

THE WORLD'S HOPE NOT IN MISSIONS, BUT IN THE KINGDOM.

FROM time to time we have demonstrated that there is no hope of a general world-blessing through Christ along the lines generally held by Christian people;--the conversion of the world by present-day missionary efforts. We herewith supply additional evidences on this subject from highly creditable sources--not with a view to casting disrespect upon all missionaries, but in order to demonstrate afresh that this foreign-mission-world-conversion delusion is doing positive and serious harm to the Lord's true people, in leading to false expectation and, consequently, to misdirected efforts.

Foreign missions were undertaken with two convictions; one correct, the other false. (1) The *correct* Scriptural conviction that the only name by which any can be saved is the name of Jesus;--faith in his sacrifice, and obedience and devotion to him. (2) The *false*, unscriptural conviction that there is no hope for any who die in ignorance of the only name whereby we must be saved. These intertwined theories have been the cord which has drawn hundreds of noble lives to self-sacrifice, especially during the first half of the past century. It is the cord also which has drawn, and still draws, from sympathetic purses, millions on millions of money. And we need not wonder, if the money has, in turn, drawn some into the missionary work simply for an honorable and easy living.

We are not objecting to the sacrifice of noble lives and consecrated money, either; for we firmly believe that lives and money *given* with sincerity have been pleasing to the Lord; even though given under some serious and discreditable misapprehensions of the divine character, and plan of human salvation. We object that this mixture of truth and error is very injurious to God's people, in that it diverts their hearts and efforts away from the truth. It draws them away from Bible-study--away from growth in knowledge and in the graces of the spirit. Instead, it inculcates the thought that the chief object of life for all Christians should be the snatching fellow-creatures from the hands of an angry God intent upon throwing them into eternal torment at the hands of demons. Or, if not this, the making and contributing of money which will pay the expenses of those who do the snatching.

As a result, Christian people "have no time" to study the Father's Word; no time for studying the divine plan, cultivating their own hearts, etc. They say to themselves often, and sometimes, unguardedly, to others--Bible-study! Nonsense, we already *know enough* when we know that millions are perishing-- going down to hell. Bye and bye we "hustlers" who have been less careful for our own spiritual development and for Bible study, but more "on fire" and "burdened" for souls, will have brighter crowns than yours--if indeed you "hair-splitting" Bible students are not rejected from heaven entirely.

But a reaction from so unreasonable a position was bound to come with the advance of intelligence; and it has come. People in general no longer believe in the awful devil-god of the past, seeking for any possible pretext for the torture of as many as possible of his creatures. Reason is asserting itself, and man no longer poses as the sinner's only friend to save him from a malicious God. That is too absurd a proposition for the twentieth century. But men will have theories;--for theories still, as ever, are the basis of action--the rudder of human effort. It has become evident to all thinkers that one or the other of the strands of the original mission-cord is false, unreliable, rotten. Question: Which of the strands will they reject?

We answer that the true one will be rejected; and the false one will be retained. They will continue to believe that all hope ends with death, and will reject the inspired declaration that faith in Christ is the only hope, and this the only name. They have already concluded and are more and more becoming convinced, that although

the name of Jesus is a good rallying cry, especially when calling for missionary contributions, it is *not the only name for salvation*. They conclude, but do not care to declare it in so many words, that "education," "civilization," are, rather, the only names for salvation. And *salvation* [R2862 : page 264] at home and abroad is more and more coming to mean, not a personal relationship to him who is the light of the world, and in whom alone is life everlasting; but rather it now stands for social progress, municipal and national reform,--"social uplift." Thus has the false idea of missions and their conversion of the world led God's people farther and farther away from his Word and plan, which, in their zeal without knowledge, they have been rejecting.

To those who are rightly instructed on the subject by God's Word--to those who lean not to their own understandings, but who search the Scriptures daily to be thereby taught of God--the utter failure of missions as respects any hope of ever converting the world to even the imperfect conditions which prevail throughout "Christendom," is faith-strengthening. Because it demonstrates, it proves beyond question, the truth of the Scripture teaching; namely, that God is not yet attempting the conversion and salvation of mankind in general, but is leaving that great work for the future age, to be accomplished by [R2862 : page 265] the Kingdom of God when it shall be established in power and great glory during the Millennium. It corroborates fully the Bible declaration that the present work of God is the *election* of a Church which, finished, polished and glorified with her Lord and head shall, bye and bye, fulfil the predicted blessings of all the world as Abraham's seed ([Gal. 3:29](#)); fulfilling the petition of our Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven."

The following discouraging reports of missionary efforts we clip from the *Literary Digest*:

"A SWEEPING CRITICISM OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

"The missionaries' side of Christian missions in foreign lands has been very fully stated from time to time in Christian churches and in the reports of missionary societies and conventions. Not so much has been heard as to how these missions impress others, except in the occasional private reports given by returning travelers. *Reynolds' Newspaper* (London) has lately been devoting considerable space to this topic. In a recent issue the results of some investigations by a special correspondent employed for this purpose are given. These investigations cover the missionary organizations in London--the great center of Protestant foreign missions--as well as the results obtained by them in the chief countries of the Orient. In speaking of the great sums collected from the people of England for this purpose, the writer states that the Church Missionary Society (Church of England) has an annual income of about L.404,906 (a little over \$2,000,000). The collection of this money alone costs L.25,843 (about \$129,000); administration costs L.15,917 (about \$79,500); salaries to nineteen clergymen as association secretaries amount to L.5,432 (about \$27,160). The London Missionary Society has an income of about L.150,168 (about \$750,840) yearly, while its foreign secretary, the Rev. M. Wardlaw Thompson, receives L.800 (about \$4,000) per annum, and others receive 'proportionately large amounts.' The missionary income of the Wesleyan Methodists for 1899 amounted to L.133,690 (about \$668,450), out of which four ministerial secretaries received 'large salaries' in addition to extra charges for 'children, rent, rates, taxes, house bill, house repairs, and replacement of furniture, coals, gas, etc.,' amounting to about as much again. The Baptists in 1900 collected L.73,716 (about \$363,580) for foreign missions.

"In commenting on the foreign results received for these vast sums, the special agent of *Reynolds' Newspaper* gives the following facts, based on his study of the official missionary reports:

"What are the results abroad? In India, with its great population of 350,000,000, the number of converts made by the Church Missionary Society, after more than a century's labor, is to-day 35,640, although no fewer than 3,424 agents are at work. How many of these converts are genuine is a different matter. The above number includes the helpless children. In the year 1889-90 there was a gain of 1,836, mostly the babes of converts. Thus it took two missionary agents and a sum of L.113,000 to secure one 'convert' babe, or adult, in

a year. What a farce! This ridiculous result, too, is a falling-off on the previous year. The other societies have even a more unsatisfactory record. Mr. W. S. Caine, M.P., on his recent return from India, writing in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, February 14, 1889, thus sums up his opinion of the attempt to 'Christianize' India: 'Educated India is looking for a religion, but turns its back on Christ and His teaching as presented by the missionary. As far as turning the young men they educate into Christians their [the missionaries'] failure is complete and unmistakable.' A writer in *The Contemporary Review* for February, 1888, gives his Indian experience as follows: 'Christianity has taken but a poor grip of Hindu India. Its votaries are nowhere really visible among the population. A traveler living in India for two years might leave it without full consciousness that any work of active proselytism was going on.'

"And the alleged converts? The Church Missionary Society for 1900 says: 'At present there is a rather low standard of Christian living.' It is the same as was told some years ago by the Rev. Sidney Smith, that the native who bore the name of Christian was 'commonly nothing more than a drunken reprobate, who conceives himself at liberty to eat and drink anything he pleases, and annexes hardly any other meaning to Christianity.' The London Missionary Society in the 1896 report (p.186) ask subscribers 'not to despise the low ideas and motives with which they [the converts] come to us.' And, again, at page 145: 'A very large proportion who profess themselves Christians, and are baptized, are so very ignorant that great care and patience are required to make them intelligently acquainted with the fundamental truths of Christianity.' Among the Malay Christians, which the 1899 report of the Wesleyan Methodist Missions states 'furnish us with the great majority of our converts' (p.76), a lady worker writes: 'When one questions them by themselves, the one appalling factor that forces itself upon one is their unimaginable ignorance. In most, the anxiety for the daily bread is the largely bulking factor for their consciousness.' Extracts of this description might be indefinitely multiplied.

"In China, the missionaries are now thoroughly disliked, although they have not been interfered with unless their zeal has outrun their discretion, for the Chinese, says Professor Douglas in his book on China (p.370), are 'singularly tolerant of faiths other than their own.' In the Report of the Church Missionary Society for 1900 we are told that 'churches' have been organized by Chinese for the purpose of affording protection in law cases, such as the payment of debts. In 1869 our Foreign Office (Parliamentary paper on China, No.9, 1870, p.13) wrote as follows as to Protestant missionaries in China:

"There is good reason to suppose that the animosity which has lately been more intensely shown toward missionaries on the part of the ruling authorities in China is in a great measure to be attributed to the injudicious conduct of the native converts to Christianity....There seems sufficient reason to believe that converts assume and have acted on the assumption that by embracing Christianity they released themselves from the obligations of obedience [R2862 : page 266] to the local authorities and from the discharge of their duties as subjects of the Emperor, and acquired a right to be protected by the European power whose religious tenets they have adopted.'

"And again, Admiral Richards, in an official communication to the British Government (Parliamentary Paper, China, No.1, 1892, p.24), says:

"It seems to be the special aim of missionary societies to establish themselves outside treaty limits; and, having done so, they are not prepared to take the risks which they voluntarily incur, but, on the contrary, are loudest in their clamor for gun-boats, as their contributions to the Shanghai press sufficiently demonstrate....It appears to be necessary, after the lessons taught by these occurrences, that some understanding should be arrived at with regard to missionary societies in China....It seems altogether unreasonable that the societies should exercise absolute freedom in going where they please, and then their agents should look to Her Majesty's Government for protection.'

"The scandals in connection with the present war in China, published in *The Daily Mail*, and other papers, of

missionaries engaging with the troops in looting, and inciting the burning of the houses of the Chinese, must give these followers of the great Confucius --who taught a doctrine in no sense inferior to Christianity, and long before Christianity was known--the notion that missionaries are a kind of barbarian horde, whose real object is to plunder and massacre. The number of 'communicants' in Christian churches throughout China, after half a century's work, is only a few thousands. 'In Ichang,' writes Mr. Little, 'the Bibles that are distributed broadcast are largely used in the manufacture of boot soles,' and, further, that no respectable Chinaman would admit a missionary into his house. In other parts of the country they [the Bibles] are employed to manufacture *papier-mache* tables.

"As to Africa one quotation may suffice. Sir H. H. Johnson, our present Special Commissioner for Uganda, and a man of many years' experience in Africa, says in *The Nineteenth Century*, November, 1887:

"It too often happens that, while the negro rapidly masters the rules and regulations of the Christian religion, he still continues to be gross, immoral, and deceitful....They [missionaries] may have succeeded in turning their disciples into professing Catholics, Anglicans, or Baptists; but the impartial observer is surprised to find that adultery, drunkenness, and lying are more apparent among the converts [R2863 : page 266] than among their heathen brethren.'

And again:

"I regret to say that, with a few--very rare--exceptions, those native African pastors, teachers, and catechists whom I have met have been all, more or less, bad men. They attempted to veil an unbridled immorality with an unblushing hypocrisy and a profane display of mouth-religion which, to an honest mind, seemed even more disgusting than the immorality itself. While it was apparent that not one particle of true religion had made its way into their gross minds, it was also evident that the spirit of sturdy manliness which was present in their savage forefathers found no place in their false, cowardly natures....

"It is not on the spread of Christianity that African missions can at present base their claim to our gratitude, respect, or support....In many important districts where they have been at work for twenty years they can scarcely number in honest statistics twenty sincere Christians--that is to say, twenty natives understanding in any degree the doctrines or dogmas they have been taught and striving to shape their conduct by their new principles. In other parts of Africa, principally British possessions, where large numbers of nominal Christians exist, their religion is discredited by numbering among its adherents all the drunkards, liars, rogues, and unclean livers of the colony. In the oldest of our West African possessions all the unrepentant Magdalenes of the chief city are professing Christians, and the most notorious one in the place would boast that she never missed going to church on communion Sunday.'

"Considerations of space prevent us following the missionary into other fields of his activity. The tale is pretty much the same wherever we turn. But we have said enough to show how grossly deceived the public are with reference to the doings of our missionaries and the result of their missions. Far be it from us to say that there are not good and self-sacrificing men among them. But we assert that the fruit of their energies is so small, and the work left undone at home so great, that it is nothing less than a criminal act of human folly to give any special encouragement to the missionary movement."

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