

## REFLEX INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS.

Prov. 11: 24-34.

When the beating of the heart sends the blood out through the arteries, it looks like a process that would be fatal to life. It is the very opposite; for by the same heart action a thousand veins are replenishing the heart again, and to make it anew a center of life-giving power. This is reflex action.

A similar process is taking place as the result of missionary activity. One man opposed the sending out of missionaries to the heathen on the ground that we had no religion to export. But experience has proved that the converse is the truth; we will soon have none, if we do not export it. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." (Prov. 11:24.) In forty years the anti-missionary Baptists in the United States dwindled from 68,000 to 40,000, while in the same period the missionary Baptists made the enormous increase of 68,000 to 3,000,000. Religious enthusiasm abroad helped to fill the churches at home to overflowing.

What are some of the ways in which this "reflex influence" is felt?

1. It sets up a higher standard of loyalty and devotion to Christ.

Christ's command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16: 15) is based upon His authority. "All authority is given unto me," . . . "Go ye therefore" (Matt 28: 18, 19 Rev. Ver.). Any Christian who is not honestly trying to carry out this command is really denying Christ's lordship over his life. On the other hand, to obey it is a real test, because it often involves so much sacrifice, and the greater the sacrifice involved, the higher the spiritual tone of the church at home.

2. It is the surest way to increase and strengthen the church at home.

Missionary history is full of illustrations of this fact. In 1849 Pastor Harnes began a Foreign Missionary work in Hermannsburg. Short-sighted prudence would have said, "You should confine your means and strength to your own parish." But he had the faith and courage to obey Christ's command, with the result that before the century closed he had established 59 stations among the heathen, with 68 foreign and 227 native workers. Did his home church suffer? On the contrary, he received into the church at Hermannsburg 10,000 members.

John R. Mott, says:—"There is no better way to quicken the activity of the church in the work right at her doors than to bring before her members the triumphs of Christ in the most difficult fields." Jacob Riis is right in his contention that "for every dollar given for those in need abroad, the spirit that gives it provides ten for home use." The story of missionary trials and triumphs cannot be told without kindling enthusiasm in hearts at home. "Faith cometh by hearing."

3. It produces a larger Christian-

ity, or rather, a larger type of Christianity at home.

When men begin to study the world map, as Carey did in his cobler's shop at Hackleton, they can no longer be "little Christians." They begin to think and pray and live imperially. When Jesus said to His disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and look upon the fields," it was a clarion call to a larger Christianity. Livingstone and Duff and George Leslie Mackay and James Robertson were men of large heart, because they had wide sympathies and a large outlook upon life. As we begin to see the majesty of God's plan for this age—"to preach the gospel to every creature," and fall in with it, our minds and hearts enlarge. One of the things that not only exhibited Paul's greatness, but helped to make him great was his ceaseless "ambition" "to preach the gospel in the regions beyond." (2 Cor. 10: 16.)

4. It furnishes an unanswerable argument for Christianity.

Every Christian life is such an argument, but how much more forceful when it is a life raised up from degraded savagery to purity and intelligence by the simple transforming power of the gospel. Even Darwin admitted the force of this argument, when he saw the transformation wrought in the degraded natives, and he became a subscriber to the funds of the South American Missionary Society.

Kayark, the degraded Eskimo in Greenland, was such a witness for Christ that his life helped to change the whole community. Afeicaner, the "Hottentot terror," as he was called, when converted under the living ministry of Dr. Motlat, became a true helper to the great missionary and a humble and devoted witness for Christ. So we think of Kanavalma II, the "Bloody Mary" of Madagascar, and Pastor Hsu, the Chinese scholar, and Narayan Sheshadri, the Brahman apostle, and Joseph Neesima, the great educationalist of Japan; such trophies of grace as these are a stronger defence of the Gospel of Christ than whole libraries of books.

Thus we see that, when Jesus Christ, after His resurrection, gave the great missionary commission to His disciples. He made it as much a privilege as a duty, a means of grace for the perfecting of their spiritual life, as well as a means of salvation for a fallen world.

The tree casts its shadow when the sun shines, and the failures of our lives stand out most conspicuously when the love of God shines the brightest. But there is no shadow between the tree and the sun! It is not a blessed reflection that no medium intercepts between the believer and his Saviour? We may not be able to deliver ourselves from the remembrance of failures and of incompleteness; we may not be able to sever ourselves from our shadows; but between us and our Redeemer there is only the light and the joy of his countenance.

## PRAYER.

Almighty God, to the hunger of our hearts do thou apply the bread do thou apply the waters of the river of life. Revive the drooping. May they look up where they cannot stand up. Look upon thy servants who have to face the world day by day,—whose life is often a battle, whose strength seems wasted. Give them grace, work in them thy peace, and give them hope. Teach thy servants that all this world can give is but a splendid nothing. Show them that if the whole world were at their feet it would ultimately fall away and leave them without possession and without rest. May we set our affection on things unseen and eternal. May our faith dominate time and sense and may we even now sit down in the kingdom of God. And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.—Selected.

Many a man's fate has been increased by his doubts. Being honest he has investigated the grounds of doubt and has found beneath the rubbish of unbelief a firm foundation for faith to rest on. Doubt often arises from the mis-information which we have allowed to gather over the Bible, as the silt of the desert around the base of the pyramids. The deeper we dig the broader the foundation.

Th greatest man is he who chooses the right with invincible resolution, who resists the sorest temptations from within and without, who bears the heaviest burdens cheerfully, who is calmest in storms and most fearless under menace and frowns, whose reliance on truth, on virtue, on God, is most unfaltering.—W. E. Channing.

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