

commands the services of a multitude of the most daring and heroic, learned and accomplished men; that has received the good-will and commendation of powerful governments and eminent statesmen, and derives support from the most thoughtful minds and the most eloquent tongues, and crowds the largest buildings, simply to hear the reports of what it has effected; that is sustained by free-will gifts, poured into its treasury by innumerable hands, until in a single year they amount to £3,750,000; that has sown in a vast country like India 4,636 schools, and planted 569 stations; that is threading its way up every river and over every road in still vaster China; that penetrates to the heart of the "Dark Continent," pioneering a path for travel and commerce in its impetuous haste; that settles its servants among the snows of Greenland, and sends them to brave in loneliness the perils of the cannibal islands—an enterprise that binds together the most divided communities by its broad aims and passionate enthusiasms; and that has become an inseparable part, and a prominent part of every living branch of the Church of God.

The Mission has taken hold of men and taken hold of our time. It is awakening expectations that thrill men through and through, so wonderful, so sublime; treading so far beyond the limits of what our fathers had conceived possible, that men are lifted out of themselves as the Mission unfolds its divine proportions, and beckons them by its divine glory to move forward. Looking, then, at the Mission as men have grown familiar with it, at what it has accomplished, and at the sympathies it has begotten, and looking beyond all this at the task before it, incomparably greater than any it has yet achieved, it would seem as if the time had come to advance a step farther, and to suggest that the Church, as a whole, should be consecrated to this Mission as the imperative and grandest aim that God has placed before us. Probably it is already conceded that this is the basis on which the Mission is to be builded into strength. It is acknowledged that the Old Testament and the New agree in representing the kingdom of God as world-wide, that the prophecies flow here in the same stream with the explicit teaching of Christ. This kingdom penetrates the Scriptures everywhere with its glory. We see it breaking through the barriers imposed upon the Jews. It teaches to the psalm-singers some of their divinest songs. It runs into the very structure of the universal prayer of the Church through "Our Father, who art in heaven." It burns away the barriers at Pentecost with its tongues of fire, it draws Peter to the house of Cornelius the Gentile, and it makes Paul, whose heart's desire is for his Jewish brethren, the apostle of the heathen. No vision like it was ever lifted up by any religion before men, for no other religion has in its very heart the seal of universality. "There is but one spiritual and universal religion," Goldwin Smith says, "there is but one religion of which Renan could say that if there were religion in another planet it could be no other than this."

We have got at last so far. The Mission has conquered—conquered the sluggish unbelief, the apathy, the selfishness, the veiled fatalism that gathered round the infancy of its revival, the dulness that would not apprehend the breadth of the divine compassion and the deep brotherhood of men. But although this is all true it is only half the truth, and it is absolutely necessary to look at where we stand to-day and the problems we must face. It is scarcely possible to resist the temptation to overrate these brilliant successes, and to credit them with a significance they do not possess. Yet after so many years of vigorous and successful effort, with opposition dying out

and growing sympathy, and with certain weighty conditions more favorable than at any previous epoch, all that we can point to is a line of 2,700,000 Christians in Pagan and Mahometan lands; and behind them an awful phalanx of about one thousand millions, made up of nations and whole races, dense and almost illimitable crowds of men, unchanged, and most of them untouched by any gospel. If we distribute this statement into a few details:—In India there is a population of 250,000,000 who are not Christians, and scattered thinly through them as the fruit of all these years 700,000 who are; in China, 70,000 Christians, and the rest, 300,000,000; in Africa, 320,000 Christians, and besides, 200,000,000; and while there are territories that have become entirely Christian they are in regions like the islands of the South Seas, where the primitive type was barbarous, and where the environment reduces influence to a cipher. There are indirect influences, no doubt; and they are more significant than any tabulated figures, but they do not alter the conclusion which is forced upon us that not only the larger part, but almost the entire part of the work contemplated by the Mission has yet to be done, and that, if it is ever to be done, some larger power of the Church of Christ must be brought into play than we have seen at any previous period.

There is another consideration that must urge our thoughts in the same direction. I have mentioned indirect influence, and the modern Mission represents a thousand influences among the non-Christian populations. We are thus approaching a condition in some of these great countries of the East when the order of millenniums will loosen before it breaks up. It would be hasty to suppose that we must be near the time when huge races will exchange their Hindooism, or their Buddhism, or their Mahometanism for Christianity; but we are already entering the period of disintegration that precedes it. It is the most critical and dangerous time in the life of a nation. These movements will be confined to the populations round a few Mission-stations. They will affect the mass of men, the millions, and up till now we are only dealing with the units. How are we to deal with a crisis like that, one of enormous responsibility and inconceivable delicacy, one that may break out acutely and almost simultaneously over an area as large as Europe, if, in a country like India, for example, we have only a few hundred missionaries among a population of 250,000,000? The scale on which we have been working up till now is plainly inadequate, and the new measures will not be found until the entire Church is consecrated to the work. For what we have seen in the last four centuries, and they are the very flower of history, is this:—A solitary herald here and another there, sent out by pious king, or knot of simple men, or of his own heart's desire, out into the waste of darkness to proclaim the great Evangel among the natives; and then, and surely in advance of this, there sprang up the society of sympathizing men, pledged to this particular aim, gathering strength and numbers, and spreading over town and country with its network of meetings and helpful hands, growing into the stateliness of a vast Christian co-operation, and gaining hold, each upon the Church within which it grew. Such societies are very noble. Their founders fought the cause of Missions when all the world about them was sunk in careless scorn; and they fought it with a magnificent daring and a faith so glorious that men will always turn to the dawn of this century for inspiration in their noblest work. But if Christian men seem now agreed that the Word of God does not merely contain here and there a missionary chapter or the music of a missionary psalm, or some clear word of pro-

phesy, or more clear and commanding word of Christ, but is throughout an intensely missionary book, the missionary spirit being of the very essence of its revelation; if it is a book that responds, with the sensitiveness of a divine sympathy, to the cry of the lost but seeking spirit, to the burdened sigh of Pagan Asia, as well as to the anguish of those that doubt and yearn in Europe and America; if it is a book that proclaims, with every one of its tongues of fire, that there is a kingdom of God to grow out from it, instinct with its own spirit, a kingdom of living men in whom its revelation will be seen in action, by whom its sympathy and its offer of life and rest will be borne to every nation, in whom the great hunger for the redemption of the world has struck so deep that every one who is of that kingdom must hunger with the same intensity, and look out on the world with the very eyes of Christ, and see, not in dreams and fancies of the poets, but by faith—faith which is no dreamer, but real and practical, carving swiftly the way to its own end—see by faith the march of the peoples back to God, the idols flung aside, and the cry of all:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

If that is the idea of the kingdom of God, then even our noble Missionary Societies are not the adequate expression of this enterprise of Christian Missions, but are only preparatory, and the conception of a Missionary Society we are to keep before us is of the Church herself, as broad as the Church, as manifold as her gifts, as numerous as her membership, and as much clothed as she can claim to be with power from on high. That, in theory, is the position that has been taken by the great body of the Presbyterian churches, and what I plead for is nothing more than that this theory should be wrought into practice. Christian people have yet to feel that it is their own cause, and the most sacred and lofty cause for which they ever fought. The Mission is not an organ of the Church, but the Church is the organ of the Mission, divinely appointed, divinely endowed, divinely dwelt in. The Church has been consecrated to this work by its Master, and when the consecration is accepted, penetrating not only into Assemblies and Councils, but into every little group of Christian people, penetrating like a fire that burns into men's souls and then leaps out in flames of impulse and passionate surrender, we shall see the Mission as Christ would have it be. The story of it, and the pitiful wail of Christless men, as they grope in their millions round the great altar-stairs of God—and more pitiful still if they are so blind as not to feel their blindness—will be poured from every pulpit; it will be the burden of daily prayer in every Christian home; every one will study for himself, as Canon Westcott recommended the other day, the annals of the present conquests of the Cross; the children will grow up, believing that this is the aim for which they are all to live, and churches will meet to plan their great campaigns, and send out the best and ablest men they have to take part in this war of love.

It will be the cause of the hour into which men will pour all that they would spend on the greatest struggle they have ever known; labor, and treasure, and genius; the affections and the life will pour these and more, because this cause must always overtop every other. It is time for the Church to ask this consecrated spirit, to ask for the entire congregation the consecration that is asked and expected of the single man or woman whom it sends out to the field. Consecration such as I have indicated, so pervading and entire, is not impracticable. It is a large hope, large beyond measure, some would say; but it is confirmed by the voice of history, it is luminous with promise. Every

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