

FOREIGN MISSIONS AND THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

THE following is a digest of an address given upon Foreign Missions at the recent session of the Friendship Association, by R. E. Neighbour, pastor First Baptist Church, Americus, Ga."

"Brethren, hearken unto me: Simeon hath rehearsed unto me how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophet; as it is written: After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, sayeth the Lord, who maketh these things known of old."

From these four verses, quoted from Acts 15:13-18, R.V., we learn:

First. God will at first visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Second. After these things, Christ will return.

Third. The tabernacle of David will then be rebuilt.

Fourth. The residue of men, and all the Gentiles, will seek after the Lord.

Here we find God, the holy Spirit, unfolding the plan of this age. The work of the Church, then, is what?

To take out of the Gentiles, or nations, a people for his name. It is impossible to read into these words that we are to "take the

world for Christ." This is an "elect" age. The Church, God's "ecclesia," are a people "called out" from among the nations.

The Church is a minority, and will remain so during its whole existence. The work of the Church can never be marked "a failure," as long as it is doing the work that God ordained. Because the Church does not "convert the world," it cannot, therefore, be deducted that the Church is making the world worse.

But what is the great inspiration of Foreign Missions? Surely, without a doubt, it is the Second Coming of Christ in pre-Millennial glory. And why? Because, as soon as the Church arouses herself and, empowered by the Spirit, gathers **[R3732 : page 70]** out of the Gentiles the certain number of God's elect, then he will come and establish himself on David's throne, after which the residue of men may seek the Lord.

The thought in the missionary's heart, then, should not be "India for Christ," or "Africa for Christ," or "the World for Christ," but the bringing to God from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, a people for his name. The great inspiration of a Christian worker is, "After this, I will return."

Does not the truly saved yearn for the appearing of the Lord? Is not the very height of his glory to see him coming in his majesty? Then, what is the better way? To stop trying to win men to him, and sit down and merely pray, inasmuch as the coming of the Lord will bring salvation to all men?

By no means. To be sure, we must pray for the coming of the Lord, but we must also work for it.

If the taking of the "world for Christ" is the missionary's motive, he must despair. Nineteen centuries of this era of grace have already passed, and yet there are more heathen today than

there were in the days of Paul. The earth is filled with new and strange doctrines. Whereas, if the veneer were removed, we would find sin and lust just as heinous as in the long ago.

This is a man-glorying age. Wonderful achievements and startling progression are seen on every side, yet with all our learning, riches and advance of civilization, there is not a country, a city, nor even a hamlet, where Jesus truly reigns. [R3733 : page 70]

No, brethren, the wheat and the tares must grow together to the end of this age. The mustard seed has grown into a great tree, but the birds of the air (representing the wicked one and his children) roost in the branches thereof. The meal, to be sure, is good, but the leaven (sin) is contaminating the whole loaf. The drag-net which holds the evil as well as the good will not be separated until the consummation of the age.

Dear brethren, keep clearly before your mind that the work of the Church is to call out a people for his name; that the inspiration of this work is the glory of hastening the coming of our Lord, and that the coming of the Lord will bring to the Church her reward.

How the activities of the Church ought to be quickened. How her gifts should be increased. How her hand should be reached out in every direction until God from above shall say, The work of the Church is done, the witness to the uttermost part of the earth has been borne, the elect from the foundation of the world have been brought in, and the day of her reward is at hand! – Christian Index.
