

Missionary service is a *personal* thing; it cannot be deputed to another any more than it can have something else as a substitute for it. Contributing money in order that others may be maintained in their missionary undertakings, does not exempt the donor from personal service himself. Every Christian is bound to strive to deepen and widen, by the force of his personality in Christ, the Kingdom of God. Of course there is a narrower and a wider missionary spirit. The latter is reached by faithfulness to the former, here as well as elsewhere effective breadth beginning in depth. All missionary power begins (as well as ends) in that unconscious witness* which the Christian character bears to Christ. So infectious a thing is God's truth, that to receive it is to spread it.

As one lamp lights another nor grows less,
So nobleness enkindleth nobleness.

"Ye are the light of the world;" "Ye are the salt of the earth." And it is that part of the character which easily, simply and naturally lays hold on Christ, that first sheds God's light abroad and becomes the preservative element of society. It is further noticeable that the sphere of Christian influence as alluded to by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, corresponds with the sphere of witness-bearing marked out by Him in His parting words before the ascension—"Ye are the light of the world;" "Ye are the salt of the earth;" "Ye shall be witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth." To recognize the fact that Christian life is the most invincible and the most permeating influence that the world can ever know, is an enormous incentive to consistency and zealous devotion. Christian character is the only force which a man can both leave behind him, and take with him when he comes to die. Nothing can withstand it, and nothing can check its career. It is bound to impress all that it touches, and it touches everything—"the world," "the earth." It is not too much to hold that unconscious influence always exceeds conscious influence, the latter reaches the zenith of its effectiveness only when it has been transformed by constant use, into the former. It is in the home that the Christian begins that witness-bearing, which is destined to reach so far.

But the widest missionary spirit is inclusive. It is not a substitute for home work, any more than public life is a substitute for family life.

* (Cf. Emerson's verses on Unconscious Influence:
Little thinks, in the field, yon red cloaked clown,
Of thee from the hill-top looking down;
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon,
Dreams not that great Napoleon
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,
While his files sweep round yon Alpine height;
Nor knowest thou what argument
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent.)

The former is the extension of the latter. The disciples of the first days reached the uttermost part of the earth through Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria; while the disciples of these latter days must touch the bounds of the world through the parish, the diocese, the Church of the nation. Nothing, no matter how fine and striking it may be, can take the place of loyalty to the duties that are nearest at hand. Church life may be conceived of as a series of concentric circles, the innermost of which representing parochial relations, the next diocesan missions, then domestic, and the outermost circle foreign missions. Power to traverse the large circumference comes from faithfully treading the round of those that lie within, beginning with that next the centre. The only way to have power and to serve abroad is to live a deep full life at home, and, let it be added, the only way to have large power and to serve at home is to cast the eye far abroad and wind the interests of a whole world around the heart. And the spiritual force of the foreign mission field is no lying index of the spiritual condition of the home Church; it tells the tale as truly as the pulse reports for the heart. It may be perfectly true that in every other society of men that mere concentration is the secret of power, but it is not so with the Church. Any ecclesiastical unit, be it parish, diocese, province or national Church, which is content to feed itself on rich spiritual food, without regard for the rest of the world, will sooner or later be filled with disease and die. However specious a form self-contemplation may assume, it inevitably ends in ruin, for it leads to isolation; and what is isolation but the most awful and irretrievable of catastrophies? The only true independence is that which is the fruit of interdependence. A given Church may have all the appearance of life—there may be popularity, large property, handsome equipment, and other signs of outward prosperity—but within there is nothing but death. It is just as wrong and just as fatal to hold aloof, on any plea soever, from the common life of the entire Church at home and abroad, as it is to cut ourselves off from the Church of the past by a denial of fundamental truth. The former, quite as much as the latter, is a departure from Apostolic Christianity and so merits the opprobrious name of *schism*.

It is a strange but inflexible spiritual law that those who aim at anything short of the best according to their conception, as God has given them light, will sooner or later come to grief. It is merely a matter of time. The hope of Christianity lies in its boldness. The Church is strong when she is daring, and only then; her strength rises and falls with her courage—victory is faith. (1 John v. 4.)