

# WOMEN and MISSIONS

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## Cycles of Service

By M. Katharine Bennett

Mrs. Fred. S. Bennett, one of the vice-presidents of the Board of National Missions, is too well known to readers of *Women and Missions* to need introduction. In this article she states convincingly the new problems of Christian work in the Southern Mountains—problems arising from changing modern conditions, which have reached even these people in their long-isolated mountain regions.

JUST recently the following paragraphs appeared in New York daily papers and doubtless in other papers throughout the country:

"Jerusalem, August 21. A small American automobile in four hours today did what it required the Israelites forty years to accomplish in their exodus from Egypt to Palestine. This was the crossing of the Sinai Desert, the wild and barren region between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Akabah, a distance of about 130 miles."

"Close upon the news that the famous 'road to Damascus' has been made into a first-class motor highway comes an announcement that Armenians are planning a tourist resort on Mount Ararat. The last strongholds of tradition are assailed; the immutable is, after all, changing."

As though these items were not sufficiently startling, the photogravure section of another paper pictures a cross erected on the spot on Mt. Sinai where Moses stood when he gave the Tablets of the Commandments to the children of Israel, and also shows the cliff in the Desert of Zin where "Moses lifted up his hands, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also."

It is a distinct shock to read of the penetration of cameras, automobiles, airships, radios to those remote regions that have given a sense of security because somewhere in a hurly-burly world there was stability and changeless customs connecting the past and the present. But if the deserts and mountains of the Holy Land are becoming easily approachable,

it is probable that every part of these United States will be soon touched by the encroachments of industry and pleasure.

Both these stimuli direct attention to the southern Highlands, where a land of great beauty invites the tourist, and where the wealth of mines and forests draws those who would develop the untouched resources. "The road to Damascus" is being opened to even the most luxurious of wayfaring strangers, although but a decade ago they would have had to guide weary horses up rocky stream beds and over mountainous trails. The last ten years have wrought great changes in the Appalachian Highlands, the next ten are destined to see much of that whole country opened. The question will not then be one of isolation but of a people brought too suddenly from isolation and a primitive way of life into the hectic and high-speed existence of 1924. "Some of the young men about here," said a worker in a rather remote community, "go to Detroit and to Ohio towns to work during school vacation or when there is no farm work to be done." A short time ago these young men would hardly have known how to start on such journeys; now one calls to another and there has begun that which may easily lead to an exodus from the struggling existence caused by poor land, inadequate equipment, and isolation to the crowded streets, bright lights and good pay of prosperous cities. Some from the farm will always seek the pavements, and no plan or purpose may keep all the

# The Spirit of Christmas

M. Katharine Bennett

“CHRIST was born on Christmas day,” we sing, and for nineteen hundred years other groups in many lands have gathered to carol this glad song. Yet through this long time the wonderful implications of the words have not reached to the hearts and minds of all the peoples, and the sin and the suffering that would be healed were there an acceptance of this message still haunt and distress the world. Has familiarity dulled our appreciation of the message and of its possibilities when translated in terms of life and human relationships? Have we, in the joy of family reunions, of gift bearing, of the holiday spirit sometimes forgotten that these are but selfish manifestations of the Spirit of Christmas?

Christ came “That all men through Him should have eternal life.” He came that the peace of God might “rule in your hearts”; He came teaching that we should “pray for them which despitefully use us”; He came, preaching “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Is it of these truths that Christmas reminds us anew each year, and to the practice of these does it call us? Is it on them that we place the emphasis in the home thinking of Christmas? Or is the utmost endeavor for the joy and the gifts for our own loved ones? Unless the true Spirit of Christmas be with us then, for us shall Christ have lived and died in vain.

“O Holy Child of Bethlehem!  
Descend to us, we pray.  
Cast out our sin and enter in,  
Be born in us today.”

