

A Large Factor In Success

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WE, as missionaries, need to have behind us a constituency who will support us abroad. I do not mean friends who will support us financially, though that is useful enough, no doubt. But there is something much more important. I thank God that without realizing the full importance of it, I was led to do something in this way before I went out to Arabia. We are prone to look on ourselves as doing the work of the Church in the foreign field but that is not the way that God looks at it. If we stand alone out there, we will accomplish little, but if we are one of twenty, one out there, and the other nineteen working with us, at home, God will accomplish a great deal through us.

In Arabia, after a long effort we succeeded in getting permission to begin work in Kateef, a town on the mainland. This was an advance step of great importance. I took my instruments and medicines and assistants, expecting to be able to do anything I could do anywhere. We were received enthusiastically and the first day we had over two hundred patients. We tended all of them we could, and the others came back the next day, with two hundred new ones. Things went on in this way for four or five days. We were so popular that it was uncomfortable. We had visions of a permanent establishment in Kateef, and in two of the neighboring towns as well, thus making a circuit covering the whole district.

Then a change came. I was invited to come and interview the chief.

"What is this that I understand you do in the mornings before you treat the sick people?"

"Before we treat the sick people," I replied, "why, before we treat the sick people, we have prayers."

"Do you have them in Arabic?"

"Yes."

"You can't do that in this town," replied the chief.

"Well," I said, "we always have prayers before we begin work. We consider that we heal no one. It is God who heals, and we always have prayer before the work begins. No one is compelled to come. The doctor does not know or want to know who comes. Those that come and those that stay away are treated alike. But we could not begin the work without prayer."

"No," said the chief, with a snap in his voice, "You can't have them in this town."

"In that case," I said, "we will have to give the work up, for we do not desire to carry it on without prayer."

"Very well," was the reply, "give it up then. You can leave here to morrow."

The situation looked hopeless. Kateef was apparently slipping out of our hands, and there was not a thing we could do to hold it. I thought of Luther's prayer. "Lord, Thou art imperiled with us." That afternoon, a little after 1 returned from the reception room of the chief, a man came for treatment. I told him that I was unable to do anything for him because the work had been officially closed down, but if he would get the chief's permission, I would be glad to do what was necessary for him. He left to seek the chief and was followed by another, and he by twenty or more who went off for special permission that afternoon. The boat was to leave the next day, and we packed up to go in it. But in the morning, Mahmoud, the Grand Vizier of the chief came to see me.

"You did not understand" he began, "The chief wants you to remain, but to work without the prayers."

"Yes," I said, "we understood well enough, but we do not feel that we can do that."

"Well," said Mahmoud, "don't you think you could pray in your upstairs room and not come down till you were done? Would not that do as well?"

"No," I said, "I do not think it would be the same."

"Well, anyhow," said he, "surely God knows you want to pray, and He will take into account the fact that the chief has forbidden it, so it will be all right."

"No," I said, "we do not feel that it would be the same."

"Oh, well," said Mahmoud, "don't you understand, go ahead and have your prayers, and say nothing more about it."

So we stayed in Kateef, and had prayer before the clinics, and a day or two later, when I visited the chief, he gave me five cups of coffee in succession, to show the great esteem in which he held me, and everything went beautifully from that time on. If we had been driven out of that town, I suppose it would have been years before we could have returned. That battle was not won by the missionary in Kateef. It was the nineteen working at home that helped to change defeat into victory. Other missionaries have experiences like that, and often much more critical.

The Growth of the Missionary Idea

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THE great missionary problem is clearly stated in the last three verses of the Gospel by Matthew. Christians of the early centuries accepted those words as their Master's command and promise, and worked zealously and efficiently to accomplish the task laid upon them. Many centuries passed before the churches of Christ began slowly and separately to undertake the duty laid upon them.

Examine the changes that have taken place in the world field and in Christendom's conception of the duty imposed by our Lord's last command during my own missionary life, 1860 to 1920.

Sixty years ago when my missionary life began at Constantinople the great Protestant Foreign Missionary Societies of America and Great Britain had already a history of about half a century. At that time important work had been begun and results achieved in the Near East, in India, in China, in the islands of the Pacific, and in South and West Africa. Missionary effort in China was then confined to certain quarters of half a dozen seaport towns. Today the whole of that land which contains one-fourth of the human race is wide open to missionaries, and a very large part of that population has heard God's message of salvation through the living messenger or the printed page. Sixty years ago Japan had not yet been entered by missionaries. Korea was wholly unknown to people of the West. Central Africa was as concealed from our view as is the reverse hemisphere of the moon. Look at Japan, at Korea and at Uganda today.

Even as late as sixty years ago only a small fraction of the membership of the evangelical churches of Christendom took an intelligent interest in the work of foreign missions. The hope and aim of even the missionaries themselves were far from rising to the level of the command of Christ to "teach all nations." Their chief hope was to save some souls out of the city of destruction before the final catastrophe.

The change which has taken place in the Christian conception of missions is well nigh revolutionary. The aim accepted now almost universally is to *disciple all men*. By Christian education, by industrial and social reform, by the appeal of the life and teaching of Christ, missionaries endeavor to lift men to the plane of true disciples of Christ, to bring into individual and national life everywhere the regenerating power of the Spirit and so to cooperate in God's plan to save the world.

Sixty years ago missionaries were regarded by the governments, and by the great mass of peoples of eastern lands, as unwelcome intruders, or at the best as well-meaning persons with plans altogether impracticable and futile. Merchants and travelers from the West generally regarded them with contempt, if not with hatred. Today the work of the missionaries is everywhere regarded as of great beneficent value to the peoples among whom they live. Their influence on the side of justice in governmental administration and public welfare is profound and far reaching. In the Near East, for example, during the last thirty years, the work of missionaries in education, in scientific healing, in systematic relief of suffering in times of famine, pestilence and war has won the confidence and love of men of all races. There are now at work on the solution of these problems of the Near East a thousand men and women of ability and experience. The leadership is confessedly in their hands.

When foreign missionary work was systematically undertaken by evangelical Christendom more than a century ago, each branch of the Church worked independently of every other. Each carried to the foreign field its own denominational policy, creed and forms of worship, and established churches near one another which were often rivals if not antagonists.

About sixty years ago evangelical missionary societies adopted what was called "comity" in their relations one to another in their work abroad. This meant the elimination of unfriendly rivalry and the cultivation of friendly relations between missionaries of different societies and the members of different native churches. But "comity" was far from the *unity* of our Lord's great intercessory prayer. (John 17). Nor did comity eliminate the carrying of Western denominational divisions into Eastern lands.

Within the last twenty years there has come into challenging prominence, first on mission ground and then among the home churches under the leadership of the officers of the great missionary societies, the idea of Christian unity of service clearly announced by our Lord Himself. This has resulted in concerted action by the missionary societies of North America, and by the American and British workers on mission fields. Better than that, the evangelical churches of China, India and other lands, are consolidating into national churches on a basis suited to their own conditions and needs, freed altogether from Western limitations.

What now does all this signify for the future of Christianity?

(1) It gives vital significance to the name *Christian*. To be a Christian is to have a character and do a work similar to the character and the work of Christ. Read what the four Gospels tell us of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ often enough and deeply enough to imbibe their spirit as St. Paul had done when he wrote the 13th chapter of First Corinthians. The name Methodist, or Epis-