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Motives In
MISSIONARY WORK

Motives in Missionary Work

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MOTIVE IS THE SPRING OF ALL HUMAN ACTION. The character of the motive determines the character of the act. The deeper, the holier, the mightier the motive, the more permanent, the greater in spiritual value, is the action that results from that motive.

There are in the foreign mission fields today *[1915]* about twenty-five thousand men and women who have left their homes and relatives and become permanent residents in alien lands among alien peoples and amid trying climatic conditions. Of that number over six hundred have gone forth from our denominational ranks. In the case of many in this large army, they have gone forth

deliberately into lands where they are not only subjected to privations and hardships, but where positive dangers in the form of deadly fevers, cholera, smallpox, the plague, and the like, beset them on every side.

Why do these go forth? What impelling impulse moves them? What motive is so mighty and so abiding as to send them forth and keep them steadfast for years in those foreign lands? This great missionary enterprise upon which we have entered with so much urgency and on which we are virtually staking our all as a people, must have some mighty motive as its mainspring of action. **WHAT, THEN, IS IT THAT MOVES THE MISSIONARY?**

The Natural Motive

THE FIRST MOTIVE that impels to missionary action may be called the natural motive. It is natural, not in the sense that it is found in the heart of the unregenerate man, but rather that it is natural to, and of the very essence of, the mind and heart of the one who has received the divine life. *"Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver."* – *Desire of Ages, page 195.*

... The very life of God is a life that goes forth and gives itself, that is, it is essentially missionary. ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF THE SPIRITUAL, IT IS NATURAL FOR THE CONVERTED HEART TO COMMUNICATE THE BLESSING IT HOLDS IN ITS OWN POSSESSION. Like any other life, the spiritual

life must not only receive, it must also give forth. That is a fixed law of the spiritual life. The church or the individual that will not and does not go forth with a message of peace to bless others, is doomed to lose its or his own spiritual life. TO DENY THE CAUSE OF MISSIONS IS TO DENY OUR OWN SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. The missionary impulse, the desire to impart salvation to others, is just as truly of the very essence of the spiritual life as is prayer, the desire to commune with God.

It is a most interesting and a well-attested fact in history that great religious revivals issue in correspondingly great missionary endeavors, both at home and abroad. Witness the experiences under King Josiah (**2 Chronicles 34, 35**), the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost (**Acts 2**), and the great revival at

Antioch (**Acts 13**). This same truth is illustrated in the case of Andrew, who, when he had found the Saviour, at once carried the message to his own brother, Peter, saying, "*We have found the Messiah.*" – **John 1:41**. It is seen in the case of Paul, who said, "*Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel,*" – **1 Corinthians 9:16** and who also said, "*The love of Christ constraineth us.*" – **2 Corinthians 5:14**. The spiritual life must give forth itself; it does so instinctively. And hence it is true that EVERY MISSION EPOCH [era], traced to its source, is simply THE RESULT OF SOME FRESH RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

Sympathy for the Lost

THE SECOND MISSIONARY MOTIVE is that of sympathy, or concern, for the lost. To the first man God said, *"Where art thou?"* – **Genesis 3:9**. To the first brother he said, *"Where is Abel thy brother?"* – **Genesis 4:9**. NO ONE LIVES TO HIMSELF. The Bible, from first to last, insists that EVERY ONE WHO KNOWS THE LORD IS RESPONSIBLE TO EVERY OTHER MAN WHO KNOWS HIM NOT. With the great increase of knowledge of the entire world that has come to us in recent times, it is morally impossible for a truly converted heart to remain indifferent to the physical suffering, the sin, the misery, and the spiritual destitution of the millions in heathen darkness. We see this truth illustrated in the life of our Lord, who came to *"seek and to save that which was lost,"* – **Luke 19:10** who was *"moved with*

compassion" – **Matthew 9:36** as he beheld the multitudes in their sad condition, and *"wept"* – **Luke 19:41** in the presence of the world's sorrow and grief.

Like their Master, many missionaries are deeply moved by a profound compassion for the suffering masses who are without hope and without God in the world of heathen darkness. And once they are in the foreign field, their hearts are wrung with continual compassion in the presence of a veritable sea of suffering and misery, the vast majority of which they are unable to relieve. Indeed, what Christian heart is not moved at the thought of the terrible, blighting curse, manifested in a thousand ways, that rests on the heathen peoples? WE HAVE TRUTH, WE HAVE LIGHT, WE HAVE SALVATION; HOW

CAN WE REFUSE TO THEM THE LIGHT OF LIFE?

The Gospel Commission

THE THIRD GREAT MOTIVE that impels to missionary action is the unrepealed and unrepealable command of the risen Saviour. The very circumstances in which the command was given were significant. Jesus had just risen from the dead, and He was about to ascend to the Father to receive power to bestow on those to whom had been committed the carrying of His gospel. This meeting at which He gave this command had been appointed and fully arranged for before His death. See **Matthew 28:7, 10, 16; Mark 16:7**. Compare **Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8, 9; Luke 24:50**. This word of

command is no other than that of our divine Lord and Master, whose authority is final. This in itself would be sufficient on which to rest the entire basis of all missionary work.

It is well to remember that this command of the Saviour is not something separate and apart from Himself which He put upon His followers. JESUS WAS AND STILL IS THE VERY INCARNATION OF THE MISSIONARY IDEA. He is the embodiment of all missionary motives, impulses, and activities. And when He gave that command to us, it was simply a fuller and further revelation of Himself and the Father's divine purpose. AT EVERY STEP IN HIS EARTHLY MINISTRY OUR SAVIOUR WAS THE GREAT MISSIONARY GIVING HIS LIFE FOR THE WORLD; and when He ascended, He could do no other than LEAVE WITH US THIS COMMAND AND BEGET IN US THIS SAME

PASSION. Back of this command is not only the life of our Lord, but the very mind and eternal purpose of God Himself. This command of Christ to go and preach His gospel is as vital and as binding as the first commandment of the Decalogue, and TO TURN AWAY FROM IT IS TO DENY THE WHOLE MEANING OF THE INFINITE SACRIFICE OF OUR SAVIOUR. Thus in a very important sense our own salvation depends on our being obedient to the command, "*Go ye therefore.*" – **Matthew 28:19**

Christ's Soon Coming

To us as a people the belief in THE NEARNESS OF CHRIST'S COMING IS A POWERFUL MISSIONARY MOTIVE. With the conviction that human history and probation are soon

to close, we cannot be other than highly sensitive to the awful doom that awaits a godless and impenitent world. As surely as we believe that the sin of the entire race is soon to receive the full measure of God's just retribution, so surely must we be mightily moved to go forth and solemnly warn the unsaved world.

Embedded in this same conviction of God's impending judgment is the living desire found in the heart of the believer that the time may speedily come when the perfect state shall be realized in which God's will shall be supreme in the earth as it is in heaven. This, too, is a missionary motive impelling us to go forth and preach the gospel of the kingdom, that not only may *"the end come,"* – **Matthew 24:14** but the beginning of eternal righteousness and

peace — the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.

Passing over other missionary motives of minor importance, not to say human and worldly, such as the strictly humanitarian impulse, the intense desire for mere denominational success, the ambition to make a good showing for personal ends, etc., it must, in the last analysis, be said that THE GREAT CENTRAL MISSIONARY MOTIVE, THE SOURCE AND SPRING OF EVERY TRUE MISSIONARY IMPULSE, IS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF IN ALL THE FULLNESS OF HIS BEING. That unseen power that moves the true missionary to the fields of heathen darkness and binds his heart in ever-increasing love and tenderness to the darkened souls, is not merely the guilt or the peril of the heathen world, nor the abiding

command of Christ, nor even the intense desire to bring honor to our God, who has redeemed us through his Son,— it is not any one of these nor all of them together that suffice to move and sustain the missionary, but the very Lord of the harvest himself, the author and finisher of missions.

[Emphasis added by Lightindarkness.site]



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