

**BETHANY C. E. READING
COURSES. HEROES
OF MODERN MISSIONS**

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Bethany C. E. Reading Courses. Heroes of Modern Missions by W. J. Lhamon

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W. J. LHAMON

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Bethany C. E. Reading Courses

Heroes of Modern Missions

BY

Rev. W. J. Lhamon

Author of "Studies in Acts," and "Missionary Fields and Forces of the Disciples."



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Explanatory Note.

The National Convention of the Disciples of Christ, held in Springfield, Illinois, October 16-23, 1896, adopted the following recommendations:

"1. That this convention approve the idea of adding, with certain limits, the educational feature to the Christian Endeavor Societies among us. This added educational feature shall include helps for the systematic reading of the Bible, a selected course of reading concerning missions in general, and our own missions in particular, and thorough instruction as to the origin, the principles, and the history of our own movement for the restoration of New Testament Christianity.

"2. That this convention approve of the purpose to provide a series of hand-books for our young people covering the fields not already satisfactorily covered."

The chapters which set forth very briefly the missionary work of the Disciples are omitted from this edition, these subjects being presented more fully in a companion hand-book entitled, "Missionary Fields and Forces of the Disciples of Christ," by W. J. Lhamon.

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"Firm wast thou, humble and wise,
Honest and pure, free from disguise;
Father of orphans, the widow's support;
Comfort in sorrow of every sort.
To the benighted dispenser of light,
Doing, and pointing to that which is right,
Blessing to princes, to people, to me;
May I, my Father, be worthy of thee,
Wisheth and prayeth thy Serabojee."

The above was composed by the Prince Serabojee, son of the Rajah of Tanjore, as an epitaph to the veteran and beloved missionary, Christian Friederich Schwartz. It is the first English verse ever composed by a Hindu. It was the choicest gem with which the Prince could enrich the tomb of the Saint. Let it stand as a symbol. There are myriads of voices that would so speak if they were gifted with song, and there are many graves that are likewise glorious.

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CHAPTER I

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

A movement that has been the inspiration of so many heroic hearts from the first century to the last of our era, and that has every promise of increasing power through coming centuries, must have beneath it a profound meaning. This movement, starting with the commission of our Savior and never so potent as to-day, is like the great rivers of earth that grow in volume and increase in majesty in proportion to their distance from mountain to sea. It is a movement not transient, but age-long; not dwindling but increasing; and not limited but international and world-wide.

As contrasted with other great movements this, unlike the commercial one with its promise of gain, is spiritual with rather a promise of poverty; unlike political ones with the allurements of glory and power this is fraternal with many times the repulsions of persecutions and distress; and unlike wars

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of conquest with their prospects of victory and destruction and plunder, this is the harbinger of peace and good-will, the evangel of glory, honor and immortality.

What is the meaning that underlies this mighty movement, so contrary to all merely human enterprise; promising to the rich man no dividends on invested capital but demanding of him gifts in fee simple; promising to churches no increase of membership, but possibly whole decades of praying and giving in order to the conversion of single souls in far away lands; and promising to missionaries themselves a bare existence, hard work, a foreign residence, many deprivations, inevitable persecutions, possible death by disease or violence, and a doubtful old age . . . what can be the secret of it?

More than all else the Savior himself is the answer to this question. The captaincy of the movement rests in the crucified and risen One, standing with pierced hands and feet and side among his wondering disciples, and saying, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." As truly as Christ is Lord this commission is felt to be imperative by all who are intelligently loyal to him.

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Paul felt it so and cried out, "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise." The apostolic church felt it so, and therefore the Christians that were driven from Jerusalem by persecution "went everywhere preaching the word." It was the recognized urgency, the realized imperativeness of this commission that made the ancient church a conquering power, so that "the fires of its faith burned to the water's edge all round the Mediterranean, and remade the Roman world." And the modern church as it issues from the gloom of the Middle Ages, and from the doctrinal vagaries of that long Roman Catholic period which may be likened to a nightmare, is rapidly coming to be one with the ancient church in its recognition of the captaincy of Christ, and the urgency of that commission wherein he gives the secret and the sequence, the sum total and the climax of his own mission. The meaning of the Savior's presence among men is focused in his commission, and the meaning of the commission is the meaning of missions. What it commands they seek to execute; what it expects they seek to create; and what it promises to humanity they seek to verify in eternity.

Again; dwelling more particularly upon the commission we are led more explicitly into the meaning of missions.

(a). In the commission Christ claims "all authority in heaven and in earth." The meaning of missions is that this is a rightful claim, and that it shall be made effective; that it is a majestic claim and that it shall be made a glorious reality; that it is a beneficent claim, and shall be imposed upon the nations for their temporal and eternal welfare. Missions are the medium through which Christ's rightful authority and saving power are carried over from the ideal to the real among the various kindreds and tongues and peoples and nations of earth. They are the King's means of asserting his kingliness, the High Priest's means of making known his High-priestliness, the Savior's means of winning to his hand and heart the multitudes for whom he died.

(b). In the commission our command is to go and teach. Missions therefore have all the meaning that inheres in the teaching and the student faculties among men. All that the pulpit, the platform, the press, and the rostrum can mean the Savior means in his command to teach and preach, and all this meaning he enjoins upon his missionary representatives. Among his last words before the crucifixion were these, "Put up the sword;" among the last before his ascension were these, "Go teach." The methods of the teacher, the preacher, the friend, and the brother are the methods of his conquest.