

Missions—The Y. M. C. A.—and Pre-millennialism.

THE cry has been raised (no new one, by the way) by opponents of the Pre-millennial doctrine, that such doctrine tends to cut the nerve of all missionary and evangelistic enterprises. Several writers have ably replied to these unwarranted and foolish statements, and in so doing have brought forward most conclusive proof that those who hold the pre-millennial doctrine are found to be the foremost in the work of missions. One of the ablest articles upon the subject is from the pen of Dr. Gordon, of Boston, who says:—

“It tends to cut the nerve of evangelistic enterprises’ forsooth; and the commentary of facts is that the noble company of evangelists who are now sounding out the Gospel far and wide, almost without exception, maintain and preach this doctrine—Moody, Pentecost, Whittle, Needham, Hammond, Munhall and many more in this country; Henry Varley, Lord Radstock, George Muller, Wm. Haslam, Grattan Guinness, Denham Smith, Herr Von Schleumbach and scores of others abroad. And among many pastors who are truly evangelistic as well as evangelical, we find such as these, who distinctly avow and boldly preach this faith: Spurgeon, Newman Hall, and Archibald Brown, of London; the late Dr. Mackay, of Hull, author of ‘Grace and Truth;’ Drs. Andrew and Horatius Bonar, of Scotland; Bishop Ryle, Canon Hoare, and the great body of evangelical ministers of the Church of England; Bishop Baldwin, H. M. Parsons, Pastor Denovan, Dr. Kellog, and others of Canada; and Bishop Nicholson, of Philadelphia; Dr. Brooks, of St. Louis, Goodwin, of Chicago, Pierson, of Philadelphia, and many others in America; while among scholars are names like Professor Christlieb, of Germany, who is not more distinguished for his learning than for his ardent evangelistic missionary spirit, and Dr. Delitzsch of like mind and faith. Let the reader run his eye over these names and say whether they appear to be men whose nerves of zeal have been cut, so that they are utterly hamstrung, and unable to obey when commanded to go and preach the Gospel to the lost.

“As to the influence of this doctrine on missionary zeal, the teaching of facts is equally suggestive. We can give only a few.

“The East London Training School, established to fit young men for the ministry, and presided over by the Rev. H. Grattan Guinness, is under strictly pre-millennial teaching. A report made a year or two ago showed that within six years this seminary had given more than a hundred young men to the foreign missionary work. Under the administration of Dr. S. H. Kellog (now pastor of St. James’ Square Presbyterian Church, Toronto), late Professor of Theology in the Allegheny Theological Seminary, a pronounced Millenarian, about fourteen per cent. of the graduates

entered the foreign missionary service, against five per cent. for the fifty years previous, during which the opposite view was taught. In the Princeton Seminary, in the class of 1864, out of fifty-four members, eight came out Pre-millenarians, notwithstanding the contrary teaching prevailing there; and all of these eight offered themselves as foreign missionaries, and, so far as known, they were the only ones of the number who did so.

“The China Inland Mission is under the direction of Mr. J. Hudson Taylor, who distinctly confesses this faith, as do the great body of his co-laborers. That mission, the largest in the empire, numbers 177 foreign laborers, who are almost without exception, under the sway of this doctrine. This may be regarded as a standing experiment as to whether the primitive faith of the Church is destructive of modern missionary enterprise.

“And what patron of missions for the past century has done more than the late Lord Shaftesbury, of London? By his great influence, lent for years to Missionary bodies of all names, by his extraordinary consecration of his property, leading him to give even to the very last limit of his means, he won a place in the hearts of lovers of missions which no nobleman for generations has held. And reading his address at the Mildmay Conference in 1878, we hear him tell what inspiration he had found in the doctrine of the Lord’s pre-millennial coming, and what power he had found in his lay preaching, especially among the lowest classes.

“No; this doctrine is not inimical to missionary zeal. Against such a charge great names rise up to bear witness—Heber, the missionary Bishop, of the Church of England; Gutzlaff, “the opener of China;” McCheyne, the inspiring spirit in inaugurating missions among the Jews, which have had such worldwide extension; Krummacher, the co-founder and first president of the “Berlin Missionary Union for China;” Wolf, the indefatigable Hebrew Christian Missionary in the east; Dr. Duff, who, in addition to his own great labors in India, so mightily stirred Scotland with missionary zeal; and poor Lowrie, Bertram, and with these, scores and hundreds now toiling on the field, who are numbered among the steadfast confessors of this hope.”

To Dr. Gordon’s array of “heroes for the truth,” we would add another line. What organization of the present day has received such unqualified approval from clergymen of all branches of the church of Christ, as has been bestowed upon the Y. M. C. A., and yet from a somewhat extended acquaintance with the work, we feel free in saying that a majority of its most prominent workers are Pre-millennialists. We take the Association of our own city, (Toronto), and looking over its published list of officers and committees, we find its President, 6 Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, Assistant Secretary, Railway Secretary, and at least six of its Directors, are Pre-millennialists. In other words, fully one-half of its