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## HINDRANCES TO MISSIONS FOUND IN THE WORKING FORCE.

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The whole problem of missions resolves itself into two factors : the *field* and the *force*—the work to be done and the fitness of the workers. Commonly our eyes are apt to be fixed, perhaps too exclusively, upon the woe and want, sin and suffering, of the countless host as yet unsaved, and even unreached by the saving message. Or, if we look away from the habitations of darkness and cruelty, it is to seek inspiration and encouragement in contemplating the heroic lives of saintly and self-sacrificing missionaries.

There is, however, another aspect of the whole matter which has had far too little candid, careful examination. All real power in missions must find its fountain of energy in a body of disciples at home, indwelt by the Spirit of all power. We must have a Christianity and a Christian life *worth diffusing and propagating*, else how can there be any real blessing to far-off lands, however diligent our efforts ? and whence are to come the heroism, the self-sacrifice that make the true missionary ?

With this aspect of the problem we ought to deal intrepidly and conscientiously as in the sight of God. There is danger of a spiritual agnosticism, knowing nothing about our true state. Saul wist not that the Lord had departed from him ; the Jews knew not the time of their visitation ; and the Laodiceans knew not their own nakedness and poverty, blindness and lukewarmness, but thought themselves rich and in no need, at the very time when God was about to spew them out of His mouth as in disgust !

There are four conspicuous characteristics of modern church life which threaten a virtual apostasy, and to which even professed believers are strangely indifferent. The prevailing apathy and lethargy, like the comatose conditions which precede death, are themselves the most alarming symptoms. At risk of seeming hypercritical and having to bear that opprobrious and somewhat indefinite stigma of "pessimism," we venture to give expression to apprehensions and convictions which have grown upon us until they imperatively demand utterance.