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CHRISTIAN  
EDUCATION  
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AT HOME AND ABROAD



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**RIGHTEOUS ZEAL**

S. L. MORRIS, D. D.

*Secretary, Executive Committee of Home Missions*

**T**OURISTS traveling in Moham-  
medan countries are deeply im-  
pressed with the virility and fer-  
vor of the followers of the false pro-  
phet. Five times a day they respond  
to the call of the muezzin to prayer.  
Amid the throng of the streets, or  
wherever else the call finds him, the  
Mohammedan fervently engages in his  
devotions, utterly regardless of the ir-  
reverent jeers of the frivolous. All  
business is instantly suspended and the  
salesman falls on his knees in devout  
worship. "They have a zeal of God,  
but—"

Passengers on railway trains in any  
section of America are handed Mor-  
mon tracts, Christian Science litera-  
ture, Seventh Day Advent propaganda  
material, etc. Mormons religiously  
tithe, build their chapels in city or re-  
mote rural districts, and conduct their  
propaganda for converts amid rebuffs  
and scorn—at their own expense—liter-  
ally going out two and two without  
purse or scrip.

Christian Scientists lose no oppor-  
tunity to speak of their cult, rising  
many of them before daybreak to study  
and give themselves to prayer. On  
Wednesday evenings they have crowd-  
ed Churches and enthusiastic meetings  
while nearby the Christian Churches  
are lamenting sparse attendance and  
listless audiences.

Denominations which claim exclu-  
sive rights and privileges and unchurch  
all others are notorious for their prose-  
lyting zeal—worthy of a better cause.

The zeal and sacrifices of each false  
sect are accepted by the superficial as  
evidence of the truth of these respective  
systems; and they each make converts  
by their evident sincerity and active ef-  
fort. Instead, however, of proving the  
truth of any one of these systems, it  
proves too much; for it would prove  
that all are right—even when they bit-

terly and diametrically oppose and  
contradict each other.

It does, however, raise the serious  
question: Why is the false ordinarily  
characterized by zeal while orthodox  
Christianity is humiliated and hinder-  
ed by the indifference of the mass of  
its followers? Charles Roads in  
"Rural Christendom" a prize essay,  
states that "ninety-five out of a hun-  
dred in the Church never lead a soul  
to Christ, nor have they ever done any  
personal work of a soul-winning char-  
acter." Why?

Only two things have force and vital-  
ity sufficient for aggressive propa-  
ganda. One is the zeal of fanaticism;  
the other is the strength of convictions.  
Mere sentimentality may temporarily  
excite the emotions, but issues in no  
substantial movement. Shall Christian  
Scientists, Mormons, Russelites, So-  
cialists, etc., be allowed to continue  
their fanatical crusade unopposed?

One of the most difficult objectives  
of a denomination is to cultivate loyalty  
in its membership and at the same time  
liberality toward other creeds. That  
is the task set for itself by Presbyter-  
ianism. Its purpose is often misunder-  
stood by its own constituency. Urged  
to study the principles of Presbyter-  
ianism and to loyally support their own  
organization, and at once many good  
people imagine that the aim is secta-  
rianism. Unless, however, there is an  
intelligent understanding of its prin-  
ciples, the result will be indifference to  
truth, producing flabbiness of charac-  
ter, rather than ruggedness and moral  
fiber. Has not the time come for the  
Church to insist upon its membership  
knowing its fundamental faiths, if it is  
to be characterized by *righteous* zeal  
and sustained effort in its missionary  
operations? Is there any method of  
off-setting the zeal of fanaticism by  
strong convictions of the truth?