

RELIGIOUS DEPARTMENT

WHAT IS THE GREATEST WORK IN THE WORLD?

By Rev. R. E. Spence, M.A., Wascana, Assa.

It will doubtless be generally admitted that the greatest thing in the world is character, and that the work of the Christian Church is not the outpouring of wealth or focalization of energy, but the perfection of Christian character. It may also be conceded that the aim of an educational training is not so much the impartation of information as the development of all the individual powers into a strong and robust personality.

The answer, however, to the query, "What is the greatest work in the world?" will depend very much on the person's point of view. This supreme question of the hour is one which appeals with peculiar power to the constituency of young men and women, represented by Vox.

It seems to me that the supreme enterprise of the age is the immediate preaching of the Gospel to every creature. This means the bringing of the glad tidings to all within our own borders as well as sending the message to the "regions beyond." Without question this is the age of missions. A missionary revival is sweeping over the churches and they must yield to the mighty impulse if they intend saving themselves from stagnation and death. This is seen to be true by reviewing the history of the past. The church at Jerusalem, after receiving the power from on high, must obey the command of its Master and go into Samaria or dwarf its own life. Paul must "go over into Macedonia" and help, or the light would have faded from the landscape of his life. The life and development of both church and individual depends upon their yielding to and swaying with this mighty movement as it presses upon them.

If we admit then that the question of the hour is, how can the immediate proclamation of the Gospel be made a fact, we must notice what is the hindrance in the way. It is not to-day because the doors are closed. This was once the dif-

ficulty. When Francis of Navarre, the Jesuit missionary, stood before the walled kingdom of China, he exclaimed "O rock! rock! when wilt thou open to my Master?" But now, not only China, but nearly all the nations have flung wide open their doors, and many are crying for the light. Neither are we without the means of evangelization. The printing press has become the handmaid of the ear in the dispersion of the Gospel, and science has really become the ally of faith in this work. Nor are we hindered for lack of an adequate force. Thousands of young men and women, thoroughly qualified for the work, are to-day willing and ready to go; but they cannot do so unless they are sent.

The great difficulty at present is the lack of funds. There is a financial basis for the evangelization of the world, and one of its greatest elements is money. With many the missionary problem is to-day a matter of dollars and cents. The Missionary Boards have not the means to send a great proportion of those who are offering themselves. The reason why the funds are not forthcoming is not the poverty of the Christian Church, for she is wealthy: neither do I think it is generally a wilful withholding what belongs to the Lord: but rather a lack of information concerning the missionary enterprise in detail. It must sometimes seem to contributors that the work is so stupendous, that the amount subscribed does very little good: it is like putting money into a bag with holes in it, it disappears, but it cannot be seen what good has been accomplished.

What is needed to-day, is a thorough study of the condition of the heathen, with its awful consequences as revealed in the physical, social and national life. We must feel their awful need and endeavor to realize for ourselves what life would be to us without Jesus Christ: and then as we think of the "Golden Rule."