

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

The Missionary World.

HOW many missionary sermons will be preached on Census Sunday upon the Census Psalm? The opportunity is a rare one, all men's minds being centred naturally upon a single thought.

"Psalm 87 is a prediction," says Dr. Kirkpatrick, "of the incorporation of all nations into the Church of Christ, and the establishment of a new universal nationality of the kingdom of God. . . . Jehovah holds His census of the nations, and writes their names down in His book. One after another of them He registers as 'born in Zion.' It is the official confirmation of their rights of citizenship."

The individual aspect of this Divine census can readily be illustrated from, to take one society only, the current Annual Report of the C.M.S. Its statistical table shows a total of over 23,000 baptisms (over 10,000 being those of adults) for the last completed year, and its index of special topics classifies a large number of striking individual cases. But the national aspect—the primary one in Psalm 87—is even more moving. Volume II. of the Report of the World Missionary Conference ("The Church in the Mission-Field") has a passage (pp. 6-10) full of force and beauty, surveying the many-nationed Church throughout the world, as it offers its Lord's Day sacrifice of praise "for more than thirty-six hours every week."

* * * * *

The *Church Missionary Review* for March contains a valuable summary, by Canon Ransford, of the Edinburgh Report on "The Preparation of Missionaries." The resolutions of the committee based upon it are a happy combination of the old and well-known C.M.S. principles (which are re-stated), with a recognition of the changed conditions of the Mission-field, and a consequent determination to work on fuller lines. The committee contemplate including more than hitherto in their scheme of training such subjects as the Science and History of Missions; the Religions of the World; Sociology; the Art of Teaching; the Science of Language, and the Languages required in the Mission-field; they instruct the secretaries to

make inquiries as to continuation study for young missionaries on first going out, and as to the value of training colleges in the field; they set forward to consider the possibility of co-operating with other missionary bodies as to the preparation of missionaries; they institute action to secure an earlier knowledge of actual needs abroad, and, as a result, an earlier location of candidates, in order to give opportunity for specialized training; they express readiness to take "full advantage" of any help which the Board of Missionary Studies, when constituted, can give; and they set before themselves a careful study of the whole operation of "recruiting for the Mission-field," whether in the home Church in general or at the Universities. In a word, the resolutions endorse all the main recommendations made in the report, and propose definite action upon them.

* * * * *

What does all this mean for the parochial clergyman with future candidates in his congregation, or for the future candidates themselves? Does it set up an impossible standard, and brush aside as useless the "average man"? Such a misconception is guarded against in the resolutions of the C.M.S.:

"In view of the Society's past experience of the use made by God the Holy Spirit of missionaries of very varying gifts, as shown by the effective and valuable work done by them, this committee will still be prepared to welcome candidates of all classes who have the essential spiritual and other qualifications, and show promise of ability to become missionaries."

A development of training such as the committee contemplate will rather give the "average man" a better chance of "becoming" than he has had before.

* * * * *

Here, as always, we balance ourselves by a study of the working of our Lord in the founding of His Church. The man divinely chosen to bear the knowledge of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" to the Greek and Roman world was Saul of Tarsus, whose gifts of birth, education, training, and temperament fitted him to become the apostle to the Gentiles. But "average men" of Galilee, suited to be elsewhere "witnesses

of the resurrection," formed the rest of the apostolic band. The call took the conditions of the field into view. In each case there was fitness for the special work to be done, and the training given to the "average man" was superb in its depth and grasp. Walk, in thought, the villages and hillsides of Galilee with our Lord. Hear Him lead those humble men, not only into understanding of the written Word, but into the secrets of the spiritual kingdom, the ways and the purposes of God. Watch Him forming—by methods which have never been equalled—habits of thought, and calling out the diversities of each personality. See Him teach humility, strenuousness, independence, self-discipline, sympathy, faith; note how He tests each stage of growth by contact with life and its problems. The method of "average training" for the "average man" was never His. He welcomed—more, He called—the publican and the fisherman, but each He moulded into an "apostle according to the will of God" before He sent him forth.

* * * * *

The man who can respond to training, who has capacity to *become* a missionary, has before him an open door. But the *becoming* should not begin only after an offer of service is made. The "average men" who have become great seldom waited for a society to start them. They worked onward, outward, upward, by the force of their inner life. If Missionary Societies are preparing to justify their raised standard by providing advanced training on specialized lines, the Home Church should see that "average" men and women come forward with a far higher qualification on general lines. It would be easily possible for our Christian homes and parishes to prepare men and women up to the point at which present missionary training too often stops, and leave the Missionary Societies to go forward from that point. This is urged strongly in the Edinburgh Report.

* * * * *

The financial year 1910-11 has closed. Within a few days the Missionary Societies will be face to face with a realization of

their hopes or their fears. The March periodicals indicate how severe the strain in some cases is ; we note with special sympathy the position of the C.E.Z.M.S., which, like its sister society, the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission, has large responsibilities amongst women in the East. Already two societies—the S.P.G. and the China Inland Mission—have passed over to the thanksgiving side. Others may yet follow, for all things are possible with God. Should, however, some societies find themselves faced with deficit or retrenchment, or both, thousands who have worked, and prayed, and given at home will ask with deep concern the question, *What remains?* Their question will be echoed ere the month is out by burdened missionaries and dependent Churches in the Mission-field.

* * * * *

Is **ADVANCE**, with all its light, and hope, and victory, withdrawn out of our reach? Are we at home, who are already sharers in, if not leaders of, foreign missionary work, and our missionaries abroad, driven to “mark time” until the Christian Church becomes conscious of that lack of consecration and self-sacrifice which is a menace to her very life? Are we to be checked in our spiritual outgoing because money is checked in its incoming? Is the spread of the kingdom in the world necessarily hindered because certain methods for its expansion are dependent on silver and gold? Must missionary bodies abroad abandon constructive policy, and the Christians in the Mission-field of necessity weaken, because the dark shadow of retrenchment has fallen upon the work for a time? If the progress of **GOD** is not arrested, our progress need not be. Only one thing has ever stayed His hand—our unbelief. Trusting Him, we may with strenuous faith **ADVANCE**.

* * * * *

But advance has many aspects, and certain forms of it—so urgent that delay seems a mystery—must rightly be postponed. The South American Missionary Society may go forward in its new mission to the Indians of the Argentine Chaco ; some working developments may be possible for the tribes in the

Lado Enclave; but other great doors to evangelistic work must stand open but unentered. Certain opportunities for educational work in the Far East may be availed of quickly; others equally urgent must wait for lack of funds. It may even prove needful, if the expenses of old work are unmet, to withhold for a time some missionaries ready to be sent out. But, if we cannot advance with these new things, *there remain the old things to be made new*. Time is a gift more precious than money. Reorganization and reconstruction, so vital for the welfare of our work abroad and at home, are apt to be crowded out in the onrush of missionary expansion. "New work" is apt to sap the life of the old, because interest, gifts, and prayer gravitate unduly towards it. If the old work emerges to sight in this time of arrestment, we shall truly have scope for **ADVANCE**.

* * * * *

Let us stir ourselves to hope and effort at the call of God, who governs at His will the opening and shutting of doors. We look at the work abroad. If new mission-stations cannot be opened, old ones may be flooded with newness of life. Money has here no place. If additional schools and colleges cannot be built, co-operation may be introduced into existing educational work to an extent that will double its efficiency. If reinforcements must be held back from the mission-field, there is time to train those detained more efficiently, and thus raise the standard of all after-training work, and time to prepare ourselves for wider, deeper service. If the avowed work-policy of a mission is hindered by lack of funds, a prayer-policy, equally thought out and agreed on, can transcend the barriers of money, and press on to conquest for Christ. Is not this **ADVANCE**?

* * * * *

We look at the Church on the Mission-field. Has our money always fostered her life? Is it not possible that, hidden in the pain of this withholding, is God's answer to our prayers on her behalf? A Christian man said recently, speaking of a trial which had fallen on him and on his house: "The cost has

been worth while because of what it has taught the children. Their mother and I laid all our burden before them, and let them share the family load. They rose to it bravely, and it has been ceaseless joy to watch them grow beneath its weight." There may, when the Societies' books are balanced, be need to withdraw the foreign missionary from certain mission-stations, and leave infant Christian communities humanly unled. But if the prayer of faith is called out on their behalf from fellow-Christians in their own land and at home, until their life grows strong and nourished, rooted in the resources of God—is not even this last dread form of retrenchment really veiled ADVANCE?

* * * * *

We look at the Church at home. Shortage of funds concentrates prayer, thought, and leadership upon the problems of the Home Base. To insure advance in income, we must address ourselves—centrally and locally—to advance in deep intensive work. It would cost no money to examine, simplify, and co-ordinate all our home organization for foreign missions, or to train our deputations in effective presentation of the message, or to develop good method in all our local missionary work. It would cost no money to gather a conference of missionary editors for a fearless review of their publications—pamphlets, periodicals, books—calling in as assessors Christian writers, editors, and publishers who have expert knowledge on general lines, to see how far correlated production could cover the whole field of missionary appeal without increased expenditure, and how missionary literature might become that great power which it is not, but ought to be. On these and many other lines the Home Base, on its present restricted income, can ADVANCE.

* * * * *

In a word, it is suggested that the present lack of money for missionary work is a sign-post which governs direction, not a barrier which closes the way. Deep in some hearts lies the

assurance that if by faith we tread bravely in the narrow path before us, we shall find ourselves ere long in the great highway of Advance-yet-to-be.

* * * * *

A paper on "The Indian Bar-Student," in the *Times* educational supplement for March 7, brings one aspect of the international student question before us. Oriental students are pouring into England; the field they offer for Christian influence and fellowship is a large one, and the workers in it are few. The Student Christian Movement of Great Britain has unusual facilities for helping Orientals; we shall do well to strengthen its hands for this work. We call our readers once more to prayer for the ninth Conference of the World Student Christian Federation, to be held at Constantinople (April 26-30). Previous Federation Conferences have been held in Sweden, America, Germany, France, Denmark, Holland, Japan, and England. Each one has left its mark. The twelve national movements comprising the Federation will be represented at Constantinople, a larger number of students being admitted from the Levant. Both the *Student World*, published in New York, and the *Student Movement*, published at 93, Chancery Lane, W.C., have papers of thrilling interest on life, thought, and education in the Turkish Empire. Few realize how much has been already effected there by what Mr. Noel Buxton calls (in his article on "Young Turkey after Two Years," in the *Nineteenth Century and After* for March) "the patient work of the American missionaries." Clergy who want to open a new world of thought and prayer for their people will do well to inform themselves about this Conference, and call out intercession for the Federation and its work.

G.

