

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.

THE month of March has come, and this year, more than ever before in the history of modern missions, have those words a serious meaning for most of the great societies. The month of March has not yet gone, and in those words, more than ever before, does the challenge of a great opportunity lie before a tested Church. The finance of missions in its most urgent form looms up before us, and we are as much impressed by the possibility of a great sufficiency in the mercy of God as by the pang of a great deficit should such come to pass. Looked at very simply and practically, a deficit is probable unless we eliminate the Divine factor, and we need to reason quietly with ourselves to ascertain whether *we*, in our particular mission or society, have any reason to advance which would justify us in expecting that the Divine power will operate on our particular behalf and avert such a contingency.

* * * * *

Let us rule out of count for the moment errors of estimates, lesser faults of judgment whereby at earlier stages certain items, now doubtful, seemed essential in our budget. The most scrupulous care and the maturest experience will not save estimates, as we all know well, from such entries. Let us also rule out—or be prepared to rule out—items which, if we could see as clearly now as we shall see six months hence, we should cheerfully cast aside, and let us humbly stand by our estimates, our engagements, our indebtedness to others, and, “errors and omissions excepted,” ask our God, Will there be enough?

* * * * *

Let us go one stage farther and be prepared to admit that we may be—nay, we are—in need of chastening and humbling; that we have tended to upset the balance of material and spiritual things in our service; that we have so dreaded monetary need for missionaries dear to us as brethren or children that we have clung tenaciously, before all else, to

securing means for their support, giving the material side first place. Knowing that, for our profit, we and, far harder to us, those abroad for whom we are responsible, may have to face financial shortage, let us, in personal contrition for any individual or corporate unworthiness, ask our God whether, in the highest sense, there will be enough.

* * * * *

We shall find our answer far outside the missionary society, far outside the Church. It lies in the Will of God and the Kingdom that is coming. What we have really desired all through the past eleven months was not that our exchequers might be full, our missions free—though we clumsily put it so, because we use so small a range of words and think so small a range of thoughts—but that the Will of God might be done on earth and His Kingdom come. Incomes, however great, are very small, and easy to hide away altogether within such vast prayers as these—prayers, too, not of our own making, but prayers duly “authorized.” We have to ask ourselves, Will *these* prayers be granted? Why, assuredly; Christ taught them, and they are immutably operative. We may take it as certain that through our prayer, our aim, our service, and the sacrifice of our missionaries, the Will of God must be done and the Kingdom be nearer; and the lesser prayer—for what we think the needful money—will be relegated to its own true place as the servant of the Will and the Kingdom, not the determining factor in the issue. These things are so; nevertheless, there is a balancing for them on the other side.

* * * * *

It is conceivable that personal parsimony, personal dread of the future, fear of the cost of further sacrifice, may diminish the total that the income of the missionary societies ought to reach in the purpose of God. Here, then, and now, is the Church's chance. Here are four full weeks in which to give, remembering that sufficient unto next year is the income of that year. Even supposing that we are all less able to give than even we are now, there is time for readjustments in expenditure to

be made in the interval whereby work need not be arrested harshly. But there is no justification at all for holding over for another time, or holding back for "worse days" (which may never come), what ought to be given now. We might easily be found among those who allow prudence to dictate to love—a dangerous precaution when the Church is in need of a true measure for her sacrifice.

* * * *

Both the Church Missionary Society and the China Inland Mission have grave words to say about finance—grave, but not gloomy, and we have a right to know and to share in the gravity. These are days in which grave things appeal, and we would be ashamed to need to be cheered so that we could the better be induced to give. The China Inland Mission, whose financial year has already closed, can speak of signal spiritual blessing; so also could the C.M.S., but with the latter Society there is every possibility that the month of March may be filled with giving, and every apprehension swept away. And this is so because we can never eliminate the Divine factor from the affairs of the Kingdom.

* * * *

The special claims of the Colonial and Continental Church Society should not be forgotten at this time. The current number of the *Greater Britain Messenger* forecasts a considerable deficit. The nation, and in particular the Church, has cause to realize its debt to the Society for its faithful and enterprising work in those Colonies which have rallied round the Mother Country in her hour of need, and also for the courageous and spiritual ministry being carried on by the Society's permanent chaplains in the war zone. The letters telling of chaplains' work at Dunkerque, Rouen, Brussels, and Boulogne in the February magazine are full of interest. The greatness of the opportunity afforded by Continental chaplaincies is strongly stated in an address delivered at a conference in January by

the Rev. E. S. Woods, who has been chaplain both at Davos and at Lausanne, and is now working with the forces.

* * * * *

The opening of the new premises of the C.M.S. on February 1 by the Archbishop of Canterbury was a notable occasion. It was an answer in part to the question whether the war need check the advance of missions. Even though the project originated in time of peace, the ceremony of dedication fell on a time of war, but was none the less marked with a spirit of confident hope. If, as the Archbishop said, the C.M.S. has a peculiar contribution to make in the life of the Church, how much more has it not to make to the life of the world—and at such a time as this! It is sometimes said that the thought of perishing souls has a waning influence on Evangelicals, but it ought to be able to be said that the manifestation of the love of God in Christ has an ever growing power upon them. If the new premises are peopled by men and women who see in Christ the suffering, sovereign love of God for human souls, and if through the offices and across the threshold there pass to the mission-field men and women impelled by that same love, then the new premises will fulfil their great design. On the side of good organization we congratulate the C.M.S. on the completion of a long-needed extension; we have little doubt that the work can grow to fill the new space.

* * * * *

We shall hear much in the next few months of Medical Missions. The C.M.S. has made preliminary announcements of the approaching jubilee of its Medical Missions, which is to be celebrated shortly. We who have watched the growth of the Medical Auxiliary, and have seen the rapid passage to the forefront of missions of this agency, know what stirring records will be available for rousing fresh response at a time when suffering and its relief make a peculiar appeal. In an admirable number, given up chiefly to its own large Medical Missions, "F. L." says in the *L.M.S. Chronicle*: "All this magnificent organization is used to advance and reinforce the work of the

rest of the mission . . . and even after a Christian Church is created, the doctor still stands forth as carrying on the healing ministry of his Master." Medical Missions need no explanation, no advocacy, no defence ; they are their own witness.

* * * * *

There is a danger lest we should overlook typical events in the mission-field in all the nearer significance of the war. We select two or three for notice, each pointing in a different direction. In the Evangelistic Mission in China, led by Mr. Sherwood Eddy, to which we referred briefly last month, we find further food for hope and thanksgiving in fresh details come to hand. In 1896 Dr. Mott characterized the Chinese *literati* as "the Gibraltar of the student world," by which he meant that they were an impregnable fortress. Now, we find in this Mission that thousands of gentry, officials, merchants, students, soldiers, flocked to the meetings, and the great audiences sat in hushed attention to the faithful message of life and truth for the men and the nation of China. The public preparations for the Mission were remarkable. In Peking Mr. Eddy was personally welcomed by the President, the Ministries of the Interior and of War granted respectively a site and materials for the pavilion, the Ministry of Education granted a half-holiday to Government students to enable them to attend the opening meeting. In Changsha the Governor gave the site for a pavilion, and the interpreter was a nephew of the well-known Marquis Tseng, and but recently baptized himself. In Hangchow the largest theatre was lent for three afternoons and the usual charge remitted. Overflow meetings were held, with an attendance of 2,000. In Amoy the Taotai entertained Mr. Eddy at luncheon, when representatives of civil and military officials, and of students, gentry, and merchants, welcomed him. Here, again, thousands assembled in a mat shed, undeterred by the rain that came through, to listen to the proclamation of Christ as the hope of China. Similar scenes also took place at Tientsin and Foochow. Better even than the influence of the meetings at the time are the thousands of

Bible students since enrolled. In Amoy alone over 1,000 men, many of them leaders in the city, signed cards signifying their purpose to study the life and teaching of Christ. Truly the Church in China has a great work to do to follow up this movement—and so have we. It was not ephemeral: it was the result of long preparation, and, as the *Student Movement* says, of “the work of Christian education, the growing recognition in China of the nation’s weakness, the passionate desire of her people to save her, and the conviction that moral power . . . can be found . . . in Christianity.”

* * * * *

The other instance we select has a very different significance, but it also is typical and important. We learn from the *Uganda Notes* that a schism has appeared in the Church for the first time in thirty-seven years. The difficulty appears to have arisen in connection with a certain chief who refused medicine of any kind, and influenced his people to do the same. Such an attitude could not escape notice, owing to the existence of diseases necessitating treatment. The separation of a congregation ensued, and the uprising of a man who baptizes all who wish to be baptized in a wholly irregular way has caused confusion and is a source of anxiety. While it would be more than unwise to overestimate this anti-medicine movement, and its far more serious development as regards baptism, yet it seems to remind us that now, as of old and always, the Church will have its battles with heresies and schism, and that those who labour for it will never be able to shield it wholly from such disaffections. It is no discouragement, but it is a salutary reminder that the Church in Uganda will have no charmed safety of doctrine, but must wrestle its way, upheld by us, against foes which assail its welfare.

* * * * *

The *Missionary Review of the World* is in this country the most familiar of the American missionary periodicals. Its wide outlook and industrious summary of matter from other periodicals have made it welcome to speakers, though a certain uncritical

element in its selection of matter for repetition has occasionally brought its accuracy into question. With great pleasure we note the steady advance of our contemporary towards the attainment of its ideal. It has now, while continuing under the editorship of Mr. Delavan Pierson, a co-operating editorial council, who keep in close touch with representatives of the various missionary societies in America. A programme has been issued for 1915, which indicates the purpose of the *Review* to make a systematic presentation of news from the mission-field.

G.

