rule. It is the shame of men who enjoy the blessing of the Redeemer's reign, and who seem wholly indifferent about bringing those blessings to others. It is the shame of men who

rejoice that the Redeemer's cause will eventually triumph, but who are content to let the battle be fought without their help. Too many Christians are like Dan in his ships, and Rueben among his sheep-folds, when Deborah and Barak were leading the faithful of Israel to conflict and to victory,—they are content to be spectators while others bear the burden. There is need of a great awakening in the matter. Many Christians are asleep. They need the trumpet sounded in their ears to startle them into activity. For the arousing of the careless, the encouragement of the interested, and the enlightenment of all, there is nothing so good as facts. We want first to realize that the march of the world's Redeemer over the continents and islands of the globe to ultimate victory is a fact. It is no myth, no speculation manufactured to engage the fancy of men. It is a fact as real as the creation of the world, the discovery of America, or the march of science. And of this fact we have abundant proof. First, from the Word of the Omniscient God; and, second, from the history and present status of His religion.

Secondly, we want to realize the facts in connection with the present extension of His kingdom. The progress being made; the work to be done; the necessities of the case. Let us devote a time to the consideration of such facts.

I. The progress being made in evangelizing the world. I need not stop here to mention the efforts being made and the success being achieved in nominally Christian countries, in religious work. Any close observer, acquainted with the history of the past, knows full well that there never was such determined, systematic, widespread effort to reach men and make them followers of Jesus as is being made at this day. And, although there are no tidal waves of religious excitement, the result of spasmodic effort, such as the past has witnessed, yet there never were so many converts being made to the faith of Christ as now. This is inspiring. It shows us that Christianity is calculated to keep pace with the highest progress. The light of the Sun of Righteousness shines all the brighter amid the triumphs and glories of nineteenth century civilization.

But we turn to heathen lands, where men worship other gods than ours, and mark the advancement of the rule of Christ. The century in which we live has truly been called the "Missionary Century of the world's history." Protestant missions in heathen lands were, at the beginning of this century, almost unknown. Now the missionaries are like "an army whose lines reach round the globe." Within these eighty years, missionary societies multiplied from seven to seventy; male missionaries from 170 to 2,400, besides the thousands of native preachers and teachers; converts from 50,000 to 1,650,000; church offerings for missions from \$250,000 to \$6,250,000! Protestant schools from 70 to 12,000 with nearly half a

million pupils; translations of the Scriptures from 50 to 226, and the number of the copies circulated from 5,000,000 to 148,000,000!"

In India, the stronghold of Asiatic Paganism, one missionary society, the London M. S., has 440 places of worship, 53,000 worshippers; with 34 male, and four unmarried women missionaries, with 300 native preachers and many teachers at work.

On the 1st of January, 1867, a church was organized at Ongole, India, with only eight members. In 1877 it reported a membership of 3,269, with twenty-two native helpers, six of whom were ordained ministers. In 1878, Mr. Clough, the missionary at that place, baptized, within twenty-one days, with the aid of native preachers, 5,429 converts, "making the membership of the Baptist church in Ongole nearly 9,000 souls; still later 3,262 additional baptisms made the whole number baptized from June 16th to July 31st, 1878, 8,691." This is but a specimen of what is being done, and of what can be done, to extend the reign of Christ in India. "A new population begins to make itself felt in India. Christian homes rapidly multiply in which the casteidea, which has ruled India so long and so cruelly, no more holds sway. To the caste Hindoo these Christians are outcasts, but the outcasts are becoming so numerous as to form a community of their own. There are tens of thousands of them and they are multiplying more rapidly than ever. A silent but wonderful transformation is going on in that strange land and is illustrating the power of missions."

Japan has abolished the State Religions, thus putting all faiths on a level and giving Christianity a fair field. The Gospel is making prodigious strides there, and thousands yearly avow their allegiance to Christ.

China has opened her doors to the missionary and already the first fruits are being garnered. "Bromanga, where Williams and Harris and the Gordons fell a prey to cannibals, is now open and friendly to missionaries." The church there numbers 200, with 33 teachers. The New Hebrides have become missionary centres, sending the bread of life to others. Scarcely a country on the earth remains without the heralds of the Cross of Christ. The old temples of the gods are being abandoned to secular uses; and a gentleman who has travelled extensively in heathen lands states that in all his travels he had never seen one new heathen temple.

These facts are full of encouragement and hope to the Christian. The events of the time proclaim that the prophecy is having its fulfilment. The Messiah is setting judgment in the earth, and the isles are waiting for His law, and receiving it as well. The waste places are becoming pools and the thirsty land springs of water; and the regions that sat in the shadow of darkness have seen a great light.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)