

## A Brief Survey of Missionary Movement During the 19th Century.

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No. 1.

"And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal gospel to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth; and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people; and he saith with a great voice, Fear God, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters."

This vision of the apocalyptic seer gets a wonderful grip on our heart and imagination. It is a vivid conception of the spread of the gospel of Christ throughout all the earth.

When John wrote, missionary enterprise, both home and foreign was nearly a half century old. Paul had gone on his famous missionary journeys to the peoples of Asia Minor and had carried the gospel of Christ into the cities of Greece and even to Rome. Other apostles, after the persecutions which had scattered the church at Jerusalem, had gone north and east and south, carrying the news of salvation in Christ. The angel of missions had been flying through heaven's domain for a period of years. In what had been done, the apostle saw what was yet to be accomplished, only in larger and larger measure. The work of Paul was the earnest of the coming in of "the fulness of the Gentiles;" and the genius of the gospel adapted it to all nations and tribes upon the earth.

I want to help you see that the 19th century has witnessed a large fulfillment of the seer's vision; and that if John had reason to be confident of the purpose of the gospel respecting every nation of the human race we have tenfold more reason; and also, if the apostle's heart in view of what he knew about the word of life impelled him to sacrifice self and life for the Master's sake, then in view of what we know and have seen of the work of the gospel and its mission among men have far more exceedingly abundant reason to thank God and take courage and to make sacrifice of ourselves in behalf of the name of our Lord.

1. First of all, in order to get clearly before us what has been done during the 19th century in missionary work, we must get a view of the condition of such work when the century began.

It is a sad spectacle which meets the eye of the historian of the church of Jesus Christ at the close of the 18th century. He searches almost in vain for a single country where the missionary of the cross has gained a foothold and found toleration; and equally vain is his search for a church filled with enthusiasm to carry out the Lord's commission to go and make disciples of all nations. There is one such church. The great example of the first missionary to the Gentiles apparently had lost its hold on the churches of the Reformation, while the work of the early church in evangelizing the barbarians of Germany, France and Great Britain, indeed of all Europe, had seemingly been entirely forgotten.

In the apostolic days the spread of the gospel was nothing short of the miraculous. The messengers of the cross had run on eager feet to the far borders of the Roman Empire. In the Dark Ages and the Mediaeval Period of European history, the church as a church had ceased to be interested in Missionary work. Yet even during these periods the cause of missions made some advance, for here and there God raised up mighty men of valor, who felt their personal responsibility to God; and who, filled with the spirit of Christ, went forth proclaiming the glad tidings of great joy; but the church as a whole lay under the incubus of indifference, temporal power and scholastic theology and philosophy. The Reformation came, but the quickened spiritual energy of the protesting churches was soon engaged in petty strifes among themselves, and for two hundred years they thus consumed this energy at home, while the great world beyond was lying in the awful darkness of idolatry, superstition and almost inconceivable misery.

Some missionary work, however, had been undertaken by the Protestant churches. In the early days of the Reformation, the Swedes under the patronage of Gustavus Vasa had begun work among the Laplanders. In the beginning of the 17th century the Dutch tried in a somewhat summary fashion to convert the natives of Ceylon. And Dutch missionaries had been at work in Java, the Moluccas and had gone as far as Formosa. But the work had been temporary. On the other hand the Reformation gave to the Catholic church a new missionary impulse, although it was an impulse of self-preservation; and in the establishing of the Propaganda of Rome in the 17th Century, for the directing of the missionary work of the Catholics, the great reactionary movement of Rome against the Reformation was centralized. But the missionary impulse of the Catholic church had pretty largely expended itself by the middle of the 18th century, to be revived however under the new and world-wide missionary enthusiasm of the 19th century.

At the close of the 18th century, Europe excepting Turkey was nominally Christian; but as Mr. Eugene

Stockwell said at the Ecumenical Conference in New York, it was "Christianity corrupted in the south, frozen in the north and officially abolished in France." Asia, save for the down-trodden churches in the realm of the Sultan, was altogether Mohammedan or heathen. India was in the clutch of the East India Company, which, though nominally representing a Christian country, was yet a sordid, selfish organization far more favorable to heathenism than to Christianity. In fact it opposed the entrance of missionaries to India. In South India the Danes had prosecuted missionary work with good results, and when in 1793 Carey landed in India it was under Danish protection. China was not open to foreigners, though scattered here and there within the borders of the Celestial Empire were bands of Catholic Christians. Japan was hermetically sealed to all missionary work. Africa was the great unknown or undiscovered continent, whence Christian nations got their slaves. The innumerable islands of the Pacific were just beginning to be known; and the interior of the two American continents had not been explored.

At the close of the 18th Century the barriers to missionary work seemed insurmountable. The great nations of heathenism were shut in by walls of hostility, different customs, and sensual idolatry. Means of conveyance and travel were slow and tedious. There were no railways, no steamships, no telegraph, no postal union, no Suez Canal. There were languages strange and hard to learn, many of which were still unwritten. The position of woman in the heathen world rendered her inaccessible to the missionary worker, while she was regarded as the slave and plaything of man. "Degraded to the level of the cattle for which she was often bartered," says Dr. Pierson, "she was unwelcome as a babe, untaught as a child, enslaved as a wife, despised as a widow, denied all social status and individual rights and even a soul." Then, too, the impression was quite general among Christian people that the heathen, both men and women, were hardly more than cattle to be bought and sold, and driven hither and yon with the lash in the service of the superior and masterful whites. The trader and the slaver with whom the heathen had had to do, made the very name Christian a stench in the nostrils of heathendom. Lust and death were in their track; sorrow and bitter hate were left behind them. At the beginning of the 19th century, the missionary followed the trader and the slaver; and knowing something of the history of slavery and commerce in those days it is no surprise to us that the first missionaries were murdered in cold blood. It was the harvest of death which the Christian churches had been sowing for themselves.

Then the worst barrier of all was the lethargy and hostility within the Protestant churches themselves. The value of a human being of another race and color, and his need of the gospel of Christ, had not come home to the churches. A new outpouring of the Holy Spirit was as necessary now as at Pentecost. When one knows the condition of Christianity as it was illustrated by the great mass of nominal Christians, he can hardly wonder that the last half of the 18th century has been called the darkest period of the Christian church; nor that within that period were produced the sceptical works of Hume, Gibbon, Paine and Voltaire; nor that Voltaire said that Christianity would be dead by the beginning of the 19th century. Christianity, as Voltaire saw it, certainly was dead in the main, by the beginning of the 19th century, and it died to give birth to the missionary and philanthropic Christianity of the 19th century.

Now at the close of the 18th century to meet all these difficulties, to break down all these barriers and to give the gospel to the heathen, the churches of Christ presented little force or organization. In fact it would be keeping far within the bounds of the truth to say that the churches on the whole felt little or no special need that the gospel should be given to the heathen.

For missionary organization there were, (1) "The Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge"—nearly a century old—which was directing the Tamil mission in South India, and sending thither German and Lutheran missionaries; (2) "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" which, we are told by Mr. Stock, at the beginning of the 19th century was engaged "in supplying ministers and schoolmasters for British settlers in Canada"; (3) In 1792, after twelve years of persistent, earnest work, Carey succeeded in getting the Baptists of England to form the Baptist Missionary Society. The following year Carey went out to India; (4) In 1795, as the result of the interest aroused by the letters of Carey from India, the London Missionary Society was formed. When the 19th century opened this Society had sent one man to South Africa, one to India, and a band of twenty-nine missionaries to the island of Tahiti, one of the Society group; (5) In 1796 two Societies were organized in Scotland to aid Carey's work in India and that of the Moravians in the West Indies. But these Societies had limited means and were shortly absorbed by larger organizations; (6) The church Missionary Society was organized in 1799, but did not send out any missionaries until 1802; (7) On the continent of Europe, in 1797, the first Dutch Missionary Society was formed. But virtually the

Protestantism of the continent was represented by one missionary organization already at work—the Moravians, who seem to have been the one Christian church who had kept alive, all through its history, the object of the gospel in the world. In fact the Moravians were organized simply and solely for mission work. At the beginning of the 19th century they had missionaries in Greenland, in the West Indies; they had done work among the Hottentots, and among the slaves of Central America; (8) Under the influence of the movements in England, two Societies were formed in the United States, one in 1796, the New York Missionary Society, the other in 1797, the Northern Missionary Society. Both these Societies were formed for work among the North American Indians; (9) In 1786 Dr. Coke, a Methodist, sailed from England for Nova Scotia, but having been driven south by a storm he landed at Jamaica and at once began work among the slaves on that island; but the Methodist Society was not formally organized until 1813.

Thus the 19th century opened. But a new spirit was stirring the churches of Christ. The voice of the missionary angel of the Apocalypse was already startling the Christian world out of its sleep of death, and the churches were beginning to realize the purpose of the gospel as including all nations and peoples and tribes of earth. Great revival waves swept England and America, and the churches awoke to new life, new energy, new enthusiasm for humanity. The new life refused to run in the old channels, and the great missionary movements of the 19th century tell the direction in which the divine Spirit moved and carried the churches. Not that opposition was all removed, nor that Christians suddenly became favorable to missionary work. There is yet much indifference, if not open hostility, to missions even among Christians. But the barriers, one after another, have been removed, and the missionary spirit and work of the 19th century have been among the marvels of divine grace.

## The Success of Prohibition in Kansas.

In the course of an editorial on the Prohibition question, Dr. Shaw, editor of the "Review of Reviews," makes several statements which on the face of them are full of error. The first is that the members of the Kansas legislature, "being just ordinary politicians," have failed in their duty with respect to bulwarking the prohibitory amendment with effective laws. As a matter of fact the Kansas legislature has piled law upon law in sought-for enforcement of the prohibition amendment. Politicians tell us that there has not been a legislature in 20 years that has not been friendly to prohibition. The temperance enthusiasts have never asked for anything at the hands of the law-making powers which was not freely granted. At the recent session they got everything they applied for. Now is not this situation worth studying? Will not such a study reveal to us the value of such an enactment in itself without reference to the people, and also show us just where the responsibility for the success or failure of the law should be placed. In Canada the plebiscite revealed the pleasing fact that the will of the people demanded prohibitory legislation, but the government was so far misrepresentative as to nullify that expressed desire. In Kansas the people but need to manifest the desire, and the law for temperance is forthcoming. For instance, during the session of the legislature just closed two bills were passed by immense majorities for the better enforcement of the prohibition law. One of these bills declares that the building in which liquor is stored, sold, or given away, is a public nuisance; and as such can be destroyed without punishment following. And the presence of mere bar fixtures (without the detecting of intoxicants) is *prima facie* evidence of guilt.

And now what conclusion are we to draw from this willing spirit of the law-makers taken in connection with the conditions as we find them through the State, First—The prohibition law has so far proven the best enactment, even when lacking at times the support of the people. For the past ten years temperance sentiment in this State, as in nearly all others, has been dormant, seemingly resting satisfied in what it has already accomplished. The result is that the breweries have made deep inroads into the State, and the cry has gone out, to the shame of Kansas and to the detriment of prohibition,—"Prohibition in Kansas is a failure. Liquor is sold there the same as in other States, and the saloon is wide open." We have to face the fact that public sentiment has not positively supported the law as it should, and yet with such popular laxity what is the result?

In the first place there are few such things as Kansas Saloons in the entire State. Kansas Saloon is a misnomer. "Joint," with its suggestion of stealth and evasion is a characterization vastly more appropriate to the sort of drinking places that have sprung up under the eyes of prohibition. The question of morals aside, the Kansas dramshop of today is an abomination which calls for extinction. The sight of one is enough to give a person perpetual stomach trouble. It looks quite as