

The Missionary World.

OVER against the sundering influences of the war it is encouraging to set the growing tendency, which is specially manifest in connexion with foreign missionary work, to undertake together work which used formerly to lie untouched because it was beyond the grasp of a single organization, or else to be attempted in a partial and unsatisfactory manner. This fact of missionary co-operation, whether at the home base or on the mission field, has extraordinarily wide implications, though it is perhaps well that the task of exploring them all should be postponed until the final results of work undertaken in co-operation have been still further tested and defined. Nothing but good can, however, accrue from a simple statement of some directions in which missionary co-operation has already developed and the subjects on which it is mainly engaged.

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In the mission field there is almost universally conference between the workers of various organizations, not only on great occasions such as the Shanghai Missionary Conferences or the conferences for workers amongst Moslems at Lucknow and Cairo, but also at stated intervals in smaller areas or for special forms of work. In South Africa there is a general missionary conference, the meetings of which have been suspended during the war; an interesting general conference for missionaries on the Congo was, however, able to meet a few months ago. In China, educational missions have a council in nearly every province and a central association which serves every mission throughout China. Medical missions meet in the same way, both among themselves and with qualified Chinese doctors who are not necessarily Christian. There is a vigorous educational association in South India combining the work of all missions. These organizations bring workers of various denominations and societies together for the discussion of their common work.

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Since the visit of Dr. John R. Mott to Asia, and as an outcome of the conferences held there by him following on the World Missionary Conference of 1910, new co-operation in work has developed in Japan, China and India. In each of these countries a committee

or council has been formed with a membership of men and women, both foreign and Oriental, to consider the larger problems of missionary work and take steps in common towards their solution. These bodies have created an extensive co-operative organization which is dealing efficiently with such subjects as social conditions, Christian literature, Christian education, the training of the ministry, prayer and Bible study, and many other matters. In India and in China a survey of the country has been begun, in order that the disposal of missionary forces may be made more effective, and an important statement laying down the principles of missionary comity has been issued. These committees arising out of the Edinburgh Conference command the confidence of the best missionaries in Japan, China and India, and are in the van of the missionary advance.

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Still more significant is the growing desire for co-operation among the Christians in Eastern mission fields. India, China and Japan have recently organized great evangelistic campaigns in which Christians of various denominations have united to present the Gospel to their neighbours. Central and local committees have represented all denominations, and the common effort has been rich in results. Special pains have been taken to put those reached through the meetings into touch with the various Christian bodies to which they elect to belong. Abroad, as at home, it is unmistakably clear that the spirit of co-operation which is manifesting itself in missionary work is inter-denominational and not undenominational in its effects. It builds up Church life while it strengthens brotherhood and fellowship between the Churches.

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The growth of co-operation in missionary circles at home, while less apparent, is no less real. There is nothing in Great Britain quite comparable to what is being set on foot in America, but none the less co-operation on sound and deeply based lines is taking form and every year sees new developments. The Conference of Missionary Societies in Great Britain and Ireland is becoming a body of great importance, truly representative of the Societies which nominate its members. Its yearly meetings are occasions when broad questions of policy or outstanding problems are discussed, and from its deliberations mature recommendations are taken back into

the societies' committee rooms. Its three-days' session in June has become one of the most important missionary fixtures of the year. It has a wide net-work of committees, all representative in their membership, dealing alike with questions of foreign administration and of propaganda work at the Home Base. Committees on Christian literature and on Christian education are working in concert with similar committees in America and in the various mission fields, the recruiting of missionaries and their preparation, the provision of high-class literature for use in the home Church and many other subjects are being considered and dealt with co-operatively. These committees have naturally only advisory powers, but again and again the societies have proved ready to entrust them with special tasks involving executive action, on the ground that many larger missionary tasks must be done together if they are to be done at all. The highest manifestation of the value of such co-operative work has perhaps been found in the Committee on War and Missions, which has rendered signal service to all missionary organizations in the critical situations arising in several mission fields.

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The vital import of all this lies not primarily in the work done, though this is high in quality and large in amount, but in the spirit which is brought to birth. Through common service and common thought the Church at home and abroad is being prepared for that unity which will one day convince the world of the Divine mission of Him who came forth from the Father and dwelt among men. Into that spirit every missionary worker in town or country parish may enter, and by it every vicar may be inspired. Before it local jealousies between church and chapel, home and foreign work, one society and another, will fade and pale, for it has been truly said that "co-operation is a moral problem," and when the spirit of men is right, they can stand in service side by side. Thus like a lily among thorns this beautiful thing has grown up in war-time, and we thank God and take courage.

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We have already referred in these notes to the proposal that there should be an assistant Chinese Bishop, for which important office Archdeacon Sing, well known to C.M.S. friends and supporters, has been selected. Now we learn from Japan that Bishop

Cecil, of South Tokyo, proposes to resign his bishopric in order that a Japanese may be appointed as diocesan Bishop, his English predecessor working under him as suffragan. This, as the *C.M.S. Gleaner* well suggests, is "calculated to captivate the imagination of the Japanese people." It is a demonstration, such as has long been needed, that high office in the Church does not depend on race, but on personal fitness for spiritual leadership, and there are Indians, Chinese, and Japanese already in the ministry who are qualified by education, character, experience of life and spiritual gifts for positions not only of independence but of leadership. A few more instances of action such as that taken by Bishop Cecil will arouse western Christians to realize the great possibilities breaking into life in the Churches in the mission field, and will convince the members of those Churches that we have no desire to fetter the expansion of their powers.

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The political situation week by week brings forward new claims for missionary intercessors. The eastward trend of German influence at the time of writing reveals fresh needs in Armenia, where the Turks seem likely to dominate again, at least for a time, and where there is a threat of recurring massacre. The situation in Persia is also compromised by the Russian collapse, and beyond lies the great closed land of Afghanistan. Central Asia, with the nomad Moslem tribes of Turkestan, may also be affected by the temporary subservience of Russia. Day by day he who reads the war news with a missionary outlook will find fresh call to pray that through all political happenings a way may be opened for the Gospel, and that the spiritual welfare of distant peoples may be safeguarded even in the midst of war.

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There is no end to what we may learn from one another. In the March number of a small magazine issued by the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society for its workers, there is a note on a Question Conference held last winter at Birmingham which proved a great success. A capable deputation connected with the Study Department went down as leader, and local workers organized speakers to answer the following thought-compelling questions:

1. "Our Foreign Missionary organization is practically perfect. We have had an increase the last two years. To introduce Missionary Education

would interfere with the details of our programme." So says complacent North-countryman. Answer him respectful but firmly.

2. Zealous says: "The children of our neighbourhood are an unworked gold mine. We ought to get far more collecting done by them." What would be the child-lover's attitude towards this policy?

3. "The Society Class is the place for improving our spiritual life in fellowship. Foreign Missions, therefore, are out of place there." Is this brother right or wrong, and why?

4. Evangelist prayed for "the millions of China." And one said "How can you pray for millions of people? What really was in your mind?" What do you think Evangelist should be able to say?

5. Do you find it easy to use the Helpers' Union Manual? If not, is the Manual wrong, or are you? If you do, do you think you are using it in the right way?

6. If it could be proved that an average Chinaman is a better man than an average Englishman, would it then be unnecessary or impertinent to send missionaries to China?

7. A local preacher says there are heathen enough at home, and he believes in home missions. Lucinda says she does not care for church work, but she is an enthusiast for foreign missions. Philistine says that as a hobby he prefers golf. In three minutes bring them all to a better mind.

The form of some of the questions would need perhaps to be altered for Anglican use, but could a better programme be devised for a parochial missionary meeting or a Gleaners' Union Branch?

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Sunday School workers in Great Britain will need to move faster if they are not to be outdone in method and in practical service by some of the Sunday Schools in the mission field. Nonconformist missions are ahead of Anglican, American ahead of British, and workers belonging to the native Churches are claiming a foremost place. Sunday School lessons and other literature, and even up-to-date apparatus, are being produced and adapted to Eastern needs. Part of the training given in these Sunday Schools consists in calling out sympathy for others in need. We are accustomed to children in our own Sunday Schools giving in aid of other children in non-Christian lands, but it will be new to many that a year ago Indian Sunday School children raised a fund of over Rs. 24,600 on behalf of Belgian children. Some of the offerings came in the form of rings, garments, handfuls of grain, goats and fowls. This year an appeal is being made for the children of blinded soldiers and sailors in connection with Sir Arthur Pearson's work, and a large response has been awakened in Indian Sunday Schools.