

THE
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I.—LITERARY.

A SKETCH OF THE MISSIONS OF THE SOUTHERN
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

In the last issue of the **MAGAZINE** we gave sketches of the Missions in the Indian Territory, in China, in Italy, in the United States of Columbia and in Brazil; in the order of their establishment. In the present paper we propose to sketch in a similar way the other missions of our Church. We shall present these, also, in the chronological order of their founding; and accordingly begin with

THE MEXICO MISSION.

This mission was opened in 1874. During the preceding year the Rev. A. T. Graybill had, with the approval of the Executive Committee, explored Northern Mexico with reference to the establishment of a mission somewhere along the borders of the Rio Grande. Matamoras was fixed upon as the site of the mission. And in 1874 Mr. Graybill accompanied by Mrs. Graybill, returned to this point to initiate what has since turned out to be a very fruitful work. Linares was opened in 1887, and Victoria in 1892. Hence there are now three main branches of the Mexico Mission.

The following laborers have been employed in the Mexico Mission, viz.: The Rev. A. T. Graybill, 1874—, Mrs. Graybill, 1874—1876; Rev. J. G. Hall and Mrs. Hall, 1877—1895; Miss Hattie Loughridge, 1879, who became the second Mrs. A. T. Graybill, 1880—1889;* Rev. L. Walton Graybill and Mrs. Graybill, 1881—1882; Miss Janet Houston, 1881—; Miss Anne Dysart, 1882—; Miss S. E. Bedinger, 1886—; Miss C. V. Lee, 1890—; Miss Minnie Gunn, 1892—; Miss Ella Cummins, 1894—: Mrs. A. T. Graybill, 1895—.

* She died in the field.

powerful agents in arousing and keeping alive missionary zeal in his congregation. It would be a wise and paying investment to purchase one or two of these books yearly and circulate them systematically among the families of the church.

Third. May not the pastor find in the study of missionary biography the solution of the ever present problem of his monthly concert of prayer? If he has studied the fields thoroughly, may he not well supplement that by a study of the lives and characters of some who have labored in those fields?

“ARE FOREIGN MISSIONS A MISTAKE?”

The recent massacre of Christian missionaries in China has given rise to an animated and heated discussion of the subject of Foreign Missions, especially through the British secular press. Most of these articles are thoroughly radical; and some irreverent, to say the least. They have come from all classes of society and hence represent a popular and wide-spread feeling. These authors have set themselves up to pass judgment upon a question which it is almost sacrilege to utter: Are Foreign Missions a Mistake? In a review of these articles in the Literary Digest (Sept. 14th, p. 19) it is stated that “in the majority of cases Christian missions to the heathen seemed to be regarded as a failure.” The one point upon which they all rely is “the expenditure of blood and treasure is far greater than the results of the mission work warrant.” This is their stronghold. Furthermore, they argue that the money should be spent at home and not abroad.

We are sorry to say that this feeling is not confined to the British Empire. America is full of it. Our own church is rife with it. Members of our own denomination urge these points. So we shall consider them and try to answer them.

Let us consider them in the order mentioned. The first objection to missions then, is, when carried to its logical conclusion, nothing more or less than this—*Foreign Missions are too costly.* In order that we may settle this point we ask this simple and direct question: What is the sole aim of this work? In one word it is the salvation of the world; or, if we like the expression better, the salvation of immortal souls. This is the one true aim of missions. Of course there is an aim to uplift the family, to raise woman to her proper sphere, to further education, etc., but these are subordinate to *soul*

saving. Having defined the work to be done, the end to be attained, there remains a practical question of cost. What outlay must be made to gain this end? What must be sacrificed to save souls? Money and treasure certainly—possibly blood and life. An enormous outlay, you say. We admit it. But what is money worth? What is life worth? *What is a soul worth?* An answer to all these is found in one other. Christ propounded the greatest question on investments, stocks and bonds that any man ever had to answer. Hear His great problem in profit and loss—"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Nothing, *nothing*, NOTHING. Christ estimated the value of *one* soul above all the world and everything in the world, and we cannot change that valuation. So we assert that no outlay is too great for Foreign Missions. We go further. If the church were enlarged and enriched so that she possessed all the wealth of the world and every life *except one*; and if by giving up and sacrificing all, she could save that *one* soul, it would be her duty to spend every dollar of her treasure and lay down every life for the *salvation of that one soul*. A high standard, you say. Yes; Christ's standard. Yes; if one soul has been saved by Foreign Missionary effort, that work is a grand success. Money and life have been nobly and divinely expended.

We now turn to the other objection. Do we not owe the first debt to Home Missions? it is asked. Before answering this we wish to emphasize the fact twice made in THE SEMINARY MAGAZINE of September-October, 1895—Home and Foreign Missions are one and the same. These designations are simply conventional and a difference does not *really* exist. A soul is a soul and they are all equal in value; whether in heathen China, superstitious India, dark Africa, civilized England or free America. Those that ask this question seem to doubt this, but it is true. Still there is a question of expediency, perhaps to some minds of obligations; Should we not begin at home? Perhaps we would answer this in the affirmative were it not for some facts of inspired history. In the Acts we read of Paul with helpers going out "to the regions beyond." They passed by fields near at hand and went further. Why? Suffice it to say that the Spirit of God was their guide. He inaugurated the move. "The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (13:2). He conducted the enterprise and directed their movements—"They assayed to go into

Bythinia: but the Spirit suffered them not" (16:7). But the best practical answer not drawn from Scripture ever given to this objection was recently given by a ruling elder of our church. "The man," says he, "who sees any difficulty here, is simply trying to shirk his duty. He will not contribute to Foreign Missions because he wishes to help in the Home work. When you call on him for Home missions he has some other enterprise."

One other objection should be met before closing this discussion. It is to many minds an honest difficulty. Do the heathen really need the Gospel? There is a great number of most excellent Christians who say "no." They see only one side of God's character. To them He is only a God of love. He is too good to torment in hell souls that never had the Gospel. But he is also just. He will in no wise spare the guilty. Since Adam was the federal head of the race through him the whole world became guilty in the eyes of God and all must have perished had Christ not intervened. (Ro. 5:12.) "There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." Surely, then, they need the Gospel.

This opposition to missions, to our mind, has a deep significance. It portends danger and disaster to the church of Christ. Two things have always gone together since the church was organized under the new dispensation. These are missionary zeal and spirituality in the home church. An examination of the facts of history proves this true. It would be profitable as well as interesting to examine into this fully in this article, but it has now gone beyond the prescribed limit. Let us, however, look at one period by way of illustration. Take the Apostolic age, and what do we find? At home the churches were adding daily to their rolls, caring for the widows, and doing in all respects a noble work, while Paul and his helpers went "everywhere preaching the Gospel." In contrast note the "Dark Ages"! No life, no love at home; no missionaries abroad! Which precedes and which follows we can scarcely say. They are so closely linked together that they cannot be separated. What must be the result then of the present attitude of the church to this great work? Our zeal for missions is growing lukewarm. Does this not mean formalism, lukewarmness, spiritual death in the church? We must believe it, or else the history of the past is no longer a valuable and competent preceptor.

A consideration of these things lays us under obligation to carry the Gospel to the end of the world. But there is a greater reason still why we must do it. Christ's last words were full of Foreign Missions.

He commanded us to go into "all the world." This is the order; shall we disobey it? This is the trust; shall we prove recreant to it? This is the duty; shall we shirk it? No; a thousand times no. With God's help we will "go into ALL the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

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