

## "SPEAK HOME TO THE HEART"

BY A LAYMAN.

It would be to beat the air to present arguments in order to prove that Missions should be supported. The conscience of humanity has long since settled that point. The great body of missionaries in the field and the enormous output of scriptures circulated in about 650 languages or dialects, at a loss of probably over 50 per cent. cost, is the Christian world's answer to the charge that Christianity is playing with missions, or that, if the Church really accepted the trust her Lord had confided to her she would be more in earnest in observing his mandate. Although the charge, levelled against the Church, is ungrounded, she constantly appeals to her members to do more. The harvest is whitening and the laborers few.

Few laymen can be quite satisfied that they are really pulling their weight in the aid they are giving to missions. To say that "the other fellow, in better circumstances, is doing his bit, and therefore I need not bother", is hardly in line with what we really can approve. Civilisation has made every white person a heavy debtor to the native races, in that, inevitably possibly, it has so injured them, in uprooting the good that they had, while greatly handicapping the better good that was being implanted. Some, greatly daring, put the blame for the existence of savage peoples, and of native ignorance, superstition, and cruelty, upon God, who they venture to say must have willed to have it so.

A few laymen, when appealed to for help, evade the issue by a series of questions. 'Why' is forever on their lips. Why is sin possible? Why should there be any suffering, cruelty, or superstition? So, even through those who might know better querulous accusation against the Most High God goes on, and men turn away from the good that they might do, because they fail to see that the better path for limited knowledge is acceptance, with thanksgiving, of what is revealed. Man has been thought worthy to be enrolled in the fight against evil, and so to be a fellow-worker with God. He is placed upon the earth under conditions that he can improve; under limited knowledge that he can increase; and under difficulties, that with divine aid, he can overcome.

All races are located in families—many Fatherhoods. God, Himself, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged, is the head of each Fatherhood. God has established leadership in His Son. Christ is the head of the universal Church which is his body. The



The Melanesian Brothers who have answered the call of Christ to go and teach the heathen.

body cannot move without the head. The head cannot act without the body. The Church paralyses the work of its glorious Head, when unable to give effective aid in the extension of His kingdom.

But what has this to do with the ordinary layman who, giving the cold shoulder to appeals for aid to missions, does his day's work faithfully; pays his way; and makes provision for his family. Much every way. Admittedly he is a good citizen: he has fulfilled his duties to his earthly king, his nation, and those of his own house. If life began and ended here, and Christ had not taught—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself", there could be no further calls made upon him. But life did not begin here: neither will it end here. The command of our Lord still stands. The origin of life is not revealed. No one knows under what conditions life beyond the grave will be lived. Opportunities refused in this life may never recur. "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren ye did it not to me."

I wish it were possible to do away with mathematics and quotas in the collection of funds for missions. The fact that a diocese is assessed for a particular sum does suggest a limitation of duty. That we have to resort to business methods is not of course matter for regret. But one could wish that the springs in aid did flow voluntarily—rising waters, waters to swim in. There can be no limit, fixed from without himself, as to what money any Christian can give in the advancement of the Kingdom of heaven.

There are a happy few who have been so fortunate as to have heard that an action or word of theirs in the long past, quite unknown to them, had enabled another to accept the full message of the Gospel. Such knowledge

could hardly fail to have given pleasure. But imagine the case of one person who has dedicated his life to the training of just one native lad, who had no knowledge and was full of fears and terrors by night and by day. The teacher has seen the mind slowly developing. It grasps at truth. It perceives God as a benevolent being; a spirit too, but no longer one to be an ever present shadow of terror, but a God of love, asking—oh, so gently—for a return of that love. The devotion of the teacher has enabled the young mind to absorb the idea of voluntary sacrifice—even the sacrifice of Calvary. To him heaven opens and earth expands. The angels may be expected to take notice of, and rejoice at what is being done upon the earth. And this is but the case of one of these little ones, who have been taught to believe in, and work for, the Saviour of the world. Such as one may become, as priest or bishop, a source of unmeasurable benefit to the native peoples of vast territories

One does not like to think of reward in the case of missionary sacrifice. Yet, that reward is extended and the "Well done" registered is sure. A reward, not measurable in scales of silver or of gold.

We laymen cannot thus devote ourselves to a pupil, be he white or brown. When we have the opportunity, by direct speech, to aid another, too often we are tongue tied. We can help out of our incomes, whether they be large or small. When all in our power to do has been done, we have to write ourselves down as unprofitable debtors. It is well for us that our debts have been discharged. Neither intellect, nor power, nor work, nor sacrifice, nor tears, could have sufficed. Our debts are cancelled and we are free.