

The Commercial Value of Missions.

The grand agency which God has appointed for the establishment of the kingdom of righteousness in the world is Christian Missions. They form the sublimest enterprise committed to man. In comparison with them all others sink into insignificance. Every individual, therefore, should consider it a high honor to be permitted to share in this noble work, and none should overlook its grandeur and value.

Among the incentives employed to excite our zeal and lead us to contribute more liberally to the mission enterprise there is one rarely considered. Though the present age is a busy speculating one and men when engaging in any pursuit often ask, will it pay? yet the cause of missions is not often estimated from a commercial stand point. We frequently lose sight of the fact, that, when contributing we are doing something to increase commerce.

When a heathen people become civilized, new desires are created within them and Christianity regulates and satisfies these desires. A degraded people when becoming converts to Christ have altogether new hopes and aspirations. The rude hut in which they lived, the simple clothing with which their bodies were partially covered, the rough implements with which they tilled the soil must give place to something better. Houses are erected instead of huts, machinery is imported, manufactories built and new channels of trade opened.

We have only to look at Africa since Livingstone's explorations, and we find several embassies from different countries entering the interior of the Dark Continent for commercial purposes. On the track of missionaries, have followed the men of commerce. From one sewing machine factory in the Dominion of Canada a hundred thousand machines have been sold in Africa.

We are further told from carefully prepared statistics at Washington, that the trade of the United States with the Micronesia and adjacent islands has increased very rapidly. It is only 20 years since the first missionary landed on these shores and yet during that time for every dollar expended by the church, commerce has received back \$40.75. Looking then at the subject of missions from a pecuniary stand point would not handsome dividends be realized if we were putting forth strenuous efforts for the evangelization of the world.

For a lengthened period a financial depression has been resting upon our Dominion. What would tend more to the removal of this depression, still resting, than enlarged contributions to the cause of Christ. Sending the Gospel to the heathen is a paying investment. Wherever the missionaries of the cross go, commerce is created. And not only is trade increased, but humanity, gospel benevolence, and religious zeal are called into exercise. The stone which is thrown into the lake forms a little ring on the bosom of the placid water, the circle gradually widens until it strikes the shore bounding the lake, so our contributions are the stones that ruffle the lake of degraded humanity including continents and islands and at length striking on the shores of Eternity. And although the glory of God and the future happiness of the soul is the great incentive to liberal contributions, yet are we to overlook the commercial good that flows from our gifts? No, in this noble enterprise in which we are asked to engage, its value to commerce is not by any means a low view to entertain. It should have an influence and lead us to contribute more liberally to speed on the glad message of "peace on earth and good will toward men."

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A boy of nineteen, in Japan, a heathen until quite recently, has been teaching Christ, and thirty conversions have resulted.