

WHERE ARE THE MEN?

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OO often the appeal that is made in sermons and speeches for missions is little more than one for money. And if the hearts of the hearers are at all touched, even a rich man thinks that the claims upon him are satisfied if he puts \$5 into the plate, or at most gives an annual subscription to that amount to the society whose special cause is being pleaded. It causes him no loss or self-denial to give this. Every week, probably, the man throws away an equal or even a much larger amount on his own pleasure or self-gratification. And he neither troubles or thinks any more about the matter till the following year brings another appeal. Can anyone say that this is at all an exaggerated estimate of the interest, or rather lack of interest, that the majority of professing Christians take in the mission work of the Church? By the "mission work" of the Church I would here be understood to mean, not only the evangelization of the heathen, which is strictly its meaning, but all work that needs exterior help, such as the maintenance of the means of grace among those who are already Christians in new and thinly inhabited settlements, where the people themselves cannot afford to maintain clergy—a work, surely, of no less importance than getting others into the fold. May not this lack of interest be, in a very large measure, due to the character of the appeal that is usually made on behalf of the work? We do not ask for enough—with sufficient boldness, or with strong enough faith in the power of God over the hearts of men!

It is true that money is needed, and in much larger quantities than is now given, if the work that ought to be done is to be effectually carried out. It is a very sad thought that in spite of all the efforts that have been made during the last one hundred years, in spite of the very great success with which God has undoubtedly blessed our small and feeble efforts, through the increase of population "the heathen and Mohammedan population of the world is more by two hundred millions than it was a hundred years ago."* And the wealth possessed by Christians is amply sufficient for all needs, if only professing Christians would give but one-half of that tenth which seems to be the very least that God requires of His people as His due. It has been estimated that "the annual income of the inhabitants of the United Kingdom is one thousand million pounds, and that the accumulations from savings amount to the enormous sum of two hundred and forty millions, or at least two hundred and thirty millions, and yet the income of all missionary societies in the same area is only one and a quarter millions."†

But there is a much greater and more pressing want than money in the mission field. God can work without the wealth of man, but He does not

will to evangelize the world, or to feed those who are already His, with the ordinary ministrations of grace, except through the instrumentality of men as living agents. How shall men hear without a preacher? How shall they preach except they be sent? Even the circulation of the written Word of God is not enough, for many will say, as the Ethiopian eunuch answered Philip, "How can I understand except some man guide me?" And everywhere there is a cry heard that even where the money is ready the men to carry on the work—to feed the flock of Christ that is scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd, and to carry the blessed Gospel of our Lord and Saviour into the distant parts of the earth—are not forthcoming.

I was lately in a town, Port Arthur, in the Diocese of Algoma, that has some 5,000 inhabitants, though it is only of about four years growth, and yet the clergyman resident there has to superintend a district of more than 200 miles in length, with five other stations. The people residing outside this town could partially support at least two more clergymen, but the men cannot be found. The Bishop of Rupert's Land has seven or eight stations vacant for which he has sufficient funds, but cannot find men. In this diocese we have been for a year in very great want of three more priests. And these are but samples of a need that is being felt, we believe, all over the world. It is true that the stipends that are often offered for the clergy are quite inadequate to support a family. But any man could get amply sufficient to support himself. And if there was only more of the real earnest missionary spirit among men—the burning desire to be allowed to spend and be spent for Christ's sake—this would be considered amply sufficient. "Having food and raiment," men, for the sake of the privilege of preaching the Gospel, "would be therewith content." A married clergy have many advantages in settled countries, and in places where there is no lack of means for their support, but there are many places still where the present necessity makes it necessary for the clergy to be unmarried if the work is to be done at all. "The laborer is worthy of his hire;" but I do not know that that hire of necessity includes the support of a wife and perhaps numerous children.

Now, what is the reason for this lack of men? In the first place it cannot be denied that the present divisions of Christians involve a terrible and most deplorable waste of existing energy and power. This, when duly weighed, is certainly one of the most serious of the many evils arising from such divisions. Waste is always sinful. There are thousands of places that could easily be worked by one clergyman, where now three or perhaps four ministers are stationed, and have to be supported, as best they can be, in order to minister to the different sections of Christians. If we look at each place by itself, we do not realize the waste, but take even a hundred places and it will help us to realize what may yet be multiplied by tens if not by hundreds. In a hundred such places there

* "A Century of Missions," by Rev. James Johnston, F.S.S., p. 17.

† "A Century of Missions," p. 31