

Because "He willeth not the death of a sinner, but that all should come to repentance"; because, in one word, "God is Love."

R. GLOVER.

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PROFESSOR HARNACK ON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

PROFESSOR ADOLF HARNACK is probably the most influential of living theological writers. In Germany he holds a unique position, and his theories and investigations have profoundly modified the ideas of many English thinkers. In his "Reden und Aufsätze," lately published, he discusses many matters of present-day interest, and the results he expounds are by no means acceptable to those who hold the traditional creed of Christendom. Especially is this evident in his articles on the Apostles' Creed, for he appears to hold a special brief against the article, "Born of the Virgin Mary," and endeavours to prove that this was not the belief of the Apostolic Church, but an accretion of later date. His arguments have been adopted by those in this country who discredit this fundamental fact of Christian history, and the source of much of the erroneous thought of those who reject the supernatural conception of our Lord is to be found in the vigorous writings of the German Professor. Quite unexpectedly, the second volume of the "Reden und Aufsätze" contains a most eloquent, impassioned plea for Evangelical missions, addressed in 1900 to the General Assembly of the Evangelical Protestant Missionary Union of Germany. Here he appears as an enthusiastic advocate of Christian missions, and the argument of the man who is universally acknowledged to have a unique first-hand acquaintance with the development of the Christian Church must possess great interest for the supporters of foreign missions in this country.

He spoke when European soldiers were marching in China, where formerly only merchants and missionaries worked. A new epoch in the world's history had begun, for it was a token that Asia would come under European control. The rise of Japan was not within the outlook of the speaker; but this does not interfere with the validity of his argument, which concerns itself, in the first place, with the duty and the aim of Evangelical missions. The Gospel must be preached to all nations, not because our Lord and the Apostles gave command or because Christianity is better than other religions, but from the conviction that Christianity is not a

religion to be classed with other religions. It is religion itself, and in it and through it every nation and humanity will be what they ought to be. This conviction gives us the right to universal mission work. St. Paul and the early Christian apologists realized this, and preached to Greeks and Romans a God in whom they unknowingly lived and had their being; they proclaimed a living and crucified Jesus Christ, who was the strength of a holy life. The might of the judgment and the forgiving love of God were set forth, and hearts were prepared for the reception of the spirit of God. The sole aim of mission work should not be proselytism (which was most sharply condemned by our Lord, for ambition, proselytism, discord, and outward observance poison missions at the roots), but the leading of men to be children of God.

The missionary must be content to proclaim the simplest Gospel: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," and "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." He must be acquainted with Christian history, but he must live in the speech of Jesus; he must take his message from the Sermon on the Mount, the beatitudes, the parables, and the promises. He must, above all things, possess Christian love and dwell in the eternal world. He must live his creed; he should be no mere teacher, but a life; no burden, but a means of giving ease from burdens. Christian missionaries have as their message the knowledge of eternal life and the joy of a pure, holy life. They will overcome all opposition by holding fast to this aim, and will bring their newly enfranchised brethren to the great circle of civilized humanity.

Some wish the mission of civilization to go forward, and do not support Christian missions. Harnack has no sympathy with the standpoint of those who think that civilization can be introduced without disturbing the faith of foreign nations, but he discusses the ideal plan of developing the civilization of all people and bringing them into the Christian family. If every European dwelling among heathen were a Christian in thought, morals, and life, there would be no need of missionaries, but, unfortunately, the conversion of Europeans in heathendom doubles the need of missionaries. Even politicians see this, for they maintain that we must bring the best we possess to heathen lands, not only on account of their just claims to give them payment for what we take from them, or on account of the worth and love of man, but also on account of the need of preserving our own existence,

and avoiding the fate of the Spanish and Portuguese colonies. Missions have as wide a field among half-civilized as among civilized nations, for Christianity gives the only civilization that can bind mankind into unity. Other civilizations are guilty of cruelties, and treat human life as chaff. Christianity alone can meet the needs of universal humanity. The roots must be deep if the tie is to be great and strong, and he alone strikes the roots deep who brings to individuals and nations the knowledge of the right relation to God and eternal things. The fear of the Lord is not only the beginning of wisdom, but it is also the foundation for all assured plans. By artillery and factories we may bring nations to our net, but the true conqueror is the man who enlarges the brotherhood of Christ, and makes foreign nations possess the best he has. Only thus will Europe fulfil its world-mission, and missions are not only the affairs of individuals, but the necessary function of Christianity.

The second portion of his address is devoted to the discussion of present-day problems of the mission field, due to the relationship between State and Church and the interference of the secular power in support of the mission work. He fully appreciates the grave difficulties that arise out of the defence of the mission workers in heathen lands, but he is convinced that no mission ought to be abandoned by reason of complications with the secular authorities. Above all, Chinese missions must be continued, for they are of long standing, and it is natural that their progress will be much more impeded in a land of settled customs and a certain development. The sacrifices entailed, although severe and painful, are merited by the results. No appeal for the protection of missions by force of arms should be made, and even all appeals to the home support of the State should be avoided, except when treaties are openly violated. In some cases it may be advisable for missionaries to surrender their rights to protection by their fellow countrymen. In no case ought missions to be undertaken where it is clear that in times of persecution the missionaries will have to abandon their flocks, as the example of the flight of pastors is the worst possible for the converts. As a consequence of these propositions, Harnack is convinced that missions are much better when maintained by private organization instead of being part of the regular work of State Churches. In some countries those missionaries can alone work who rely on themselves and are personally responsible for all they undertake, without help and protection from outside. Peace should be the distinguishing character of all mission work. The message of peace and goodwill is all-important for the

heathen, and the great interest of all missionaries should be the well-being of their servants. The Apostle Paul is the example for all missionaries, for he identified himself with the interests of his "children," he lived and died only for the congregations, and became "a Greek to the Greeks and a Jew to the Jews." Collisions between different lines of conduct will arise in the mission field, but if the principles of separation from the secular power and identification with the converts be adopted, the missions will remain protected and guarded against evil results from conflicts arising through the foreign policy of Europe.

After discussing the mission problem and its environment, Harnack deals with the means of carrying on the work, and divides them into three classes: (1) Personal, direct mission work; (2) mission work by literature; and (3) indirect mission work. The most important of all agencies is the living witness, who delivers the message from God, and by his own life shows to the heathen the power of Christianity. The missionary who goes to foreign nations must go as an apostle; he must prove that he has a divine errand and possesses a divine message; this must fill his entire life. The Apostle Paul was the father of his converts, and they recognised themselves as his children, and without the personal steady leading of a missionary, converts are in danger of missing the right way. Although savage and half-savage people cannot be reached by missionary literature, even here valuable help can be given to the work by the study of their language, religion, and customs. Christianity is the religion of humanity, and it must be so proclaimed that it will preserve and ennoble whatever is good in the possession of all nations. For the successful work of missions, the clear knowledge of the conditions of thought, life, and religion of the heathen is absolutely necessary, and he rejoices to know that missionary societies are making the necessary studies. He pays a very high tribute to the work of the translators of the Bible, and says missions have often made plain the ways of knowledge and served as pathfinders. "The time will come when men will construct the languages of past people out of the Bible translations of the missionaries, and the missionary literature, which was once read by the pious, will be valued as sources of knowledge."

The problem offered by the nations who possess a relatively high culture next comes under consideration. Japan and Mohammedan lands cannot be evangelized by preaching only. The whole armour of history and religious philosophy must be used. Faber in China saw that literary activity in providing a Christian apologetic should be his life-work, and was

convinced by this means prejudice could be uprooted, superstition destroyed, and Christian truth could be disseminated. The spread of materialistic literature in Japan presents a very serious problem. Every year the Japanese receive in the original or in translations dozens of learned works which show, or seem to show, that Christianity is played out in Europe, and is now only an old relic or an historical symbol. On the other side very little literature is provided, and it is not enough to give the proper translations of English or German writings. Every nation needs its own apologetic literature, and early Church history shows us that writers like Justin, Clement, and Origen had to provide literature suited for their environment. The duty of supplying literature of this class is one of the greatest of missionary needs, and we cannot afford to wait for the establishment of missionary chairs in the advanced schools at home. "The handbooks of science and technical instruction are in the hands of the nations; European-taught mechanics teach in all lands; railways and streets are made. All this cannot bring real and lasting blessing unless we knit the foreign people in the network of our inner history. Our inner history, which is given in the family, in right living, in the strict performance of duty, in self-sacrificing work, and in all that which is for us honourable and moral good."

Finally, he lays emphasis on the indirect mission work that is being done. Everyone who carries abroad with him the lessons of good he has learned at home works as a missionary. All those who remain at home work for missions, when they are honourable and true, and stand fast in their Christian spirit in their several callings, for the earth to-day is a great show place, and is closely watched by those who are attached to other religions and follow the course of European life. When they see our home conditions to be better than theirs, and are convinced of our moral strength and brotherly love, a victory is won; but when they think our Christianity is only weakness and masquerade, behind the veil of which is hidden desire of gain and enjoyment, then all direct mission work loses its force. The need of Christian living by Europeans in the foreign field is even more necessary. Family life preserved in its purity, and attachment to Church and schools are an object-lesson to the heathen. Harnack urges on the Missionary Union the duty of preserving care for church, schools and hospitals as an indirect means of missionary enterprise, and especially emphasizes the unique importance of family life being maintained in all its purity. "The wife, the teacher, and the physician will stand as 'go-betweens' between the missionary and the merchant. So will, in little,

home life bloom in foreign lands, and its moral power extend to the wider environment."

In an eloquent peroration he proclaims mission work to be the great agency for the reunion of Christendom. Work for missions brings a reflex blessing on ourselves. The good we possess will be truer because we scatter it, and the more earnestly our eyes are fixed on fundamental principles the more sure our own faith becomes, and the more removed we are from party spirit. Asceticism and monasticism are wrong; no Christian virtue is of any value if wrapped up in a napkin. Everything proves that Evangelical missions have had a great and blessed effect on home Christianity, and a rich stream of blessing has streamed back homewards from the foreign field. Missions have given the stamp to the inner life of many Churches. As missions are helped, the home Churches become stronger, freer, more joyful, and united. The needs are great. The history of humanity marches forward, and we must see that we do not lag behind. To God alone be the glory!

The above condensation of the most remarkable of recent vindications of missionary duty and enterprise gives but a poor idea of the spirit and *verve* of the original. Professor Harnack is a convinced advocate of foreign missions, he is a believer in the world-mission of Christianity, and sees clearly its claims to be considered the only universal religion. But is the Gospel we desire to send the message brought from heaven to earth, and revealed by the birth, life, death, and resurrection of our blessed Lord? Is the subjective impression of the Christ-life, divorced as it is by Professor Harnack from the miraculous elements of the Gospel, calculated to have an abiding hold on the hearts and lives of the heathen? Forgiveness of sins is indeed mentioned by him as part of the mission of Christianity; but there is no doctrine of the atonement, and the vicarious suffering of our blessed Lord is altogether unmentioned. The triumphs of the Cross have not been victories of the preaching of the noble character of our Lord, divorced from the root-facts of His mission. Some years ago as one of the most venerable of our missionary Bishops was leaving the home of an episcopal host, the domestic chaplain of his host, who has since become a Bishop, put to him the query: "To what do you attribute the success of mission work?" "To the preaching of the Atonement," was the reply. We are thankful for the eloquent advocacy of foreign missions by the great Berlin Professor, but he mis-reads the lessons of history if he imagines that a non-miraculous Christianity, without the doctrine of Christ

crucified for the sins of mankind, will continue the blessed victories which have been won by those who found in Him perfect remission and forgiveness of their sins, and proclaimed this truth to their brethren who were in the darkness of paganism.

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### PREACHING: SOME SUGGESTIONS.

ONE need not be a pessimist to admit that few things in this world are so good that they cannot be made better; and if a thing can, then the most elementary dictates of morality require that it ought, to be made better. Of the many things in which improvement is possible, preaching is not the least important. It is common knowledge that we stand in need of better preaching among the rank and file of the clergy. We need to maintain in the Church that high standard of sound learning which was once spoken of as the *stupor mundi*: we need to be at least abreast of the intellectual tide that flows to-day; but we need quite as much the power to interest congregations who—it must never be forgotten—do come to church to be interested, and to be interested in the highest subjects which can occupy the minds and consciences of men.

It is the way with many people nowadays to disparage the sermon, to insist on the obvious truth that the hearing of a sermon is not an act of worship, and to assert—what, indeed, none will deny—that there is something painfully ludicrous in a man's going to church, which is a house of prayer, with no higher end in view than to gratify itching ears. But it is easy to exaggerate that evil. Our Church in various ways dwells on the importance of sermons in the general scheme of the religious life; and, although the hearing of sermons may degenerate, in the case of some, into a more or less innocent diversion, yet experience does show that men are often aroused, helped, instructed, and edified by sermons as by no other intellectual or spiritual instrument.

Clergymen complain loudly of the apathy of people towards religion, of the decay of public attendance at church, of general spiritual indifference; but are they not themselves sometimes partly to blame? Is not the dulness and feebleness of much of their preaching, if not a cause, yet a contributory condition to this apathy? What is needed to-day is not, as some seem to think, less preaching, but more