

## JESUS SAID "BOTH"

Byron S. Lamson

"I don't believe in foreign missions. There is too much work to do here in America. We must build a strong home base first." This was the positive statement of a sincere church member (about twenty-five years ago).

"I am not giving any more money to church work in America. The people here have every opportunity to hear the gospel and do not respond. On the mission field thousands are hearing and accepting the gospel. I want my money to go where it will accomplish the most in saving the lost." Another devoted Christian makes a positive statement that seems less than Christian.

Jesus said: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." There is no conflict between "Jerusalem" and the "uttermost part of the earth." Essential to Christianity is its universalism. If it is true, important, necessary anywhere, it is true, important, and necessary everywhere.

Christianity is grounded in the character of God, whose love includes the whole world. The sun and rain are for the evil and the good. God gave His Son for the world. He is not willing that any should perish. There is no other name by which men may be saved. They shall come from east and west, north and south, into the Kingdom of God.

It is sub-Christian to limit our Christian concern to a geographical area, or to one race or class. The gospel must come alive in every area of the life of the individual, and in the total life of the world. God's word for every problem, every concern, every culture and interest must be spelled out. We must advance on every front. The word of Jesus is "Both."

Our overseas church is outstripping us in soul-winning. Our support for missions must not be a substitute for our witnessing here at home in Judea. We must translate to "the uttermost part" a gospel that is worth dying for and witnessing to in our own neighborhood. If we fail at home, we fail in our world mission also.

— Free Methodist.

## THE PRAYING MINORITIES

By R. G. Flexon

in "Pilgrim Holiness Advocate"

"Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" ("Matthew 18:19).

Man depends on the vote of majorities, but God so often carries on his work through minorities. The praying twos and threes who refuse to give in to defeat have many times turned the tide and reversed what otherwise were hopeless situations. Thus did Gideon with his 300 against the hordes of Midian. Daniel and his three friends, through prayer, took over an empire and with "an excellent spirit" gave it direction. Through prayer they were also able to stop the mouths of lions and to quench the violence of fire. Hezekiah and his small band of faithful prayers were able in the face of overwhelming odds to stand up to the armies of Sennacherib. Through prayer, mingled with faith, they were able to go out one morning and look on the battlefield with 85,000 dead soldiers lying upon it; Hezekiah's soldiers had not so much as drawn a bow or thrown a lance. The angel of God interposed just when all hope seemed vain.

We stand astonished before some of the prayers of God's saints. Even just one of them by prayer can turn the tide of nations changing the course of history. Many

times their faith, it seems, hung on just one word in that prayer. An example is in the prayer of Moses for Israel in Exodus 32:30, "Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin."

The New Testament abounds with numerous examples of how a few have influenced the many through prayer. The blessings of God have turned defeats into victories. Spiritually barren lands have been turned into springs and rivers of blessing. On the day of Pentecost 120 Spirit-filled saints, after ten days of prayer, witnessed the conversion of 3,000 souls in one day. A praying minority in a small church opened the doors, and yet held every prisoner in his cell and prayed the jailer into the Kingdom of God.

The greatest triumphs of all time are the trophies of intercessory prayer. The greatest triumphs of the future will come through the same channel. Revitalizing and refilling of the church by the Holy Spirit can come only through the minority in intercessory prayer. Programs not backed by prayer are feeble instruments in promoting revivals. Revivals ever have been, and ever will be, generated by undefeatable praying minorities. By this weapon the minority, standing "in the gap," can release even in this last day a power which can, and will, pull down the strongholds of Satan, bring about a revival in which men will confess and forsake sin and turn away from their unbelief to faith in Christ. Such praying will release in the hearts of men that which will crucify them unto the world and the world unto them. Let us pray God to give us more intercessors as laborers in his vine-yard.

## SHOWING MERCY

William Gladstone, the famous British statesman, on one occasion sent to the Treasury Department for certain statistics upon which he was to base his budget proposals. The statistician made a mistake in his report but Gladstone was so sure of this man's accuracy that he did not take time to verify his figures. He went before the House of Commons and made his speech, basing his appeal on the incorrect figures that had been given him. His speech was no sooner published than the newspapers exposed its glaring inaccuracies. Gladstone was overwhelmed with embarrassment. He went to his office and sent at once for the statistician who was responsible for his humiliating situation. The man came, full of fear and shame, certain that he was going to lose his position. But, instead, Mr. Gladstone said, "I know how much you must be disturbed over what has happened and I have sent for you to put you at your ease. For a long time you have been engaged in handling the business of the national accounts, and this is the first mistake that you have made. I want to congratulate you and express to you my keen appreciation."

It takes a big man to be merciful.—Selected

## KEEP THE FIRE BURNING

Keep the Altar of private prayer burning. This is the very life of all piety. The sanctuary and family altars borrow their fires here, therefore let this burn well. Secret devotion is the very essence, evidence, and barometer of vital and experimental religion.

Burn here the fat of your sacrifices. Let your closet-seasons be, if possible, regular, frequent, and undisturbed. Effectual prayer availeth much.

Let us examine ourselves on this important matter. Do we engage with lukewarmness in private devotion? Is the fire of devotion burning dimly in our hearts? Do the chariot wheels drag heavily? If so, let us be alarmed at this sign of decay. Let us go with weeping, and ask for the Spirit of grace and of supplication.—Spurgeon