

The dream made me ask, Does the Father above,
Who holds all the earth in his infinite love,
Our use of his manifold blessings approve?
Helping Hand. SARAH P. ELLIS.

REFLECTIONS OF A BUSINESS MAN.

BY A CHURCH MEMBER.

Some years ago I was called to face a serious question. This is how it came to me. It was the last day of the year. I had gone home from business a little earlier than usual, and was now sitting alone in my library. My mind somehow fell to thinking on last things. I thought of the last day of my life, of the last generation of mankind, and now, by a swift turn backwards, I reflected on the last words of Christ before he left the world. Instantly those words stood out before me as if printed in large capitals, "*Go ye into the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*" I immediately rose to my feet and walked the room. These words had never so impressed me before. I had been accustomed to raising some objections to foreign missions. But here was a plain yet solemn commandment from the lips of Christ. It seemed as if he were in the room, although I saw no form. I cannot describe the strange vividness with which the thought flashed upon me that it was the main business of the church, in fact the one thing for which it existed, to carry the gospel throughout the world and to do it as quickly as possible. And I reflected, somewhat uneasily, that I was a member of that church. Then the question came almost as forcibly as if I had heard a voice "*What does this last commandment mean to YOU?*"

I again sat down, resolving before the New Year should come, to find some light on this question. The light came. Let me state, in few words, the conclusions which I then reached and the experiences which have followed.

If I were a *young man*, of suitable qualifications, I should certainly feel that this word of Christ was a pretty direct message to myself. I am sure I should not dare, in such times as these, to take up any other calling until I had seriously considered whether I ought not to be a foreign missionary. I am convinced that the next fifty years will be the most remarkable in the history of mankind. The nations are being touched with a common life and brought near together. I believe, with many others, that pagan systems are soon to meet with rapid and far-reaching changes. It looks to me as if no other field of work were so urgent or so full of promise. If ever God called young men to go to the heathen, I believe he is calling now.

But I am no longer a young man. I am the father of five children, for whose rearing I am responsible. I have come to the conclusion that the last commandment of our Lord has a special application to *Christian parents*. It seems much clearer to me than it used to that children are to be trained primarily and mainly with reference to the work of the kingdom. I hope that each member of my family will come to feel a sort of personal obligation for the spread of the gospel in the world. And if to some bright son or daughter of our household the Spirit of God shall whisper a special call, wife and I have agreed that we shall not stand in the way. No ambition for their professional, or social, or pecuniary success will allow us to hush the voice of the Spirit and so imperil the very foundations of their Christian character.

On that New Year's eve I was in very moderate circumstances. Still I could not escape the conviction

that the last commandment included me. As is perhaps usual at such a season of the year, I looked over my habits of expenditure. I saw that I was spending more upon certain luxuries than for the salvation of the world. To my astonishment I found that I had paid more for a family concert ticket, and two or three times more for an excursion, than I had given during the whole year for the Lord's work in foreign lands. It did not take me long to decide that this was wrong management. I recalled the statement of a distinguished acquaintance of mine who once said: "I settle the matter at the beginning of the year whether, consistently with other duties, I can take in the regular prayer-meeting of my church. I cannot possibly stand the strain," he said, "of having this question come up for settlement every week." It seemed to me a good rule respecting benevolent gifts. I felt I could not stand the strain of having the matter come up for fresh settlement every time I heard an appeal. Nor did it seem to me quite the manly thing to do so. And so, with the coming of the new year, I adopted the plan of giving a certain *proportion* of my income. This I have found to be delightful beyond expression. The vexed question of "how much" is disposed of, and Christian stewardship has come to have a real significance.

I want to add that through the providence of God I have been blessed with some means. The last commandment still rings in my ears, "*Go ye into the world and preach the gospel.*" I cannot directly preach, but yet I am sure that I have a very definite part in this great work. If I cannot *go* I can *send*—and a better man than myself at that. For some time I have been paying all the expenses of a certain foreign missionary. He is my representative on the field. I occasionally hear from him, and I and my family follow his work with great interest and delight. Nothing could induce us to surrender the joy of this service. If I continue to be prospered, I am planning to undertake soon the support of two native evangelists in Japan.

I have now told you what the Great Commission means to me. What does it mean to you? "How much owest thou unto my Lord? Sit down quickly and write."—*Missionary Herald*.

WANTED. CROWN ADVOCATES.

W. B. M. U.

It was only a single sentence, lightly spoken on the impulse of the moment, but it was a message from God, and I want to pass it on, in the hope that He may use it to put a new purpose and glory into our lives, as it has already into mine.

We were sitting round the breakfast-table at Keswick when a friend made the remark, "You have never told us about your work in Africa," to which I replied that, as the words would usually be understood, I had as yet no "work in Africa," unless it could be called "work" to enter, as far as possible, into other people's work and interests, to look on at what was being done, and to pray for the workers and those among whom they were working. This called from another the words which have come back to me again and again every day since with every-increasing power and meaning, "You are watching the case on behalf of the Crown?"

Is it true that, in these days of opening and closing doors, of growing readiness to hear the message of salvation and life on the part of so many, and yet of increasing opposition on the part of so many more,