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I. Literary.

FINDING THE BOOK OF THE LAW.

BY ROBERT WHITTET, SR.

“When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he rent his clothes.”—2 KINGS xxii. 11.

To know not we're amenable to law—
A law we wot not of, nor yet can tell
Aught of its precepts, nor how far they're well
Or ill; to feel no sense of solemn awe
Inspiring rev'rence for their maker, or to draw
Obedience, and then—as does light dispel
Night's darkness, and show the hidden pits that dwell
Unthought of in the way, and every flaw,
Revealing perils that entail defeat—
How startling 'tis, though past the danger point,
To see the risks we've run! and when once more
We feel that safety is assured, how sweet
To let the heart in gushing joy anoint
Itself in gratitude, and faith restore!

II. Missionary Department.

REFLEX INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS.

BY REV. W. McF. ALEXANDER, D. D.

THE missionary movement of the nineteenth century has forced the church to the front as the mightiest factor at work in bringing civilization, prosperity, peace and happiness to the peoples of the earth. The success of missions has been amazing. Savages by thousands have been humanized, civilized and Christianized. This direct influence of missions on the peoples of the earth has often been dwelt upon, but the reflex influence on the church herself rarely. Since it is a law of God as inviolable as the law of gravitation that no one can impart a benefit to another without himself being benefited thereby—"He that watereth shall himself also be watered"; "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you he shall in no wise lose his reward"—may we not then expect the church to have been greatly benefited by her work of carrying the gospel to the people that sit in darkness? Such undoubtedly has been the case. We turn our attention now to the reflex spiritual benefits that have come to the church from missions. These are so many, and so vast and varied, touching as they do the life, the doctrine, the duties, the worship and the organized agencies of the church, that it will be impossible to do more than mention a few of the principal ones.

First. The greatest of these is the increased spiritual life, power and activity of the church herself, resulting from her missionary work. In evangelizing others she herself has been evangelized. She has learned, in the words of Carey, to "expect great things from God," and to "attempt great things for God." And in doing so has been baptized afresh with power from on high. The voice of song and supplication have swelled louder and louder throughout all her borders, and her activities have

gone out into all the earth. She has learned that a blessing follows obedience to the Master's short, sharp, ringing command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," while the church that disobeys does so at her peril! History proves this. The living church has ever been the aggressive, active church—the missionary church, the victorious church, the church that goes forth conquering and to conquer! She it is that prospers and has the presence of her Lord with her. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This was true during the apostolic period of missions when the church grappled with Judaism and entered into a death struggle with the Græco-Roman civilization and conquered. It was true in the period of early mediæval missions, when Patrick went to Ireland and Ireland returned Columba to Scotland, and Iona, in the North, for centuries became a centre from which not only Britain was evangelized, but her missionaries swarmed like bees on the continent, carrying Christianity, culture, civilization and learning into Switzerland, Italy, Germany and France. It was true in the Reformation times. The Reformation has been called the preparation for missions, but rather was it not itself the mightiest of home missionary movements, rescuing the everlasting gospel from the perverting clutches of a paganizing church and holding once again the water of life to the thirsty lips of nations who had lost all of Christianity but the name? Was ever the church more alive than during the Reformation struggle, not in the foreign field, but the home? Protestantism conquered and enthroned once more the Bible, and the Bible alone is the only infallible rule of faith and practice. And it has been preëminently true of modern missions that the live, aggressive missionary church has been the one blessed at home. The arm that is not used withers; the stream that ceases to run stagnates; so the church that refuses to engage in missions dies, intellectually, morally and spiritually. Why should such a church live? It has lost the spirit of Christ, it has no self-control, no self-denial, it is self-indulgent, selfish, and in the kingdom of God all selfishness must come to an end somewhere and some-when. Two men crossing the Rocky mountains, in a bitterly cold snow storm, felt themselves freezing, when they came to a man more unfortunate than themselves, who, overcome with the cold, had given up and laid him down to die. The two felt that they

could not leave him there to perish, so, forgetting themselves, they sought to arouse the dying man, rubbing him vigorously, and half carrying him as they sought to make him walk. They finally succeeded, but the work that was necessary to bring him back to life had driven the frost from their own blood and saved them from death. So the church, in the work she has done to evangelize the heathen, has kept herself alive.

Secondly. Missions have caused the church to realize that she is a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians to preach the gospel unto them—that this is the chief end of her existence. This is the essence of the missionary spirit, and Paul was the incarnation of it. The feeling of obligation is a very strong one. It was this that made Paul feel that he owed the gospel to every man he met, and which sent him over land and sea to preach to the bond and free, barbarian, Scythian, Greek and Roman. Even when in prison he preached the gospel to the soldier to whom he was chained till the Prætorian Guard were more or less evangelized by the imprisoned apostle. Somebody once asked Daniel Webster what was the most important thought that ever occurred to his mind. "The most important thought that ever occurred to my mind," said he, "was that of my individual responsibility to God." It is this feeling of individual responsibility to God for the unevangelized world, whether at home or abroad, that missions have aroused in the church. This is seen in her preaching, her prayers, her songs, her liberality in giving, and in the multiplied agencies she has brought into the field in order to discharge this obligation to God. Now, the mind, the heart, the activities of the church are all concerned about missions; a hundred years ago these things were not in all her thoughts. The great missionary societies, Bible and tract societies, boards and committees of the church, together with a multitude of smaller societies in individual churches all over the land, all working and praying for the coming of the kingdom of God, have been brought into existence by the mission work, thus increasing the organized agencies of the church and setting her in battle array. She is now indeed the church militant, assaulting the kingdom of darkness throughout all the earth. It was in 1831, at Baltimore, that Dr. John Holt Rice, in advocating the cutting loose from voluntary missionary societies, thrilled the Assembly by introducing the following resolution: "*Re-*

solved, That the Presbyterian Church in the United States is a missionary society, the object of which is to aid in the conversion of the world, and that every member of the church is a member for life of the said society, and bound in the maintenance of his Christian character to do all in his power for the accomplishment of this object." That stirred the whole church and brought to the attention of American Presbyterianism, as never before, the chief end of the Church's existence. We execrate the deed of him who, having in his bosom a pardon for the old covenanter, kept it to himself and let him go to the scaffold. And the church—God help her!—has in her hands a pardon for all the world sealed with the blood of the Son of God. What shall be done with her if she keep it to herself and refuse to publish it? "Curse ye, Meroz," curse bitterly! "because she came not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty!" But, thank God, the church now realizes that she is a debtor to preach the gospel to the whole world.

Thirdly. Missions have given to the church her most effective apologetic. Some of us are getting tired of theoretic apologetics. The arguments are well enough to strengthen the faith of those who already believe, but the unbelieving world, standing by and waiting to believe, will never be convinced till brought face to face with practical Christianity. The church must point to victories before she can stop the mouth of unbelief! And where can she show such victories as on the mission field? The living, breathing Christian, now an humble follower of Jesus, who was once a savage, a cannibal, a blood-thirsty, cruel, filthy, obscene, brutish man, who stands there in the court of the world, and with uplifted hand, swears that the change in him was caused by the gospel of the Son of God, is a fact—an argument that cannot be ignored! Infidelity herself must be dumb when pointed to such trophies from the mission field. The work of John G. Paton in the South Sea islands as an apologetic for the truth of Christianity is unanswerable. This is true, whether you direct attention to Paton himself, reproducing the life of his Master on earth, or to his faithful converts in the witness their lives bear to Jesus as their Savior. The same is true of Mackay in Uganda, and of many others.

Christianity has nothing to fear from science and learning; she is the mother and patron of these; she planted the univer-

sities and taught men letters. She has conquered all the best races of history in the past, the intelligent and the progressive; but in the nineteenth century she has been face to face with a greater problem—Can Christianity conquer at the bottom, even as she has conquered at the top? Can she humanize, civilize, Christianize, all tribes and peoples, even the lowest of the low? Missions have committed her to this task; yea, her Master committed her to it when he said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," and if she fail here, she is not from God! Fail she cannot. Already she has reached specimens of the lowest of the low, in the Hottentot, the Bushman, the head-hunter of Borneo, the Fuegian and the cannibals of the South Sea islands, and in the streets and byways and slums of our great cities. The Portuguese can no longer maintain that the Hottentots are a race of apes incapable of christianization. When Dr. Vandercamp went to South Africa, he found over the church door the sign, "Dogs and Hottentots Not Admitted." Christianity stooped to the Hottentot and lifted him from the dog's place to the place of a man. So in Madagascar. Indisputably, she has conquered at the bottom as well as at the top.

When the world asks of Christ, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" he points to the mission work in all three continents and the islands of the sea and says, "The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." What greater proof can the world have than the missionary work of the nineteenth century that verily the Lord has come? We look for no other.

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