

The Missionary World.

THE whole of the current month falls into a period of the Church's year peculiarly rich in missionary implication. Holy Week lies behind us, with its remembrance of the finished work for "the sins of the whole world" sealed to completion by the Resurrection on Easter morning. We are in the midst of the Forty Days, when the missionary teaching of the Ministry in Galilee and in Judæa was crystallized into direct commands, the sphere of the Church's service was outlined, and the needed Presence and Power were promised for the task. We draw on, as the month slips by us, to commemorate Ascension Day, when the Son of Man as King of Glory returned to the right hand of the Father, to intercede for us as He waits in expectation for the coming of His Kingdom upon earth. The last day of May finds us remembering Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out upon the missionary church. It will be difficult for men who are using their pulpits to interpret the meaning of our Church's year to fail to bring the great spiritual issues of missionary work before their congregations.

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The series on "The Home Ministry and Foreign Missions" now appearing in the *International Review of Missions* is proving of considerable value. Of the six papers already published two have been British (Anglican and Wesleyan), two American (Congregationalist and Presbyterian), and the remaining two have been respectively Danish and Swedish. The absence of mere theory, and the emphasis on the actual personal experience of the writers in their own congregations and parishes, add weight to the papers. But the striking feature in them is not the record of results, however remarkable, or of methods, however delightful and ingenious, or even the community of problems, however striking, between different denominations and different lands; it is rather the insistence upon the need for personal spiritual conviction in the preacher himself and for living spiritual content in his message.

“Let a minister preach missions as his own personal persuasion, as of the very essence of the Gospel, and instruct his people in the meanings of a cause which lies warm at the roots of his own life and at the centre of his own heart, and apathy is turned into enthusiasm.”

And again :

“Such preaching will set forth the unparalleled glory of the Christian message to the world. The finality of Christ's Person, and the cosmopolitanism of His appeal, the uniqueness of the dynamic of His life and of His spirit, and the correspondence between the ruling ideas of Christianity and the ruling needs of men—these constitute the three avenues of approach whereby the men and women of Christian lands may be brought to see that for all others, as for them, there is no other name under heaven whereby men may be saved.”

And once more :

“The ministers who are creating or maintaining a missionary spirit in the Church to-day have themselves been baptized with the missionary spirit. The system of thought and belief in which the missionary claim is founded is a part of the very warp and woof of all their thinking, it is bound up with their personal faith in Christ. As for themselves, so for their people; they are persuaded that the conversion of the heathen is not an extra task imposed upon them from without, but rather a privilege and sacred duty inherent in discipleship, the acceptance of it being a true test of the Church's faith, as it is a natural and necessary expression of the Church's loyalty to Christ.”

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Great expectation centres round the Missionary Convention—the first of its kind—being summoned by the Central Board of Missions to meet at Swanwick from May 13 to May 16. Members of the Central Board and of the Diocesan Boards—both men and women—are being invited, and a programme full of spiritual promise is being arranged. Every year shows more clearly the great part which Boards of Missions are beginning to fill in the life of the Church. The leaders of the movement are working on true lines in calling the members together with such outspoken desire that their spiritual life and missionary interest may be quickened and deepened.

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The daily press is charged with missionary interest just now. The controversy over Indians in South Africa, and over emigration questions between Japan and North America, raises

problems hard of solution. The spirit of love and self-sacrifice needs to be brought into play, so that though actual difficulties are squarely faced and practical issues are not disregarded, oppression and injustice may be repudiated and redressed. The Gospel principle of looking not on one's own things, but on the things of others, needs to be applied to racial contacts more fully now than at any previous time. New complications will follow the opening of the Panama Canal to international traffic. Nothing but the Spirit of Christ will suffice to cast out commercialism and greed.

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An article in the *Nineteenth Century* for April puts the case strongly as to the New Hebrides, where the joint British and French rule known as the Condominium is working disastrously. Here, as has been the case in parts of Africa, missionaries are standing out bravely as protectors of the natives, and are suffering obloquy therefor. Quiet but influential support is being given to a movement which seeks, by influencing both the French and British Governments, to get conditions revised.

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The arrest of Mr. Bowskill, the Baptist missionary at San Salvador, in Portuguese West Africa, has had repeated notice in the daily press, and as we write, his trial is still pending. The *B.M.S. Herald* for April devotes a large part of its space to an account of the circumstances, and gives extracts from Mr. Bowskill's letters. The real cause of the trouble is the resistance of the people to the attempt of the Portuguese authorities to obtain native labour for the cocoa islands of San Thomé and Principe. The story of the way in which the people turned to the missionary for counsel, and his efforts to maintain peace under circumstances of great peril and provocation, is a fresh testimony to the strength and purity of the influence of the messengers of the Gospel in the dark places of the earth.

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The daily papers, again, have been keeping the need of China constantly before us. The spread of successful brigand-

dage threatens the safety of Chinese and missionaries alike, and the failure of efforts to repress it show how far the forces of law and order are still from holding settled sway. Further, the restoration of the former honours paid to Heaven and to Confucius, the President taking the place formerly filled by the Emperor, have introduced a new factor into the religious situation, the significance of which is very variously estimated. A very able article in the *International Review of Missions*, by the Rev. P. J. Maclagan, D.D., of Swatow (the newly appointed Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church of England), on "The Position and Prospects of Confucianism in China," should be carefully studied. *The East and The West* has also a good article on "The Chinese Revolution in Relation to Mission Work," by the Bishop of Anking. The Editorial Notes in the *C.M. Review* give an admirable summary of facts. One thing is clear—there cannot be an irreligious East. India, Japan, and now China, turn aside from a civilization without religious sanction, a society without religious basis.

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Few things are more moving to the sympathetic student of Indian life than the extraordinary number and variety of the efforts being made by non-Christian Indians to relieve the social distresses of their fellow-countrymen. Many of these efforts are small in themselves, but they crop up all over India, and indicate an awakening conscience, for which we may well thank God. The Reform Movements are foremost in initiating them, but they find place also among orthodox Hindus and Moslems. Not so long ago the social consciousness of India was dormant, and only in mission centres was there any effort being made for the redemption of life and the uplift of society. There is now a great opportunity for the Christian Church to take a foremost place in these movements, and relate them to their true source—Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Kingdom of God on earth. It has been well pointed out that the Gospel not only teaches the need for remedial efforts—such as hospitals, leper asylums,

and orphanages—but is also a great social message which cuts at the root of disorder, injustice and oppression. The eyes of India will be fastened on those who repeat the teaching given by our Lord Himself in the synagogue at Galilee at the outset of His ministry. Only—preaching involves practice, and we need to look to ourselves at home.

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The inquiry into the problems of the mission field initiated by the editor of the *International Review of Missions*, to which we invited our missionary readers to contribute, closed on December 31, and in the current number the first of three papers based on replies received is published. There has never before, so far as the writer of these notes is aware, been so direct and detailed a presentation of the actual task of the missionary, its conditions and demands. Future missionaries and present intercessors will find here a call to strenuous preparation, and missionaries will recognize in this clear statement gathered from representatives of many societies, denominations, and nationalities, the essential unity of the great enterprise of the Church, and gain strength from the world-wide fellowship. At the base of all other problems lies that of "the personal life of the missionary." Quotations from correspondents illustrate this. The closing pages of this article, in which problems are shown to be "less real than God," are full of message for workers at the home base as well as in the mission field. One missionary writes:

"We do not believe that God is in control, and so there are infinite problems as we try to run the Church or the world ourselves, and they are not really problems of ours at all, but His problems. With faith there would cease to be any real difficulty, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, would not err. . . . I believe that when we see with real intensity of vision what the life of faith is, and as a consequence feel with real intensity how full of unbelief our life is both as a Church and as individuals, and frankly confess it as a practical matter, then life will be aglow with the presence of God."

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