

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

MISSIONARY SERMONS

Missionary Sermons

A Selection from the Discourses
delivered on behalf of
The Baptist Missionary Society
on various occasions

With Portraits of the Preachers

LONDON :
THE CAREY PRESS,
19, FURNIVAL STREET, E.C.

PREFACE

IN the Baptist assemblies of Great Britain year by year a special place has always been reserved for the Missionary Sermon, when, to congregations gathered from all parts of the British Isles, preachers from different churches have contributed their ripest thought and noblest speech to set forth the claims of Christ on the world.

The occasion itself has always been inspiring, and some fine pulpit utterances have made these missionary mornings memorable. Fugitive reports have frequently been given, but weekly journals and monthly magazines are soon mislaid, and no enduring record has yet been made of most of these discourses. Yet many of them have permanent missionary value, and in this volume some are rescued from the obscurity to which they have hitherto been consigned. They are presented, with the portraits of their preachers, as a renewed contribution to the recurring need of the Church and the world.

The references in some cases to passing events will remind us how quickly the scene changes, and yet how essentially the same is the missionary problem in all ages. Only sermons are included in this selection that have a message for our own time.

Yet we have here the material for a study in contrasts. Though the gospel is the same, the style of preaching it has greatly changed from the ponderous, exhaustive sermons of our forefathers to the more practical and picturesque pulpit utterances of our own day. We think it will be admitted that this volume, presenting all the types, gains by the variety.

Mr. Spurgeon often preached for the B.M.S. His first sermon, addressed to what was the largest congregation ever gathered on such an occasion, is the one chosen. Dr. Maclaren's sermon is the first of these memorable deliverances which he gave from time to time in London. Dr. Stanford has left us two memorable missionary sermons, and it was difficult to decide which of them should be here

PREFACE

included ; difficult, too, to choose from several in each case which sermon should be given as representative of Dr. Richard Glover and of Dr. Charles Brown. In most cases there has been no option, only one sermon being available. If only Carey's great sermon could have been included, the series would be complete, but unhappily there is no record of it.

With much regret some admirable discourses given for the Society by great preachers have been omitted because their general character rather unfits them for inclusion in a missionary volume. Sermons which have already appeared in the Centenary Volume of the Baptist Missionary Society are also purposely excluded.

A glance at the Table of Contents will show the wide range of the subjects that are discussed ; while a careful study of the arguments and appeals the sermons contain cannot fail to reawaken missionary ardour and reinforce missionary purpose—may even suggest to preachers some aspects of the Christian message that have been overlooked.

In conclusion the hope may be expressed that the value of the book may be recognised far beyond the bounds of the Church to which the sermons were originally spoken.

October, 1924.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREPARING THE WAY - - - - -	3
C. H. SPURGEON	
THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS - - - - -	21
JOHN RYLAND, D.D.	
CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN WORLD - - - - -	31
ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.	
THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS - - - - -	49
EDWARD STEANE, D.D.	
LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST - - - - -	65
CHARLES STANFORD, D.D.	
THE AWAKENING CALL - - - - -	83
J. HOWARD HINTON, M.A.	
FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME - - - - -	99
ALEXANDER SMELLIE, M.A., D.D.	
THE MEASURE OF THE ALTAR - - - - -	113
JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.	
THE GOSPEL WE TAKE TO THE WORLD - - - - -	125
JOHN WATSON, M.A.	
TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE ? - - - - -	135
JAMES CULROSS, M.A., D.D.	
THE INEVITABLENESS OF MISSIONS - - - - -	149
JOHN CLIFFORD, M.A., D.D.	

CONTENTS—*continued.*

	PAGE
THE SPHERE AND SCOPE OF MISSIONS - - -	161
RICHARD GLOVER, D.D.	
LIVING AND DYING NATIONS - - - - -	175
G. C. LORIMER, D.D.	
THE MARKET FOR MISSIONS - - - - -	187
A. T. PIERSON, D.D.	
THE DESTINY OF ISRAEL AND OF ENGLAND - - -	201
W. L. WATKINSON, D.D.	
THE PROMISE OF VICTORY - - - - -	215
MARCUS DODS, D.D.	
THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE - - - - -	229
JAMES DENNEY, D.D.	
THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS - - -	243
R. C. GILLIE, M.A., D.C.L.	
THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION - - - - -	255
J. G. GREENHOUGH, M.A.	
THE VISION OF ALL THE FACTS - - - - -	269
CHARLES BROWN, D.D.	
LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP - - - - -	285
T. REAVELEY GLOVER, M.A., D.D., LL.D.	
THE GOD OF THE HEATHEN ALSO - - - - -	299
W. Y. FULLERTON	
THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY -	313
THOMAS PHILLIPS, B.A.	

C. H. SPURGEON

PREPARING THE WAY

THE MUSIC HALL,
ROYAL SURREY GARDENS, LONDON,
APRIL 28TH, 1858.

“ Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth ; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder ; he burneth the chariot in the fire.”—Psalm xlvi. 8, 9.



PREPARING THE WAY



IT seems that everything Christlike must have a history like that of Christ. His beginnings were small—the manger and the stable. So with the beginnings of that Society which we love, and which we believe to be the very incarnation of the Spirit of Christ. Its beginnings also were small; but its latter end shall doubtless greatly increase—for hath not the end of Christ become exceedingly glorious? He hath ascended up on high; he sitteth at the right hand of God, our Father; and doubtless this agency which God now employs for the conversion of the world, shall have its ascension, and God shall greatly magnify it. But as Christ was called to suffer, so must everything Christlike suffer with him. The Christian who is the most like his Master will understand the most of the meaning of that term, “fellowship with him in his sufferings”; and inasmuch as the Missionary Society is like Christ, and hath Christ’s heart, and Christ’s aim, it also must suffer like Jesus. This year we have been made to sip of that cup. The blood of our martyrs has been shed; our confessors have witnessed to the faith of the Lord Jesus; at the hands of bloodthirsty and cruel men they have met their fate, and again the seed of the church has been sown in the blood of the martyred saint.

I felt that in addressing you this day it would be far from me to offer you any advice or counsel, when I am but as the youngest among you all, but that I might be permitted, as sometimes the child doth comfort its parents, to utter some few words of consolation which might cheer you in the present distress, and nerve your arm for future combat with the great enemy of souls. And upon what subject could I address you, which could be more full of consolation than the present? “*Come, behold the works of the Lord.*” Turn ye from man’s bloodshed, and behold

PREPARING THE WAY

your God at work ; and from the *desolations which the Lord hath made* in the earth. You see how, though the battle-bow still doth twang with the arrow, and though the spear is still imbrued in the heart's blood of men, yet he breaks the bow, and cuts the spear in sunder, and burns the chariot in the fire.

We shall regard this text this morning, first, as a *declaration of what has happened* and, secondly, as a *promise of what shall be achieved*.

I

First of all, we shall look upon it as a *declaration of what has already occurred*. "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he *hath* made in the earth."

1. And now let us commence the discussion of this part of our subject by inviting you to the sad spectacle of the desolations which God in his providence has in different ages brought upon divers nations. As it is said of man, that he is full of trouble, so it is with nations ; they also are full of sorrows, and some of them exceeding bitter. Wars have devastated countries ; plagues have thinned our populations ; all kinds of evil have swept athwart the most potent empires, and many of them have been compelled, at last, to yield to the destroying angel, and they slumber with the mighty dead. Doubtless there hath a wail gone up from the face of the earth, when the invasions of barbarians have put an end to the promise of civilisation—when cities, renowned for the culture of the arts and sciences, have suddenly become sacked and burned—when nations that had made great advances in knowledge have been carried away captive, and the sun has been made to go back many a degree on the dial of the earth's history.

But I beg you now turn your eyes, and read the page of history, and mark the various catastrophes which have happened to this world ; and I appeal to you, as persons

who have understanding, and who can trace the Lord's hand in these matters—have not all these things worked together for good? And hitherto have not the revolutions, the destructions of empires, and the falls of dynasties, been eminent helps to the progress of the Gospel? Far be it from us to lay the blood of men at God's door. Let us not for one moment be guilty of any thought that the sin and the iniquity which have brought war into the world is of God; but, at the same time, as firm believers in the doctrine of predestination, and as firmly holding the great truth of a divine providence, we must hold that God is the author of the darkness as well as of the light, that he creates the providential evil as well as the good, that while he sendeth the shower from on high, he also is the father of the devastating storm. Oh! I say, then, come and see the Lord's hand in "Aceldama, the field of blood." Come ye, and behold the Lord's hand in every shake of the pillars of the constitutions of the monarchies of earth. See the Lord's hand in the crumbling of every tower and the tumbling down of every pinnacle which had aspired to heaven. For he hath done it—he hath done it! God is present everywhere.

And now, I again say, can you not see in all these things a gracious as well as a terrible God? Can you not feel that everything that has yet happened to the world has really been for its good? Wars, confusions, and tumults, are but the rough physic wherewith God will purge the diseased body of this earth from its innumerable ills. They are but a terrible tornado with which God shall sweep away the pestilence and fever that lurk in the moral atmosphere; they are but the great hammers with which he breaks in pieces the gates of brass, to make a way for his people; they are but the threshing wains, with which he doth thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff, that Israel may rejoice in the Lord, and that the sons of Jacob may triumph in their God. As it hath been in the beginning, so it shall be even unto the end

PREPARING THE WAY

Let us not fear, let us not tremble ; the end of all things cometh at last, and that end shall certainly be the desired one, and all the wrath of man shall not frustrate the designs of God. The past troubles assure us for the present, and console us for the future.

2. But now, turning from this somewhat dreary subject, I must invite you next to look at some desolations which will ever be fair in the eye of the follower of Jesus—the desolations of false worship. What a pleasant theme ! O, that we had but power truly to enlarge upon it ! Will you turn your minds back to the origin of idolatry, and tell me, if you can, what were the names of the first gods whom men profanely worshipped ? Are they known ? Are not their names blotted out from history ? Or, if any of them be mentioned, are they not a by-word, a hissing, and a reproach ? What shall we say of idolatries which are of later date—those which have been noted in Holy Scripture, and therefore handed down to infamy ? Who is he that now bows before the god of Egypt ? Has the sacred Ibis now a worshipper ? Do any prostrate themselves before the Nile, and drink her sweet waters, and think her a deity ? Hath not that idolatry passed away ? And are not the temple and the obelisk still standing—“ the desolations which the Lord hath made in the earth ” ? Talk we of the gods of Philistia ? Do we mention Baal and Dagon ? Where are they ? We hear their names ; they are but the records of the past ; but who is he that doth them homage ? Who doth now kiss his hands to the queen of heaven ? Who boweth himself in the grove of Ashtaroth, or who worshippeth the hosts of heaven, and the chariots of the sun ? They have gone ! They have gone ! Jehovah still standeth, “ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” One generation of idols hath passed away, and another cometh, and the desolations stand—memorials of the might of God.

Turn ye now your eyes to Assyria, that mighty empire. Did she not sit alone ? She said she should see no sorrow.

Remember Babylon, too, who boasted with her. But where are they, and where are now their gods? With ropes about their necks they have been dragged in triumph by our discoverers; and now, in the halls of our land, they stand as memorials of the ignorance of a race that is long since extinct. And then turn to the fairer idolatries of Greece and Rome. Fine poetic conceptions were their gods! Theirs was a grand idolatry, one that never shall be forgotten. Despite all its vice and lust, there was such a high mixture of the purest poetry in it, that the mind of man, though it will ever recollect it with sorrow, will still think of it with respect. But where are their gods? Where are the names of their gods? Are not the stars the last memorials of Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus? As if God would make his universe the monument of his destroyed enemy! Where else are their names to be found? Where shall we find a worshipper who adores their false deity? They are past; they are gone! To the moles and to the bats are their images cast, while many an unroofed temple, many a dilapidated shrine, stand as memorials of that which was, but is not—and is passed away for ever.

I suppose there is scarce a kingdom of the world where you do not see God's handiwork in crushing his enemies. It is to the shame of the idolater that he worships a god that his fathers knew not. Although there be some hoary systems of iniquity, in most cases the system is still new—new compared with the giant mountains, the first-born of nature—new compared with these old idolatries that have long since died away in the clouds of forgetfulness. It seems to me to be a very pleasing theme for us to speak of these desolations that God has made. For, mark this,—again we say it—as it was in the beginning, it is now, and ever shall be. The false gods shall yet yield their sway; the temples shall yet be unroofed; their houses shall be burned with fire, and their names shall be left for a reproach; their dignity shall not be honoured, neither shall homage be given unto their name. O thou that fearest for the ark

PREPARING THE WAY

of the Lord, thou that tremblest at the firmness with which falsehood keeps its throne, look thou on these desolations and be of good cheer ; God hath done mighty things, and he will do them yet again. One can never pass, even in our own country, a ruined abbey, or a destroyed priory, or an old, broken down cathedral, without a sweet satisfaction. They are fair ruins, all the fairer because they are ruined, because their inhabitants are forgotten, because the monk no longer prowls our streets, because the nun, though she is here and there to be found, yet is no more honoured, because the apostate church to which they belong has ceased to have power among us, as once it had. We will, therefore, seek to honour God, and in all our journeyings we will think of this text—"Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth."

3. And now, in the next place, let me ask you to remember what desolations God has made with false philosophies. As for stones and timbers, they are things that must decay in the common course of nature, and one might be apt to think that some of the desolate temples we behold were rather the trophies of the tooth of time than of the hand of God ; but thought is a lasting thing : a bold philosophy that shapes into words the wandering thoughts which have taken possession of the hearts of men is an enduring thing ; and how have some philosophers believed that they were writing books which would be read for ages ! They believed that their philosophy most certainly was eternal, and that to the last day their disciples would be had in reverence. Let any classical student remember how many systems of philosophy have passed away before the progress of the kingdom of Christ. There are some of our fathers here, whose hairs have but just turned grey, who can remember the rise and fall of some seven or eight theories of infidelity. You can look back, and you can remember when it was a cursing obscenity with Tom Paine, having just also been the leering, scowling thing that Voltaire made it. You remember how it was the soaring, airy, speculating,

scheming thing of Robert Owen ; and then you recollect how it became the base, grovelling thing called Secularism. Men have trembled at that, and have thought it will last. I believe I shall live to see the last Secularist buried, and that at the funeral there will be attending the leader of some new system of infidelity, who, despite his hatred to God, will have to say over the tomb, out of very spite against the one who precedes him, " Here lies a fool, yclept a Secularist." You need not be afraid of these things ; they live such a very little while. A new moon brings a new phase of the system. The thing that they have fashioned with the utmost diligence, and which they deliver with the most earnest declamation, which they think they have proved with the sureness of logic, which they have built, as they think, upon a rock, against which the gates of heaven shall not prevail, how soon it is crumbled to dust, and not a vestige of it is left—scarce a remembrance of it—but all is past away and gone. And even so shall it be. As it was in the beginning, it is now, and ever shall be. " Every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn." The words of the wise are like the leaves of the tree of life, and they fade not ; but the words of the wicked are like the autumn leaves, all withered, soon to become skeletons, and be blown away by the blast, to be heard of no more.

4. But my text has a special reference to war—the desolation of war. Have you not noticed how magnificently peace winneth its reprisals at the hand of war ? Look through this country. Methinks if the angel of peace should go with us, as we journey through it, and stop at the various ancient towns where there are dismantled castles, and high mounds from which every vestige of a building has long been swept, the angel would look us in the face, and say, " I have done all this : war scattered my peaceful subjects, burned down my cottages, ravaged my temples, and laid my mansions with the dust. But I have attacked war in his own strongholds, and I have

PREPARING THE WAY

routed him. Walk through his halls. Can you hear now the tramp of the warrior? Where now the sound of the clarion and the drum?" The sheep is feeding from the cannon's mouth, and the bird builds his nest where once the warrior did hang his helmet. As rare curiosities we dig up the swords and spears of our forefathers, and little do we reckon that in this we are doing tribute to peace. For peace is the conqueror. It hath been a long duel, and much blood hath been shed; but peace hath been the victor. War, after all, has but spasmodic triumphs; and again it sinks—it dies; but peace ever reigneth. If she be driven from one part of the earth, yet she dwelleth in another; and while war, with busy hand, is piling up here a wall, and there a rampart, and there a tower, peace, with her gentle finger, is covering over the castle with the moss and the ivy, and casting the stone from the top, and letting it lie level with the earth.

I think this is a fine thought for the lover of peace; and who among us is not? Who among us ought not to be? Is not the gospel all peace? And do we not believe that when the gospel is fully preached, and has its day, wars *must* cease, to the end of the earth! I therefore say, beloved brothers and sisters, may we not console ourselves under all the recent outbreaks of a most bloodthirsty and cruel massacre in the fact that God *hath* made desolations, even in war? He hath made desolations in the earth; and, as it hath been, so shall it be even unto the end. There is not now a rampart which shall not be scaled by peace. O ye hoary bastions, ye shall yet be destroyed, not by the cannon ball, but by something mightier still. Charged with love, this day we shoot against you the great guns of the gospel of Christ, and we believe that they shall move and shake you to your deep foundations, and ye shall crumble; or if ye stand, ye shall be uninhabited, except by the owl and the bittern. I have a fond belief that the day is coming when Nelson, on the top of his monument, shall be upset, and Mr. Whitefield set there, or the apostle Paul.

I believe that Napier, who stands in the square there, will lose his station. We shall say about these men, "They were very respectable men in the days of our forefathers, who did not know better than to kill one another; but we do not care for them now!" Up goes John Wesley where stood Napier! Away goes someone else, who was an earnest preacher of the gospel, to occupy the place high over the gate where another warrior rides upon his horse. All these things, the trickery of an ignorant age, the gewgaws of a people who loved bloodshed despite their profession of religion, must yet be broken up for old iron and old brass; every statue that stands in London shall yet be sold, and the price thereof cast at the apostles' feet, that they may make distribution as every man hath need. Wars must cease, and every place where war reigneth and hath now its glory must yet pass away, and fade and wither. We give all honour to these men now, for these are the days of our ignorance, and God in some degree winketh at us; but when the gospel spreads, we shall then find that when every heart is full of it, it will be impossible for us to tolerate the very name of war; for when God has broken the bow and burned the chariot, we shall break the image and dash the sculpture into a thousand atoms. We shall think, when the trade is done, that the men who did it may well be forgotten.

II

I think there is enough to cheer our hearts and nerve us all for the great battle of Christ. The desolations of the past should lead us to hope that there shall be the like, and greater, in the future. And now I am to look upon my text, and very briefly, *as a prophecy which is to be fulfilled.*

I should only needlessly occupy your time, if I were to go over all my heads again, because really every person will be quite as competent as I am to discern how what hath been shall be in a yet higher sense. But we must observe once more, in noticing this as a prophecy, the figure of our

PREPARING THE WAY

text. It was usual, after a great battle, and especially if peace was then firmly established, for the conquerors to gather up the arms of the vanquished into one great heap, and then setting fire to it all, as Israel did to the spoils of Jericho, everything was consumed. One of these days, when Christ shall come in his glory, or when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ—not to say anything which would look like proclaiming the Second Coming here to-day, although I most firmly believe it, and am sorry that we should ever have allowed, in any of our missionary meetings, any discussion upon a point which involves the faith of a great proportion of us, who hold this to be as dear and precious a doctrine as any other in the word of God, and we therefore think it unfair that we should at any time have anything said against this; when we meet together in the common bond of union for the spread of the gospel of Christ, we think it a sore thing that we should be attacked then—however, leaving all that, whether it be by a spiritual or by a personal coming, we believe that one of these days, we shall be roused from our beds by one who shall say to us, “Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth”; and when we arrive at the spot appointed, it may be, as the old Ephesians brought out all their books and burned them in the street, we shall see our soldiers, marching rank and file, lay down their arms, and all that they have of murderous implements, piling them into one heap; and happy is that mother’s child who shall be there to see it! But see it someone shall, when it shall be truly said, as the fire is kindled over all these things, “He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.”

Happy the day when every war-horse shall be houghed, when every spear shall become a pruning-hook, and every sword shall be made to till the soil which once it stained with blood. It is of that my text prophesies, and my text

naturally brings me to that, as the great climax of the gospel dispensation. This will be the last triumph of Christ ; before death itself shall be dead, death's great jackal, war, must die also, and then shall there be peace on earth, and the angel shall say, " I have gone up and down through the earth, and the earth sitteth still and is at rest ; I heard no tumult of war, nor noise of battle." This is what we hope for. Let us fight on, with diligence and earnestness.

And now, having thus enlarged upon my text, you will permit me to offer a few remarks on a more practical subject. There are many reasons, I think, why we do not prosper as we could desire in the missionary field ; and permit me very briefly to hint at one or two. I shall mean no offence to any.

One reason is, because we have not a thorough and entire unanimity with regard to the matter. Now, I know something of the Baptist denomination. I have wandered through every county of England, pretty well, and been to a great number of the churches ; and I grieve to see that there are many of our churches still standing totally aloof from the missionary field. If they stood aloof from our particular society I might not so much regret, if they chose to have one of their own ; but they have not one of their own either. There is the great thing for which I would blame them. That they should have some objection to unite with those whom they think to be different from them in doctrinal opinions would not only be excusable, but possibly there might be occasions when it would be praiseworthy ; but that any of us, who hold strongly the doctrines of the grace of God, and who, perhaps, give greater prominence than others to the truth as it was taught by Calvin, and, as we believe, taught by Christ, should therefore have no missionary society, is a great and crying sin ; and I really think that a defection of a large part of our body, however it may be caused, may be one reason why we have not had such an abundant blessing from God.

PREPARING THE WAY

For look ye here! Ye say ye can do without them. Very well; so said the people to Joshua, when he led his troops to attack Ai. They said, "Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai; and make not all the people to labour thither; for they are but few." They thought it would be unnecessary, and Joshua left behind him a large part, and only took with him his strong, able-bodied men. But, together with "the accursed thing" that Achan had concealed, I believe that the want of all the army of Israel was a part-cause of the defeat of Ai. So it is with us. Ah! if there be a means whereby we can get every brother who calls himself a Baptist to unite himself with this Society, if there be any method of love, if there be any way of making concessions, if there be any mode or any means whereby we all could be bound together in the holy brotherhood as a denomination, I think we are each of us bound to make it. I am sure, as far as I am concerned, I may say that there is not to be found upon the surface of the world one more strongly attached to the old faith, as I believe it to be—the old, strong, doctrinal faith—coupled with the earnest preaching of the gospel to every creature; yet I find myself not out of place in preaching for a Baptist Mission, nor out of place in helping it, and throwing my whole heart into it. It seems to me, it was founded by ourselves: the very men who held these truths were the first leaders in it; and it seems to me the most strange and marvellous thing that any brother should, from his love to sound doctrine, stand aloof from missions. I am sure it is a stab against our prosperity as churches at home if we do not come forward to help the missions at large.

I am just saying this because it may reach to the ears of many of the brethren who are possibly not present to-day. I trust they will think the matter over. We do not ask them to come with us—we will be very glad if they will—but do let them at the very least have a Society of their own. Let them be doing something, and do not let it be said that

there is a Baptist existing who does not love to send the gospel to the utmost ends of the earth. That maniac nonsense about God doing his own work, and our sitting still and doing nothing, ought to have been buried long ago. I know not how to characterise it : it has done us immense damage. We know that God has accomplished his own work ; but he always has worked and always will work with means.

It is, I believe, one reason of our want of success, or of that measure of want of success that we have, that there is not a true love of missions in the churches that really help them. Many love missions ; they love the cause of Christ ; but they do not love Zion better than their own households ; but, as far as I can judge, there are many whose attention to the mission field is confined to that one day in the year when the sermon is preached. Some of them confine that day very closely too ; for the very smallest threepenny piece that can be discovered is appropriated to the collection on that occasion. They love the mission, yes, they do ; but their love is that old sort of which it is said, "*She never told her love.*" They never tell it by any contribution, but they keep it very still in their hearts. We cannot think but that they do desire that the gospel should fly abroad, for they sing it with lusty lungs and with voice vociferous ; but when there is aught to be done, they pinch and screw—the purse-string is made half the ordinary circumference, and it cannot be undrawn. There is little to be given for Christ. Christ must take the dregs, the sweepings of their wealth. Ah ! if our churches loved missions, if we had more of the true Spirit in our midst, we should find scores of our young men rising up to go out and preach the gospel to the heathen ; and then the church, taking an interest in the young men who sprang from its own bowels, would think it its duty to maintain its missionary, and send him forth preaching the gospel to every creature.

I remember Edward Irving once preached a sermon to

PREPARING THE WAY

a vast congregation, upon missions ; I think he preached for four hours ; and the object of the sermon was to prove that we were all wrong—that we ought to send out our missionaries without purse or scrip, giving them nothing ! Edward never volunteered to go himself ! If he had done so at the end of the sermon, we might have endorsed his philosophy. But he stayed at home, and did not go. Now, we are no believers in that. We think that if a man cannot have help, it is his business to go without it. If a man loves the ministry, if he can only preach Christ's gospel in poverty, God bless him in his poverty ; if he has to be a tent maker, like Paul, and to work for his own living, and to go forth without purse or scrip ! But as a church we cannot have that. " No, no," we say ; " brother, if you are going to a foreign land, and you give your life and health, and if you renounce the comforts of your family, we cannot let you go without anything. The least we can do is to provide for your needs." And one says, " There ! though you go without purse or scrip, you cannot get across the sea except you have a ship ; I will pay your passage-money." Another says, " You cannot preach to these people without learning the language ; and while you are learning the language you must eat and drink. It is quite impossible that you can live by faith, unless you have something that you can nourish your body with : there is the fund to support you, that you may give all your time to the preaching of the word."

Ah ! if we did but love Christ better, my brothers and sisters, if we lived nearer to the cross, if we knew more of the value of His blood, if we wept like Him over Jerusalem, if we felt more what it was for souls to perish, and what it was for men to be saved—if we did but rejoice with Christ in the prospect of His seeing the travail of his soul, and being abundantly satisfied—if we did but delight more in the divine decree that the kingdoms of this world *shall* be given to Christ, I am sure we should all of us find more ways and more means for sending forth the gospel of Christ.

But to conclude. Perhaps, I may say, and some of you may with tears confess it is true, it is a want of a revived godliness in our church at home which prevents our hoping for any great success abroad. Ah! brethren, we must till our own vineyards better, or else God will not make us successful in driving the plough across the broad acres of the continents. We want to have our brethren more earnest in prayer. We want to have them more earnest in labour. Look at many of our agencies, dying for want of effective labourers, when they are to be found, but they are not willing to come forth. Where is the zeal of olden times? We are not among those that say, "The former times were better than now." In some respects they were, in others not so good; but if they were better, it is not ours to bemoan, but ours to labour to make these better still. We want—gathering up all things into one—we want the outpouring of the divine Spirit in our churches at home. Just as the anointing oil was first poured on Aaron's head, and then went to the skirts of the garment, so must the Holy Spirit be poured on England, and then shall it go to the utmost borders of the habitable earth. We want to have Pentecosts at home, and then Medes and Parthians and Elamites shall hear the word. "Begin at Jerusalem," is Christ's ordinance, and it is Christ's method. We must begin there; and as we begin there, in circles wider and wider and wider yet the gospel shall spread, till, "like a sea of glory, it spreads from pole to pole."

Now, dear brethren and sisters, in repairing to our homes this morning, let us carry away at least one thought. Let us believe firmly that God's purpose shall be accomplished; let us hope joyously that we may be the instruments of its accomplishment; and then let us labour prayerfully, that our wishes may be consummated. What is there that you can do to-day for Christ? Oh! if you love Christ, do not let this day pass till you have done something for Him. Speak for Him; give to Him; pray for Him. But let each day be spent as a mission day, and be you each day a

PREPARING THE WAY

missionary for Christ. Begin at home. Enlarge your charity; but begin first at home. Let your own houses be cared for, and then your own synagogues; and then, after that, you may send your missionaries to every part of the earth.

I beg for a good collection to-day. It is the first time we have met together in this place, and there is a large number of us; if we do not give a right good collection to-day, we shall not save our own credit. That is a poor way of putting it. It will be a disgrace to us if we do not give well to-day; but besides that, if we save not our own credit, we shall not approve our love to Jesus. Give as God hath given to you.

JOHN RYLAND, D.D.

THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS

DUTCH CHURCH,
AUSTIN FRIARS, LONDON,
JUNE 24TH, 1812.

"The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this."—Isaiah ix. 7.



THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS



THE whole paragraph, of which this is the close, contains one of the most express and sublime predictions of the Messiah in all the Old Testament. His supreme dignity and the wonderful constitution of his person is intimated, in the strongest terms, in the sixth verse ; and the extent and continuance of his kingdom is absolutely ascertained in the former part of the seventh, &c., while this concluding clause points out the ground from whence we may expect the certain accomplishment of this glorious event.

I

Let us consider the work to be performed. The erection and extension of the Messiah's kingdom.

The object to be accomplished is to restore guilty rebels to the divine favour, and also to bring them into a state of voluntary cordial subjection to God : spreading the gospel all through the globe, completing the number of God's elect, and replenishing the heavenly world with souls redeemed from among men, and placed in a state of indefectible and eternal bliss.

II

To form a proper estimate of the greatness of this work, *let us consider the obstacles to be surmounted.*

Darkness had covered the earth, gross darkness had enveloped the people. Even of Israel JeHoVaH had said, "Who is blind as my servant, or deaf as he to whom my messengers have been sent ?" For the bulk of the people practically said, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." And among other nations, the true character of God was totally unknown.

But if the dignity, purity, and rectitude of JeHoVaH are realized, how can sinners hope to enjoy His favour, since to

THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS

Him vengeance belongeth, and it is evidently His place to punish transgressors? How then can they expect to find acceptance with Him? Or, how can He be just, and yet justify the ungodly? The difficulty could be solved only by that wonderful person, mentioned in the preceding verse; and the intimations there suggested are fully explained in the New Testament.

But another source of difficulties is this, that when a way of salvation, worthy of all acceptation, was revealed; though it suited the circumstances of sinners, yet it did not suit the dispositions of their hearts: yea, their aversion to it was so great that none but God could subdue it. Moreover, when sinners are brought to believe in Christ they must still be kept, by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation. They have numberless backslidings to be healed, innumerable wants to be supplied; must be supported under multiplied trials; must be corrected in measure, with great judgment and gentleness; and be kept as carefully as a man keeps the apple of his eye. They must be supported in the prospects of natural death, and many of them in the pangs of a violent death; multitudes being exposed to the trial of bonds and imprisonments, and others enabled to glorify the Lord in the fire, and made to triumph on the rack, or at the stake.

Such difficulties as we have enumerated need, in every age, to be surmounted for each individual. Besides which, various obstacles have been presented to the general spread of the gospel, some of which have been moved already, but others still remain to be taken away. At its first propagation by the apostles, the gospel had to encounter violent opposition, both from the Jews and from Pagans; from scoffing philosophers, interested priests, and imperial persecutors. When external opposition abated, internal divisions and erroneous opinions multiplied. In the East, the worship of images, and various superstitions and errors prevailed. In the West, the apostate church of Rome became more and more corrupt, till her Pontiff seated himself in the temple of

God, and trampled on the necks of kings. When evangelical religion was revived at the reformation, new persecutions, errors, and divisions arose. At the present time, there is much coldness and formality among nominal Protestants. Too much of a sectarian spirit infects even good men, like Judah vexing Ephraim, and Ephraim envying Judah. The more important Articles of Faith, on which all good men agree, seem less to unite them than far inferior differences to divide them.

III

Let us consider the pledge of success here given ; The zeal of the Lord of Hosts.

JeHoVaH, the God of Hosts, Whom all the armies of heaven delight to obey, will perform this ; and that from an ardent zeal for His own glory, which is most completely and inseparably connected with the attainment of this object. As I live, hath JeHoVaH said, the whole earth shall be full of My glory. Nor can He be more zealous for this object than it deserves. He has already done the greatest thing of all. The Son of God has become the son of man. The Prince of life expired on the accursed tree. He that knew no sin was made a sacrifice for sin. And now God must not only miss His glory, but be unspeakably dishonoured, if Christ should not have a full reward. His Spirit is able to ensure the application of redemption, by working effectually on the heart. Cannot many now present bear witness to this truth ? You hath he quickened who some time ago were sinfully dead to God. He has already triumphed gloriously over the powers of darkness. Reflect on what God has wrought, in the primitive Age ; at the time of the Reformation, and in subsequent periods ; and now, blessed be God, that in divers parts of India, at Calcutta, in Jessore, and Orissa, there is room for gratitude to exclaim, What hath God wrought !

He is never at a loss for instruments to carry on His work. He can find them where He will, or make them of what He

THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS

will. He can check and restrain His enemies, at His pleasure, and can over-rule opposition, to subserve and promote His cause. Yea, He can turn the most violent opposers into faithful and indefatigable labourers.

And now, what improvement shall we make of this important subject? Since it is here declared, the zeal of JeHoVaH shall perform the work, shall we leave it wholly to Him, and not exert ourselves in His cause, nor shew any concern for the accomplishment of that object on which His heart is so peculiarly set? Will His zeal be an excuse for our indifference? If we mind inferior things, and engage with far greater ardour in other pursuits, will that prove our hearts to be in unison with the heart of God our Saviour? Will it shew that we are truly on the Lord's side, and shall certainly be owned by Him another day, as His devoted servants, loyal subjects, courageous soldiers, and dear children?

Do some plead that they fear the time is not yet at hand, and, therefore, it will be money thrown away, to employ it at present in missions to the heathen? Can that be thrown away, which may evince your love to Christ, and your compassion to the souls of men? He that shall judge the world has declared that a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not lose its reward. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons, which the Father has reserved in His own power: but we are sure that it is high time for us to awake out of sleep, and shew that we are alive in the cause of God; it is high time, as brother Carey observed, when I heard him last at Nottingham Association, 1792, to expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God.

But who hath despised the day of small things? He, that made all things out of nothing, hath not despised it. He, that raised up the righteous man from the East, and called him to His foot, hath not despised it. He hath not despised it, who caused as many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is on the sea-shore

innumerable, to spring from one, and him as good as dead. The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, who united Himself to the Babe born in a stable at Bethlehem, hath not despised it.

On October 5, 1783, I baptized in the river Nen, a little beyond Dr. Doddridge's meeting-house, at Northampton, a poor journeyman shoe-maker, little thinking that before nine years had elapsed, he would prove the first instrument of forming a Society for sending missionaries from England to preach the gospel to the heathen; and much less foreseeing that he would become a professor of languages in an Oriental College, and the translator of the Scriptures into eleven different languages!

Such however, as the event has proved, was the purpose of the Most High; Who selected for this work, not the son of one of our most learned ministers, nor of one of our most opulent dissenting gentlemen, but the son of a parish clerk, of Paulers Pury, in Northamptonshire. Accordingly, on Oct. 2, 1792, I witnessed, in a little back parlour at Kettering, the first formation of a small society, which began with a subscription of *thirteen pounds, two shillings, and sixpence*; and of which this William Carey the elder was the founder, who is now superintending the printing and publication of the Scriptures in twenty-four different languages! Three of these had been made several years ago (the Tamul, the Cingalese, and the Malay) by missionaries in the countries where those languages are respectively spoken. Four more, the Malayalim, the Persian, the Arabic, and the Arabico-Hindosthanee, are carrying on by other translators. A man who was, less than fourteen years ago, the master of Broadmead charity school, at Bristol, has translated the New Testament into Chinese, and good part of the Old. All the rest (except the Burman, by his son Felix) are chiefly the labour of brother Carey, who considers himself as responsible for their correctness.

I pray, my brethren, that the zeal of the Lord of hosts may enkindle our zeal: and may we shew that our zeal is

THE ZEAL OF THE LORD OF HOSTS

truly zeal for God, not mere party-zeal. We are obliged to act distinctly, as we conscientiously differ from our brethren, upon a practical point which must become apparent, as soon as one person is converted from heathenism who has young children. The controversies which divide other denominations from each other may be longer deferred; indeed there is scarcely any room for them to be agitated, till a large district has embraced the gospel. But we cordially rejoice in the prosperity of all missions set on foot by real believers in Christ Jesus. And our brethren in India have uniformly discovered a spirit of kindness towards their fellow-labourers sent out by other societies. Nor is there anything for which I more sincerely and earnestly pray than that both they and we may ever be kept from all party-spirit, from all self-seeking, and from all self-confidence and vain boasting.

Never, indeed, may we listen to that spurious moderation, which requires a dereliction of principle, or a disregard to what we believe to be most agreeable to the word of God: but never may we lay an undue stress on those things wherein they may differ who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. All who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity shall share in our love; all who appear to be led by the Spirit of God shall be acknowledged as the children of God, and as our dear brethren; yet we will follow none of them farther than we see them following the footsteps of Christ. But nothing in which bad men can possibly unite shall unite us so closely as those things in which good men cannot disagree.

On the behalf of our dear brethren, we bless God for what He has done for them and by them. We rejoice in their success, their diligence, their concord, their humility: but if He should honour them more and more, we pray that they, and we also, may rejoice with trembling. We are aware that no man should glory in men. Were *we* to give them the honour that belongs to their Lord, they would be grieved

if they knew it, and alarmed lest we should bring a blast on their labours : and were they to begin to ascribe the honour to themselves, we should expect them to meet with a more certain and severe rebuke.

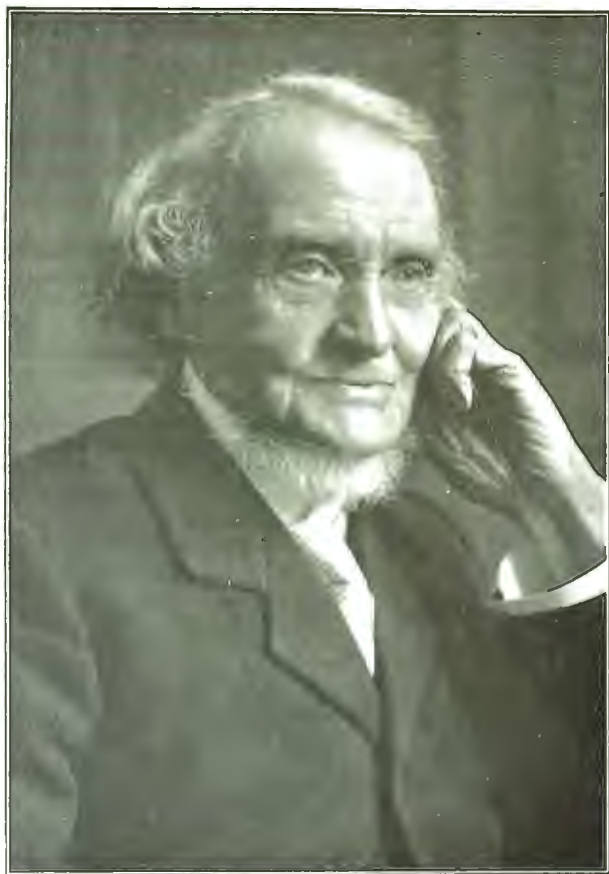
The zeal of the Lord of hosts has done all that has been wrought ; the zeal of the Lord of hosts must perform all that is achieved in future. Our zeal is but a spark kindled by the rays of that sun of righteousness which warms and illumines all the realms of bliss. But, from the infinite ardour of His zeal, we confidently expect to see all the earth enlightened with His glory, all nations submitting to His government, all the tribes of mankind rejoicing in His salvation.

ALEXANDER MACLAREN, D.D.

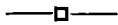
CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN
WORLD

SURREY CHAPEL, LONDON.
APRIL 27TH, 1864.

“ Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ; them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice ; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.”—John x. 16.



CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN WORLD



THERE were many strange and bitter lessons in this discourse for the false shepherds, the Pharisees, to whom it was first spoken. But there was not one which would jar more upon their minds, and, as they fancied, on their most sacred convictions, than this—that God's flock was wider than God's fold.

During His earthly life our Lord, as we know, confined His own personal ministry for the most part to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Not exclusively so, for He made at least one journey into the coast of Tyre and Sidon, teaching and healing; a Syrophœnician woman held His feet, and received her request, and one of His miracles—of feeding the multitude—was wrought for hungry Gentiles. But while His work was in Israel, it was for mankind; and while "this fold," generally speaking, circumscribed His toils, it did not confine His love nor His thoughts. The words before us we may regard as containing lessons from our Lord Himself of how He looked, and would have us look, on the heathen world, on His work and ours, and on the certain issues of both.

I

We have here *Christ teaching us how to think of the heathen world*. Observe that the words are not a declaration that all mankind are His sheep. The previous verses have distinctly defined a class of men as possessing the name, and the succeeding ones reiterate the definition, and with equal distinctness exclude another class. "Ye believe not, because ye are not My sheep, as I said unto you." His sheep are they who know Him, and are known of Him.

CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN WORLD

He is speaking not of a relation which all men bear to Him by virtue of their creation, but of one which *they* bear to Him who believe in His name.

Now this interpretation of the words does by no means contradict, but rather presupposes and rests upon, the truth that all mankind come within the love of the Divine heart, that He died for all, that all are the subjects of His mediatorial kingdom, recipients of the offered mercy of God in Christ, and committed to the stewardship of the missionary Church. Resting upon these truths, the words of our text advance a step farther and contemplate those who "shall hereafter believe on Me." Whether they be few or many is not the matter in hand. Whether at any future time they shall include all the dwellers upon earth is not the matter in hand. That every soul of man is included in the adaptation and intention and offer of the Gospel is not the matter in hand. But this is the matter in hand—that Jesus Christ in that moment of lofty elevation when He looked onwards to giving His life for the sheep, looked outwards also, far afield, and saw in every nation and people souls that He knew were His, and would one day know Him, and be led by Him in green pastures and beside still waters.

1. He does not mean that already they had heard His voice, and were following His steps, and knew His love, and had received eternal life at His hand. This He cannot mean, for the plain reason that He goes on to speak of His "bringing" them and of their "hearing," as a work yet to be done. It can only be, then, that He speaks of them thus in the fullness of that divine knowledge which calls things that are not as though they were. It is, then, a prophetic word which He speaks here.

We have only to think of the condition of the civilised heathendom of Christ's own day in order to feel the force of our text in its primary application. While the work of salvation was being prepared for the world in the life and death of our Lord, the world was being prepared for

the tidings of salvation. Everywhere men were losing their faith in their idols, and longing for some deliverer. Some had become weary of the hollowness of philosophical speculation and, like Pilate, were asking, "What is Truth?" whilst, unlike him, they waited for an answer, and will believe it when it comes from the lips of the Incarnate wisdom. Such were the Magi who were led by their starry science to His cradle, and went back to the depths of the Eastern lands with a better light than had guided them thither. Such were not a few of the early Christian converts, who had long been seeking hopelessly for goodly pearls, and had so been learning to know the worth of the One when it was offered to them. There were men who had been long sickening with despair amidst the rottenness of decaying mythologies and corrupting morals, and longing for some breath from heaven to blow health to themselves and to the world, and had so been learning to welcome the rushing mighty wind when it came in power. There were simple souls without as well as within, the chosen people waiting for the consolation, though they knew not whence it was to come. There were many who had already learned to believe that salvation is of the Jews, though they had still to learn that salvation is in Jesus. Such were that Æthiopian statesman who was poring over Isaiah when Philip joined him, the Roman centurion at Cæsarea whose prayers and alms came up with acceptance before God, those Greeks of the West who came to His cross as the Eastern sages to His cradle, and were in Christ's eyes the advanced guard and first scattered harbingers of the flocks who should fly for refuge to Him lifted on the cross, like doves to their windows. The whole world showed that the fullness of time had come; and the history of the early years of the Church reveals in how many souls the process of preparation had been silently going on. It was like the flush of early spring, when all the buds that have been maturing and swelling in the cold, burst, and the tender flowers that have been reaching upwards to the

CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN WORLD

surface in all the hard winter laugh out in beauty, and a green rain covers all the hedges at the first flash of the April sun.

Nor only these were in our Lord's thoughts when He sees His sheep in heathen lands. There were many who had no such previous preparation, but were plunged in all the darkness, nor knew that it was dark. Not only those wearied of idolatry, and dissatisfied with creeds outworn, but the barbarous people of Illyricum, the profligates of Corinth, hard, rude men like the jailer at Philippi, and many more, were before His penetrating eye. He who sees beneath the surface, and beyond the present, beholds His sheep where men can only see wolves. He sees an Apostle in the blaspheming Paul, a teacher for all generations in the African Augustine while yet a sensualist and a Manichee, a reformer in the eager monk Luther, a poet-evangelist in the tinker Bunyan. He sees the future saint in the present sinner, the angel's wings budding on many a shoulder where the world's burdens lie heavy, and the new name written on many a forehead that as yet bears but the mark of the beast and the number of his name.

2. And the sheep whom He sees while He speaks are not only the men of that generation. These mighty words are world-wide and world-lasting. The whole of the ages are in His mind. All nations are gathered before His prophetic vision, even as they shall one day be gathered before His judgment throne, and in all the countless mass His hand touches and His love clasps those who to the very end of time shall come to His call with loving faith, shall follow His steps with glad obedience.

Thus does Christ look out upon the world that lay beyond the fold. I cannot stay to do more than refer in passing to the spirit which the words of our text breathe. There is the lofty consciousness that He is the leader and guide, the friend and helper of all, that He stands solitary in His power to bless. There is the full confidence that the

earth is His to its uttermost border. There is the clear vision of the sorrowful condition of these heathen people, without a shepherd and without a fold, wandering on every high mountain and dying in every thirsty land where there is no water. There is the tenderest pity and yearning love for them in their extremity. There is the clear assurance that they will come and be blessed in Him. I pass by all the other thoughts which naturally found themselves on these words in order to urge the one which is most appropriate to our present engagement. Let us, dear brethren, take Christ as our pattern in our contemplations of the heathen world.

3. He has set us the example of an outgoing look directed far beyond the limits of existing churches, far beyond the point of present achievement. We are but too apt to circumscribe our operative thoughts and our warm sympathies within the circle of our sight or of our own personal associations. Our selfishness and our indolence affect the objects of our contemplations quite as much as they do the character of our work. They vitiate both by making ourselves the great object of both, and by weakening the force of both in a ratio that increases rapidly with the increasing distance from that favourite centre. It is but a subtler form of the same disease which keeps our thoughts penned within the bounds of any fold, or limited by the progress already achieved. For us the whole world is the possession of our Lord, who has died to redeem us. By us the whole ought to be contemplated with that same spirit of prophetic confidence which filled Him when He said, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." To press onwards, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, is the only fitting attitude for Christian men, either in regard to the gradual purifying of their own characters, or in regard to the gradual winning of the world for Christ. We ought to make all the past successes stepping-stones to nobler things. The true use of the present is to reach up from it to a loftier

CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN WORLD

future. The distance beckons. Well for us if it does not beckon us in vain.

4. He has set us the example of a penetrating gaze into heathenism, which reveals beneath its monotonous miseries the souls that are His. We ought to look on every field of Christian effort with the assurance that there are some there who will hear His voice. As it was when He came, so it is ever and everywhere. The world is being prepared for the Gospel. In some broad regions, faith in idolatry is dying out, and the moral condition of the people is undergoing a slow elevation. Individuals are being weaned from their gods, they know not how, and they will not know why till they hear of Christ. He sees in every land where the Gospel is being taken a people prepared for the Lord. He sees the gold gleaming in the crevices of the caves, the gems rough and unpolished lying in the matrix. He looks not merely on the great mass of idolaters, but He sees the single souls who shall hear. It is for us to look on the same mass with confidence caught from His. Christ's sheep will be found coming out of the midst of wolves and goats. Darkness may cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but if we look upon it as Christ did, and as He would have us to look, we shall see lights flickering here and there in the obscurity which shall burst out into a blaze. The prophet eye, the boundlessly hopeful heart, the strong confidence that in every land where He is preached there will be those who shall hear—these are what He gives us when He says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold."

5. There is one other thought connected with these words which may be briefly referred to. It is that even now, in all lands where the Gospel has been preached, there are those whom Christ has received, although they have no connection with His visible Church.

There are many goats within the fold. There are many sheep without it. Even in lands where the Gospel has long been preached, we do not venture to identify the

profession by Church fellowship with living union with Christ. Much more is this true of our missionary efforts, and the apparent converts which they make. The results that appear are no measure of the results that have actually been accomplished. We often hear of men who had caught up some stray word in a Bengali market-place, or received a tract by the roadside from some passing missionary, and who, having carried away the seed in their hearts, had long been living as Christians, remote from all churches, and unknown by any. We can easily conceive that timidity in some cases, and distance in others, swells the ranks of these secret disciples. Though they follow not the footsteps of the flock, the Shepherd will lead them in their solitude. There will be many more names in the Lamb's Book of Life, depend upon it, than ever are written on the roll calls of our Churches, or in missionary statistics.

What confidence, then, what tender pity, what hope should fill our minds when we look on the heathen world! We must never be contented with present achievements. We are committed to a task which cannot end till all the world hears the joyful sound and is blessed by walking in the light of His countenance. When the great Roman Catholic Missionary, the Apostle of the East, was lying on his dying bed among the barbarous people whom he loved, his passing spirit was busy about his work, and, even in the article of death, while the glaring eye saw clearly no more and the ashen lips had begun to stiffen into eternal silence, visions of further conquests flashed before him, and his last word was "*Amplius*"—*Onward*. It ought to be the motto of the missionary work of us who boast a purer faith to carry to the heathen and to fire our own souls. If ever we are tempted to repose, to despondency, to rest and be thankful when we number up our work and our converts, let us listen to His voice as it speaks in that supreme hour when He beheld the vision of the cross, and beyond it that of a gathered world. "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold."

CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN WORLD

II

We have here *our Lord teaching us how to think of the Certain Issues of His work and ours.* "They shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." We may regard these words as embracing two things: a nearer issue—namely, the response that shall always attend His call; and a more remote—namely, the completion of His work. There is, of course, a very blessed sense in which the latter words are true now, and have been ever since Paul could say to those who had been aliens from the commonwealth of Israel: "He hath made both one. Now, therefore, ye are no more foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints." But the fold which now exists, limited in numbers, with its members but partially conscious of their unity, and surrounded by those who follow hireling shepherds, does not exhaust these great words. They shall not be accomplished till a far-off future have come.

But for the present we have the predictions of the former clause, "They shall hear My voice." What manner of expectations does it teach us to cherish? It seems to speak not of universal reception of Christ's message, but of some as hearing and some as forbearing. It teaches us to look for divers results attending our missionary work. There will always be a Dionysius the Areopagite, the woman Lydia, the kindly barbarians, the conscience-stricken jailer. There will always be the laughers, who mock when they hear of Jesus and the resurrection; the hesitating who compound with conscience by promising to hear again of this matter, the fierce opponents who invoke constituted authorities or mob violence to crush the message.

Again, the words seem to contemplate a long task. There is nothing about the rate at which His kingdom shall spread, not a syllable to answer inquiries as to when the end shall come. The whole tone of the language suggests the idea that bringing back the sheep is to take a long time, and

to cost many a tedious journey into the wilderness. Not a sudden outburst, but a slow kindling of the flame, is what our Lord teaches us here to expect.

But while thus calm in tone and moderate in expectation, the words breathe a hope as confident as it is calm, as clear as it is moderate. There will always be a response. His voice shall never be lifted up in the snowstorm on lonely hillsides only to be blown back into His own ears, unheard and unheeded. Be they few or many, they shall hear. Be the toil longer or shorter, more or less severe, it shall not be in vain.

And to these expectations we shall do wisely if we attune ours. Omit from your hopes what your Lord has omitted from His promises, do not ask what He has not told. Do not wonder if you encounter what He met, for the disciple is not greater than his Master, and only if they have kept my saying will they keep yours also. But, on the other hand, expect as much as He has prophesied; accept it when it comes as the fruit of His work, not of yours, and build a firm faith that your labour shall not be in vain on these calm and prescient words.

So much for the course of the kingdom. And what of the end? One by one the sheep have been brought, at last they are all gathered in, not a hoof left behind. The stars steal singly into their places in the heavens, as the darkness deepens, and He "bringeth them forth by number," until at the noon of night the sky is crowded with their lights, and "for that He is great in power, not one faileth." What expectations are we here taught to cherish, then, of the final issue?

1. Mark, to begin with, that there is implied the ultimate universality of His dominion and sole supremacy of His throne. There is to be but one Shepherd, and over all the earth a great unity of obedience to Him. Here is the knell of all authority that does not own Him, and the subordination of all that does. The hirelings, the blind guides, that have misled and afflicted humanity for so

CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN WORLD

many weary ages, shall be all sunk in oblivion. The false gods shall be discrowned, and lie shattered on their temple-sill, and there shall be no worshippers to care for or try to repair their discomfiture. Bow your heads before Him, thinkers who have led men on devious paths and spoken but a partial truth, and a wisdom all confused with foolishness! Lower your swords before Him, warriors who have builded your cities on blood, and led men like sheep to the slaughter! He is more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.

Cast your crowns before Him, princes and all judges of the earth, for He is King by right of the crown of thorns! This is the Lord of all—teacher, leader, ruler of men. All other names shall be forgotten, but His shall abide. If they have been shepherds who would not come in by the door, a ransomed world shall rejoice over their fall with the ancient hymn, "Other gods beside Thee have had dominion over us; they are dead, they shall not live, Thou hast destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish." If they have been subject to the Chief Shepherd and ensamples to the flock, they will rejoice to decrease before His increase, and, having helped to bring the bride to the bridegroom, will gladly stand aside and be forgotten in the perfect love that enters into full fruition at the last. Then, when none contest nor intercept the reverential obedience that the whole world brings to Him, shall be fulfilled the firm promise which declared long ago: "I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He will feed them and be their Shepherd."

2. Mark again the blessed nature of the relation between Christ and all men which is here foretold. From of old, the shepherd has been in all nations the emblem of kingly power, of leadership of every sort. How often the fact has contradicted the symbol let history tell. But with Jesus the reality does not only contradict, but even transcends the tender old comparison. He rules with a gentle sway. His sceptre is no rod of iron, but the

shepherd's crook, and the inmost meaning of its use is that it may "comfort" us, as David learned to feel. There gather round the metaphor all thoughts of merciful guidance, of tender care, of a helping arm when we are weak, of a loving bosom where we are carried when we are weary. It speaks of a seeking love that roams over every high hill till it finds, and of a strong shoulder that bears us back when He has found. It tells of sweet hours of rest in the hot noontide by still waters, of ample provision for all the soul's longings in green pastures. It speaks of foot-steps that go before, in which men may follow and find them ways of pleasantness. It speaks of gentle callings by name which draw the heart. It speaks of defence when lion and bear come ravening down, and of safe couching by night when the silent stars behold the sleeping sheep and the wakeful shepherd. He Himself gives its highest significance to the emblem in the words of this great discourse when He fixes on His knowledge, His calling of His sheep, His going before them, His giving His life for them. Such are the gracious blessings which here He teaches us to think of as possessed, in the happy days that shall be, by all the world.

And, on the other hand, the symbol speaks of confiding love in the hearts of men, of a great peacefulness, of meek obedience stilling and gladdening their wills, of the consciousness of His perfect love, and the knowledge of all His gracious character, of sweet answering communion with Him, of safety from all enemies, of freedom, of familiar passage in and out to God. Thus knit together shall be the one fold and the one Shepherd. "They shall feed in the way, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them, for He that hath mercy on them shall feed them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them."

3. Mark, again, what a vision is here given of the relations of men with one another.

CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN WORLD

They are to be all gathered into a peaceful unity. They are to be one, because they all hearken to one voice. It is to be observed that our Lord does not say, as our English Bible makes Him say, that there is to be one fold. He drops that word of set purpose in the latter clause of our text, and substitutes for it another which may perhaps be best rendered "flock." Why this change in the expression? Because, as it would seem, He would have us learn that the unity of that blessed future time is not to be like the unity of the Jewish Church, a formal and external one. That ancient polity was a fold. It held its members together by outward bonds of uniformity. But the universal Church of the future is to be a flock. It is to be really and visibly one. But it is to be so, not because it is hemmed in by one enclosure, but because it is to be gathered round one Shepherd. The more closely they are drawn to Him, the more near will they be to each other. The centre in which all the radii meet keeps them all in their places. We, being many, are one bread, for we are all partakers of that one bread. In the ritual of the Old Covenant, the great golden candlestick with its seven branches stood in the court of the Temple, emblem of the formal oneness of the people, which was then the light of the Lord to a dark world. In the vision of the New Covenant, the seer in Patmos beheld not the one lamp with its branches, but the seven golden candlesticks, which were made into a holier and a freer unity, because the Son of Man walked in their midst—emblem of the oneness in diversity of the peoples, who were sometimes darkness, but shall one day be light in the Lord.

The words, however, suggest for us the blessed thought of the peaceful relations that shall then subsist among men. The tribes of the earth shall couch beside each other like the quiet sheep in the fold, and, having learned of His great meekness, they shall no more bite nor devour one another. National distinctions may abide, but national enmities—the oldest and deepest—shall disappear. There

shall still be Assyria, and Egypt, and Israel, but their former relation shall be replaced by a bond of amity in their common possession of Him who is our peace.

Such are the thoughts which our Lord would teach us as to the present and as to the future of our missionary work. For the one, moderate expectations of success not unchequered by disappointment, and a brave patience in long toil. For the other, hopes which cannot be too glowing, and a faith which cannot be too obstinate. The one is being fulfilled in our own and our brethren's experience even now; we may be therefore all the more sure that the other shall be in due time.

Our missionary work is the pure and inevitable result of a belief in these words of my text. Can a man believe that Christ has other sheep, for whom He died because He must bring them in, whom He will bring in because He died, and *not* work according to his power in the line of the Divine purposes? The missionary spirit is but the Christian spirit working in one particular direction. Missionary societies are but one of the authentic outcomes of Christian principles, as natural as holiness of life, or the act of prayer.

To secure, then, a more vigorous energy in such work, we need chiefly what we need for all Christian growth—namely, more and deeper communion with Christ, a more vivid realisation of His grace and love for ourselves. And then we need that, under the double stimulus of His love and of His commandment—which at bottom are one—our minds should be more frequently occupied with this subject of Christian missions. Most of us know too little about the matter to feel very much. And then we need that we should more seriously reflect upon the facts in relation to our own personal responsibility and duty. You complain of the triteness of such appeals as this sermon. Brethren, have you ever tried that recipe for freshening up well-worn truths—namely, thinking about them in connection with the simplest, most important of all

CHRIST AND THE HEATHEN WORLD

questions: What, then, ought I to do in view of these truths? Am I exaggerating when I say that not one-half of the professing Christians of our day give an hour in the year to pondering that question, with reference to missionary work? Oh! dear friends, see to it that you live in Christ for yourselves, and then see to it that you think His thoughts about the heathen world, till your pity is stirred and your mind braced to the firm resolve that you too will work the works of Christ, and bring in the wanderers.

We have had as large results as Christ has led us to expect, and far larger than we deserved. Christian missions are yet in their infancy—alas! that it should be so!

“ They feed from Judah’s land,
The dreaded Infant’s hand.”

But the past is no measure of the future. From the very nature of the undertaking, the ratio of progress increases at a rapid rate. The first ten years of labour in India showed twenty-seven converts, the seventh ten showed more than twenty-seven thousand. The preparation may be as slow as the solemn gathering of the thunder-clouds, as they noiselessly steal into their places, and slowly upheave their grey billowing crests; the final success may be as swift as the lightning which flashes in an instant from one side of the heavens to the other. It takes long years to hew the tunnel, to make the crooked way straight, and the rough places plain, and then, smooth and fleet, the great power rushes along the rails. To us the cry comes, “ Prepare ye in the desert an highway for our God.” The toil is sore and long, but “ the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” The Alpine summits lie white and ghastly in the spring sunshine, and it seems to pour ineffectual beams on their piled cold, but by slow degrees it is silently loosing the bands of the snow, and after a while a goat’s step, as it passes along a rocky ledge, or a breath of wind, will move a tiny particle, and in an

instant its motion spreads over a mile of mountain side, and the avalanche is rushing swifter and mightier at every foot down to the valley below, where it will all turn into sweet water, and ripple glancing in the sunshine. Such is our work. It may seem very hopeless, and be mostly unobservable in surface results, but it is very real for all that. The conquering impulse for which our task may have been to prepare the way will be given, and then we shall wonder to see how surely the kingdom was coming, even when we observed it not. Not till the far-off issue is accomplished shall we have a right to rest, and then we, with all those He has helped us to gather to His side, shall be among that flock whom He who is at once Lamb and Shepherd, our Brother and our Lord, our Sacrifice and King, "shall feed and lead by living fountains of waters," in the sweet pastures of the upper world, where there are no ravening wolves, nor false guides, to terrify and bewilder His flock any more at all for ever.

EDWARD STEANE, D.D

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

KETTERING,
JUNE 1ST, 1842.

“ They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.”—Isaiah xl. 31.



THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS.



I SHALL endeavour in the first part of this discourse to ascertain our present position in regard to missionary work, and our capacities for it, especially as contrasted with the state of things when the Mission was founded; then to point out and illustrate some of the necessary conditions of success; and finally, to exhibit a few of the special encouragements to the continued pursuit of the great enterprise which our own times supply.

I

There are many points of view in which our position in relation to the great work of subduing the heathen to the dominion of the Son of God, and our capacities for engaging in it, contrast most favourably with those of our predecessors.

1. Amongst these I may mention, first, *that the principles on which the work proceeds are both more clearly understood and more extensively admitted amongst our churches, and by Christians at large, than they were fifty years ago.* At that period, as is well known, doctrines widely prevailed which are altogether inconsistent with efforts to propagate the gospel, and which, wherever they still obtain, are invariably found to paralyse them. The views which were held on the nature and extent of divine requirements and human ability, on the design of the atonement, and the manner in which it should be announced to the world, on the necessary connexion between the agency of man and the accomplishment of the designs of God, and on kindred subjects, were, if not for the most part, yet to a great extent, inimical to any movement of a missionary kind.

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

Nor was any moral obligation felt to be resting on the church to exert herself for the world's salvation. The binding nature of the unrepealed commission on Christians of every age, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," was not understood. The Christians of that day seemed not to know that it possessed the authority of law, or they deemed that, however imperative it might once have been, it had long become obsolete. The founders of our mission had to clear the way at every step they took; not simply to maintain the enterprise against the opposition of adversaries, but to vindicate its scriptural propriety to their friends. The church had been slumbering for ages; and not only had her indolence acquired the force of an inveterate habit, but it had enfeebled her faculties. She was not only indisposed to exertion, but incapable of perceiving why exertion should be made. Nor was this the extent of the mischief. Some there were, and those not a few, who carried the matter so far as to denounce the very design of converting the heathen as an impious interference with the prerogative of Jehovah, a profane attempt to anticipate the divine decrees, and to control the times and the seasons which the Father reserves in His own power.

All such sentiments have now well nigh disappeared from our churches. Probably, since the days of the apostles, the principles which give rise to every kind of evangelical effort were never more clearly perceived, or more firmly grasped than now. The possession of the gospel is almost universally understood to imply the obligation to propagate the gospel. It is not simply admitted to be a good work, but it is felt to be a necessary work; not merely that we may engage in it, but that we must. It is held to be a dereliction of duty, the violation of a sacred trust, of which that Christian is guilty who is content to be saved himself, and makes no effort to save others. Such professors indeed, though a few perhaps may still remain, are now rarely to be found. If occasionally we meet with

one, so unusual is the occurrence that we gaze upon him as a sort of moral curiosity, and talk with him of his obsolete opinions with something like the surprise we might be supposed to feel were we to converse with a man who had lived in the dark ages.

Something may perhaps yet require to be done to guard ourselves against discouragement in cases where, after long toil, comparatively few of the heathen are converted. And this, I think, is to be accomplished by a still more distinct apprehension of some of the principles which are involved in our work, and which some mind capable of encountering the subject, and of placing it in a satisfactory light, might more fully develop than at present I recollect to have seen done. The conversion of souls is infinitely desirable, but the desire of their conversion, as a motive for engaging in missions, should be controlled by other considerations of even superior importance. Though no soul had been converted by all our missionary labours, the sending the gospel to the heathen would still remain an imperative duty. Success is not the measure of obligation. It is a stimulus to action, but not the rule. God's words must be spoken to the nations, as anciently to the Jews, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear."

There may also be a danger of overlooking another material point. Our views of the sufficiency of the atonement should never be dissociated from the sovereignty of divine grace. When the apostle James concluded the debate on the question of subjecting the converted gentiles to circumcision, he commenced his speech in these words :— "Men and brethren, hearken unto me. Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." Now I conceive that, by modern missions, God is doing precisely the same thing as He did by the primitive efforts of the Christian church. He is visiting the gentiles, *to take out of them* a people. This was His purpose originally, and this I apprehend is

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

HIS purpose still, whatever may be ours. This purpose, then, will assuredly be accomplished. Whether in any particular field of missionary labour God have much people, as at Corinth, or whether He have but few, the people whom He has He will gather. And should it not be enough for us to be the instruments of converting these, though the rest remain in unbelief?

Let me add yet a third consideration. The salvation of men is not the ultimate end of the economy of redemption. That economy, while it is the grand and only remedy for human guilt, is also an instrument for conducting God's moral government of the world; and the ends of that government will be secured by the publication of the gospel among the heathen, even where they are not saved. God's probation of mankind is not completed until they have been placed under the gospel. It is necessary to the experimental process by which He is trying them as moral agents, and to the vindication of His own rectitude in the day of final judgment.

2. It is obvious to remark next, *that a corresponding change of opinion in relation to Christian missions has taken place beyond the precincts of the church.*

As the Christians of the second and third centuries were compelled to write apologies in vindication of Christianity, so in the nineteenth century it was not less necessary to apologise for efforts to propagate it amongst the heathen: with this remarkable difference, however, between the two cases, that, while the Apologies of Justin Martyr and Tertullian were addressed to a heathen government, those of Fuller and Hall were intended to conciliate rulers professedly Christian. The difficulties that embarrassed the early movements of the Baptist Mission, arising from the jealousy of the government and the opposition of parties high in their confidence, are too well remembered to need that I should do more than generally refer to them. Nor is it forgotten how the wit, and genius, and literary talent of the time were marshalled against the incipient design.

Where, at the present day, are the statesmen who would prohibit the missionary from setting his foot on any shore that owns allegiance to the British crown? Where are the writers who affect to treat his self-denying labours with contempt? Where are the wits and reviewers who turn them into ridicule, or the philosopher who denounces the man a visionary, and his scheme a romance? And where is that large portion of the public who sympathized in the profane banter, and gratified their impious merriment at the expense of methodism and missions? Scarcely any thing is more remarkable than the altered estimate which is now formed of the missionary enterprise, by almost every class of persons. Men enriched with the noblest intellectual endowments, and adorning the loftiest stations in the country, are found among its advocates; senators extol it in parliament; writers of the highest order pay it the homage of their profound respect. It has evoked from the lyre of poesy some of its sweetest melodies and sublimest odes. It moulds much of the current literature of the day, and tinctures more. It has even created a literature of its own. And in the meantime the popular feeling has turned almost entirely in its favour, so that now you shall hear it spoken of in terms of commendation in almost all circles into which you can go. The impression prevails that it is a work so essentially good, and so necessary to the happiness of mankind, that it were impious to oppose it.

3. A third contrast greatly in our favour is found in *the augmented means for carrying forward the work which are now placed in the hands of the church.*

Agents, implements, and pecuniary resources, are all included in the means necessary to the conduct of missions. In each of these particulars, how marvellous is the creation of fifty years! Carry back your view to the commencement of this period, and on the 13th of June, 1793, you see Carey setting his foot on board the Danish East India-man which conveyed him and his beloved associate, Thomas,

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

to the shores of Bengal. Two missionaries were all that the churches of Britain at that time could send forth on the errand of God's love to the heathen, and even they were denied a passage in a British ship. There were none taking their departure to the South Seas, none to the West Indies, none to Africa; nor did it then appear whether others would follow these devoted men to the chosen scene of their holy toils, or whether they should labour and die alone. But now missionaries are going forth to almost every land, and the two have multiplied to thousands.

Diligent application and unwearied industry could alone enable them to surmount the obstacle which lay at the very threshold of their undertaking. So essentially different in their entire structure and idiom are the languages of the East from those of the western parts of the world, that a competent authority records it as his opinion, that any six of the principal languages of Europe might be learnt with as little labour as one of those of India. It must ever, therefore, stand as an instance of extraordinary skill and prodigious learning, that, in less than four years from his arrival, Carey had translated the New Testament into Bengali, and that his first translation was so rapidly followed by others into the venerable Sanscrit, and the various dialects and languages of British India.

If the founders of our Indian empire achieved a great exploit when they subdued the natives to the sway of the British crown, it must be remembered that they possessed every requisite for their undertaking. Not only were they brave men, but they were well armed; not only did their bosoms burn with martial valour, but they carried in their hands the implements of war. When our missionaries assailed that stronghold of Satan, men of dauntless courage they were, and clothed in armour for self-defence. They had buckled on the breastplate of righteousness, on their heads was the helmet of salvation, their left arm carried the

shield of faith, and they were clad with zeal as with a military cloak ; but where was the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ? The chief weapon of their warfare was wanting ; and how utterly powerless did they at times feel themselves without it ! Writing to Fuller, under date of January, 1796, Thomas says, " I would give a million pounds sterling, if I had it, to see a Bengal bible." Under such circumstances no soldier of the cross can take the field in Bengal again. His equipments are now complete. He can " put on the whole armour of God." Were the translation of the Bible the solitary result of the Baptist mission in the East, that result alone, I hesitate not to say, would amply justify its formation, and all the toil and money expended during the subsequent fifty years.

And let me yet detain you for another moment on this important point. Those who are conversant with the history of the translation of the scriptures into our own language, know how slow was the progress by which it advanced to its present state. If we suppose Wyclif's to have been the first translation of the Bible (and there is no proof of the existence of any thing more than versions of parts of it at an earlier date), then it took eight hundred years, reckoning from the introduction of Christianity into England by Augustine, to produce a translation of the whole Bible, and two hundred more to bring it to its present state. Thus it was the labour of a thousand years to give to Britain the word of God. Let me now place beside this statement an extract from a letter bearing date Calcutta, January 17th of the present year, and addressed by Dr. Yates to Dr. Hoby. " I will touch " (he says) " on the work of the father of our mission. The object on which Carey's heart was set is advancing, and I hope by the end of this year the whole Bible will be completed in quarto size, with references and readings. This will have been done within fifty years, and I think I may say in as great a state of perfection as the English version was five hundred years"—he might have said, comparing it only with

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

Wyclif's, eight hundred years—"after the introduction of Christianity into our island. If then in regard to the scriptures in Bengali, a language spoken by about twenty-five millions of people, we have done as much in fifty years as was done by our forefathers in our native land in five hundred years" (or rather, as we have seen, in eight hundred), "have we not reason to rejoice? Yes, I do rejoice in the goodness of God in this particular, and I feel quite confident, how many soever may be the versions of the scriptures in the Bengali in future years, that ours will have a lasting influence upon them all."

II

If, then, having arrived at an epoch in our missionary history, we are now prepared to renew the consecration of ourselves to this blessed work, indulge me still further with your attention, my honoured brethren and fathers, while I venture, with much diffidence, to offer a few suggestions on points which seem to me of essential moment to its prosperity, and to our own honour and comfort in conducting it.

1. Allow me then to suggest *the necessity of our cultivating a cordial love for one another.*

Need I remind you how much of the charm of our mission is derived from the strong affection which bound together the hearts of its founders? They were men of diversified character and intellectual endowment, differing much from each other in the mental peculiarities by which they were severally distinguished: but they "loved one another with a pure heart fervently."

I think I am not misled by a too partial judgment when I express my belief that there never was a period in which the tendencies to union, and the desire after it, were so great in our denomination as they are at present. It is true, there may not exist amongst us exactly such a combination of personal friends as that which is exhibited in the instance of those five men—Fuller, Sutcliffe, Ryland,

Carey, and Pearce. Where, indeed, shall we find its parallel at all, except, perhaps, amongst the reformers, or in the times of the primitive church? But there is a much more general agreement drawing our pastors and churches together. If brotherly affection be less intense, it is more extensively exercised.

If union be a necessary element of success in our work, that work itself strengthens the bond which unites us. There was, unquestionably, this reflex operation strongly exerted in the case of the originators of the mission. If they loved one another before, their mutual attachment was greatly strengthened by their becoming "workers together for God." Besides supplying an object of common and deep interest in which their sympathies were equally engaged, there is something in the very nature of the service of Christ adapted to engender a sincere and ardent affection amongst those who are engaged in it; and especially when it exposes them to hazard, involves them in difficulties, or calls for sacrifices and self-denying toils.

2. With this love to one another, let me conjoin *a steadfast adherence to the truth*, as a second condition of success.

The office of the church, like that of the Son of God, is to bear witness to the truth. Truth of every kind is valuable, and Christians will rejoice in its diffusion; but it is not for the propagation of every kind of truth that they are to be especially concerned. Their province is defined by the commission under which they act—"Go and preach the gospel to every creature." Whatever is included in making known the "glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people," belongs to them, but nothing else. They must neither fall short of this, nor go beyond it. Were I to speak still more definitely in relation to ourselves, I should say that the propagation of the truth in our hands must take a twofold character. It involves the inculcation of that portion of truth in which we have a common agreement with our fellow Christians, and of that portion also by holding which we are distinguished from them.

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

But, with our views of truth and of the preaching of Christ there is yet another point connected, which neither integrity nor conviction of duty will allow us to suppress, or even to conceal. We recur to the commission; "Go ye therefore, teach all nations, *baptizing them.*" By the sentiments we entertain on this part of the Saviour's last injunction we are distinguished from all the rest of our fellow Christians, and are distinctively known both as a denomination and as a missionary society. There is no virtue in dissenting from the practice of our fellow Christians, and especially when that practice has the consentient voice of any large proportion of them in its favour, unless, in our innermost convictions, it be required by fidelity to Jesus Christ. Up to that point nothing shall separate us, with our own consent, from the entire body of the faithful: but beyond that point we dare not go. We dare not keep back what we believe to be a part of His will. How could we expect His blessing upon what, in our case, would be a wilful suppression of the truth?

3. If a steadfast adherence to the truth be essential to our success, so also is *an exclusive reliance on spiritual means for its propagation.*

I need scarcely remark, certainly it is unnecessary to take up any of your time in showing, that the gospel in its propagation repudiates any resort to craft and artifice, that it prohibits the use of violence and coercion, and refuses to lean on the authority and support of civil government. These truths are to us so elementary, and withal so self-evident, that they have acquired the force of maxims.

4. But I hasten to remark fourthly, that the efficiency of our missionary operations must greatly depend on *the selection of suitable agents to conduct them.*

When the gospel was to be preached in the first age to the gentiles, Saul of Tarsus was converted, and raised to the apostleship for the purpose. There were already twelve apostles; it was not, therefore, from a deficiency in the number of this order of agents that he was added to

the rest ; it must have been because he was seen by infinite wisdom to be in an extraordinary degree suited to the work. Special occasions and great enterprises call for an order of talent which is in harmony with them. It is not every statesman who is fitted to be an ambassador ; it is not every minister who is qualified to be a missionary.

Nor is it only in the foreign department of the Society's affairs that we need this adaptation of the agent to his work ; it is equally required at home.

It must be reckoned among the felicities of our own mission that it has been so distinguished in this respect. It would be a criminal disregard of the hand of God not to acknowledge the eminent degrees of fitness for their office with which He endowed its founders, and not a few of those who, having been associated with them, or having succeeded them, have also entered into their rest. It were superfluous to speak of the masculine and acute understanding of Fuller, the wisdom of Sutcliffe, the intrepidity and tenacious perseverance of Carey, the elevated piety of Ryland, or the seraphic love of Pearce.

The missionary zeal which now pours its thousands into the treasury of God was not then kindled ; and I know not whether most to admire the self-denial which led Carey to the shores of Bengal, or the indefatigable labours of Fuller, in which there was, perhaps, as much self-denial, to procure the necessary funds. Think of the man, who in his work on the absurdity of deism could produce such a chapter as that with which it closes—on “ the consistency of redemption with the magnitude of creation ”—toiling through London to solicit contributions from reluctant givers, and often retiring from the more public streets into the back lanes, that he might not be seen by other passengers to weep for his having so little success. Such men never die. It needs no spices to embalm, no monument to perpetuate their memory : their deeds live through all ages, and their very dust is fragrant as the morning's breath, and sweet as the flowers of spring.

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

5. But all these conditions, important as unquestionably they are, and in a less or greater degree necessary to the efficient conduct of our work, must ever be fulfilled under *an habitual and deep conviction of our utter impotence and uselessness, except as the Holy Spirit shall crown our efforts with success.*

If we have nothing to do with God, He will have nothing to do with us ; if we have little to do with God, He will have little to do with us : but, if we have much to do with Him, if we are men of wrestling prayer and strong faith, if we “ dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty,” we may expect to be indulged with His gracious approbation, and to be honoured as instruments in advancing His designs.

The missionary spirit is the offspring of prayer, of united, long-continued, and unwearied prayer. In the year 1784, the same association of Baptist ministers in which the missionary enterprise afterwards originated, agreed to set apart the evening of the first Monday in every month to pray for the revival of religion, and the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom throughout the world. Thus year after year did our forefathers meet and pray, till prayer both suggested effort and secured its success.

III

It is a source of great encouragement, *that the history of the last fifty years demonstrates the adaptation of missionary agency to accomplish its object.*

In their commencement, Christian missions were literally an enterprise, and that enterprise, for anything that could be certainly known, might have proved a failure.

There was unquestionably something of an adventurous spirit in the first attempt ; and, had that attempt failed, even Christians, for the most part, would scarcely have been surprised. But the enterprise is not a failure. In no sense has it failed ; but, on the contrary, its adaptation and efficiency are proved beyond the most sanguine

expectation of its friends. In no part of the heathen world that I remember to have read or heard of, have missionaries laboured in vain. Wherever the leaves of the tree of life have been carried, they have proved their medicinal efficacy for the healing of the nations.

There was a time when the modern theory of astronomy existed only in the sagacious conjectures of its great author ; and, just as it must have been to Newton a source of indescribable satisfaction and encouragement, when by the processes of actual experiment and calculation he demonstrated the first proposition of his system, so, to the father of modern missions, the conversion of the first Hindoo must have been an event equally ominous of success.

This encouragement gathers force from every repetition of the exercise of converting grace. What, then, have we not witnessed since? The experiment has been subsequently made upon almost every modification and variety of the human race, and made uniformly with the same result. Amongst the converts to the gospel are to be classed men of almost every clime and country. In this manner it has been shown to be adapted to every part of the human family. The actual number of heathens converted since missions began it must be difficult to ascertain ; but the calculation is, that at the present time there are not less than one hundred and eighty thousand in the fellowship of the various missionary churches ; and to these must be added nearly as many more who have died in the faith.

A second encouragement we may find *in the coincident increase of our churches at home*, which in the last fifty years have quadrupled their number.

But I forbear all enlargement on these and other topics, and remark, finally, that *the aspect of divine providence* obviously portends the downfall of every pagan and anti-christian power, and the universal diffusion of the gospel.

Indications neither few nor vague, but full of promise, open upon the Christian's eye, and furnish no doubtful

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

premonition of the character of forthcoming times. The crisis is evidently approaching. That mighty revolution which shook the social system of Europe to its very foundations, and the rise of the Baptist Mission, were synchronical events ; and no thoughtful man can reflect on the occurrences which have transpired in the subsequent half century without perceiving that a change has been progressively taking place for the better in the political condition of the nations. At the same time, the brightening moral appearances which, in various parts of the earth, are breaking through the dark night of ancient superstitions, show that an invisible and benign agency is co-operating with more ostensible but subordinate causes, and advancing towards their maturity the purposes of God. Amidst the convulsions of kingdoms the reign of Christ has been, and is still advancing. All events are manifestly taking one direction. The tide of providence has set in with a strong and steady current, and is bearing forward on its broad surface those scenes of universal joy which the harp of prophecy has long predicted, and for the arrival of which the whole creation groans. We seem to be standing on the verge of some magnificent disclosure. The church appears to be waiting for the next page of prophecy to be turned over, that its sublime contents may be evolved. What the result will be none can question, and the Christian need not fear.

Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
Fulfilled their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world ; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest.

CHARLES STANFORD, D.D.

LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST

MYRTLE STREET CHAPEL,
LIVERPOOL,
OCTOBER 3RD, 1882.

“ Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Acts xv. 26.



LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST



ONCE, in lifting from its shelf a certain folio, there fluttered out from its leaves into my hand a paper that seemed to be just fresh from the pen and folded for the post, only the date on it was 1763. It had evidently been mislaid soon as it was written; but more than one hundred years after—just where the writer left it—I found it. It ran thus:

“ This is to certify that the bearer, Mr. John Wyers, is well known to us, and we do hereby commend him to all Christian churches, where in Providence he may come, as a godly minister, who hath much devoted himself to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“ DAVID FERNIE,
“ THOMAS BLACKETT.”

There was nothing wonderful in this, but it may help to explain my text, which is a line from a letter of introduction once written by the elders of the church at Jerusalem, and is to this effect:

“ This is to certify that the bearers, our beloved Barnabas and Paul, are ‘ men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ ”

That would be enough. The door of every Christian home would fly open before this precious talisman. The master of the house would say to each man thus introduced, “ Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without? ”—would lavish his best upon him; would bring forth a royal diadem, if he had it, wherewith to crown him, and would listen reverently at his feet as to an oracle. It was a grand thing to have a testimonial like this. Language could not give a better introduction to the living, or a nobler epitaph for the dead. This old certificate is not now waste paper, and must not be torn up and flung to the winds as dead and done with; it is still a live thing; it holds a Divine ideal; it stands on

LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST

this page for immortal reference ; it is wanted here and wanted now, to show what kind of missionaries are wanted, and how the armies of Christ on the field of foreign service are to win the day. As we think through the words we shall find that their logical sequence answers to their textual order. Let us therefore take them as they stand : I., " Men " ; II., " That have hazarded their lives " ; III., " For the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I.

The first word in this description of model missionaries is the word *Men*. Speaking on the question of fortifications, a great lawgiver once said that Sparta wanted not a wall of bricks but a wall of men. Speaking on the question of Gospel instrumentality, we say that the great want is men. " Well," says a certain journalist, " men are cheap." No ! If by a man you mean what is sometimes meant by the advocates of muscular Christianity, men *may* be cheap ; but it is not muscle that makes the man. If by a man you mean an accidental result of molecular forces, men may be, and ought to be, cheap ; but a man is not the consummation of a tadpole. If by a man you only mean an average human being, men ought to be cheap. Many a human being passes for a man who is not what I call a man—who is, in fact, hardly worth calling even a person—but who, if I may be allowed to speak in the mystic dialect now in currency, is only a thing—a dim, indefinite something—a " not myself " ; " a stream of tendency making for righteousness " when circumstances are not too strong for it. Although these are the terms of a *credo*, sometimes used to express the idea of God, that which may be defined by such terms is not up to the mark of a man. I now mean by a man a son of Adam, who, since he was born into the world, has been born again ; who is therefore a son of God by faith in Jesus Christ, and of whom we may say, " Like Father, like son." In

all God's grand creation there is nothing so grand as that which thus begins to fulfil the meaning of the word "man." I will not say that the particular Greek word here used would mean all this if out of this particular connection; but I do say that it means all this in this connection. God uses *men* for the service of souls. When He saved His people from the land of famine, He "sent a *man* before them, even Joseph." Thus He still acts. We would blow into infinite space the old, mean, false doctrine that anything will do for a missionary. Anything will *not* do. Before you are a missionary you must be a man.

II.

We go on to the second phrase—Men "that have hazarded their lives." In itself, to do this is a thing for apology rather than for plaudit, still less for imitation. Rare must be the circumstance and extreme the case in which the Author of life sanctions the hazard of life. With the gift of life He has linked the instinct for its preservation. To this we owe the most ancient of proverbs—"Skin upon skin—all that a man hath will he give for his life"—a saying which some old expositor thus sufficiently explains:—"Before the invention of money, trade was carried on by barter—that is, by the exchange of one commodity for another. The men who had been hunting in the woods for wolves or panthers would bring their skins to market and exchange them, say, for so many bows and arrows. Imagine one of these primitive markets. Many men from many tribes are in a broad field overspread with various commodities to be exchanged. Imagine the market held after a good hunting season, but a bad harvest. Skins are common; corn is scarce. There is a dread of famine. How many skins will a man give this year for that without which he and his family will die? Why, fling upon the heap skin upon skin, 'for all that a man hath will he give for his life.' Imagine the wheat growers, of whom Job was

LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST

one, carrying home the skins for which they had just parted with their wheat, being met by a gang of robbers who demanded their property or their life. What proportion of their property would these merchants give up, if necessary? Why, skin upon skin, *skin upon skin*—all that a man hath will he give for his life.” The proverb means that a man will keep his life at any price. So the Maker of us has made the terrors of death the guardians of life, and they all stand up to sentinel this awful, mysterious, enchanted thing.

Yet, while grace teaches the sanctity of life, it inspires us to live for something higher than life. That man is not worth the name of man who only lives to take care of himself; whose life is a chronic panic; and whose heart is in his mouth at the sight of danger. He who is for ever sunk, lamed, frozen, and sceptre-smitten before “the shadow feared of man” is incapable of noble action or high ascent. The man after the standard that we now look at is one who in serving Christ holds himself prepared, if need be, to hazard his life; who says to himself, “Oh, my soul, if you mean business, do it thoroughly; if you do not mean business, let it alone; and, come what will, what ought to be done shall be done.”

III.

We advance to mark the third link in this chain of language, and that link is the phrase, “For the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

First, this means that these men hazarded their lives out of *love to Christ*. The name of a person simply means the person to whom that name belongs. We all know the soothing, or rousing, or melting magic of a name. Before now every one of us has been thrilled with tenderness, or pierced with delight, or petrified with dismay at the sound of a name. In moments of weakness or in moods of gloom, the sudden memory of some dear name has made the spirit spring into strength, flame into beauty, or burst into

morning. But no name given under heaven has stirred hearts like the name of Jesus. When the Jewish leaders heard it they hated it. "O Virtue, Virtue," once cried a sentimental rhapsodist, "such is thy beauty that if thou wert to come down to earth and only show thy real self, all men would love thee." "O Virtue, Virtue," said a commentator on this, "Thou didst come down to earth in all Thy charms, but men sickened at the sight of Thee; the archers sorely grieved Thee; shot at Thee and hated Thee; they took Thee, Virtue, and hung Thy quivering limbs upon a cross; they did all they could to blacken Thy reputation and to break Thy heart. Virtue, Virtue, with peals of laughter they nailed over Thy dying head a board with Thy name on it, to make it a name of infamy; and, when all was over, Thy tomb was only found by Charity."

This is all true; and, even when the Crucified had become the Glorified, men still went on hating. Of these haters Paul was one of the most inexorable. He breathed out threatenings and slaughter against all who professed the name of Christ, and so went on till Christ Himself stopped him—stopped him at the height of his delirium and the fury of his charge; stung him through the heart with a voice from heaven; with a storm of glory smote his blind brain and suddenly opened his eyes to stare at his own tremendous mistake. He found that the name he had all along been hating was the name of the One Perfect Man, into whom God came down to dwell in the light of a perfect personal revelation. He had been madly striking at the love of Him "of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did speak," and who, as "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," had Himself been lifted up. From that moment the love of Christ had set his life on fire. White-hot and scintillating as from a forge, his soul was like a burning bar from which, when struck, stars flew. He counted pain to be nothing, labour to be nothing, loss to be nothing, for Christ's sake. With the glorious hurry of love, he poured out his heart in live words and

LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST

rapid intensifications, all to make Him known, and when he met with any to whom He was known, but who yet loved Him not, he was like an angry angel. Being told of such in connection with the congregations in Galatia, he thought and thought till thought burst into flame, and the trembling man said, "Here, Luke, hand me the pen," and then he wrote, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." So did he dash down this terrific memorandum, fire off this shattering shell. Oh, what a world of love explodes in this language! What a tempest thunders and lightens from this cloud! Tender lover of souls, gentle excuser of infirmities, patient doctor of the heart's sicknesses—we have seen his face all streaming with tears at the sight of human sorrow, all quivering with anguish at the thought of human sin; but when he saw any who could know about Christ, yet not love Him, he rang up their sleeping souls with this stern alarum.

We have been hearing only Paul speak, because he is "chief speaker," but the text mentions Barnabas as well as Paul. "Nature," says Emerson, "never rhymes her children, nor makes two men alike." Though these two men were not alike naturally, their love to Christ was such that they alike hazarded their lives for Him.

What have we hazarded? A prophet, standing here and speaking in the language of the day, as prophets always did, might perhaps say to some of us, "Where is your love to Christ? Is that the thing you call love?" Sometimes our love looks like a sly, slow, circumspective thing. Love that knows how to take care of itself; love that looks upon religion as a question of safe investment and social respectability; love that joins the church like a traveller who takes his ticket, books himself quite through, wraps his rug round him, and sleeps all the way till the train stops; love that will do only what it is expected to do, say only what it is expected to say, and give only what it is expected to give; love that will only speak within the safe enclosure of conventional phrases; love that hates

originality like the plague. Very often, what you call love I call prudence.

“ A glorious gift is prudence,
 And they are useful friends
 Who never make beginnings
 Till they have seen the ends ;
 But give us now and then a man
 That we may make him king,
 Just to scorn the consequence
 And just to do the thing.”

Love, whether to God or to man, tends to scorn of consequence and forgetfulness of self. Though we are not always to live in a passion, and every moment is not a flaming moment of inspiration or victory, yet if we know that love, to know which, lost, is the bitterest pang of hell ; to know which, gained, is the sweetest bliss of heaven ; that love which is great beyond all that mind can think, or pen can write or tongue can speak or harp can praise ; there will be times when our spirits will be carried away like that of the Apostle, of whom the world used to say, “ Strange man, that Paul—sunstroke, do you think ? ” Then we, like him, may cry, “ Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause, for the love of Christ constraineth us.”

Secondly, these men had hazarded their lives out of *obedience to Christ*. “ If ye love Me, keep My commandments,” is a doctrine to which love listens with delight. Public as a manifesto, literal as a law document with actual signatures and seals, the commandment now claiming obedience is this, “ Go and make disciples of all the nations.” Strange to say, soon as this commandment is given, the first thing that men in general do is to give some opinion about it. One is of opinion that it is unnecessary ; another, that it is impossible ; another is of opinion that he ought only to look at home ; another, that secular education is the first thing, and that we must civilise before we Christianise ; another is of opinion that each nation has already a religion fitted to its own nationality. Perhaps the beautiful opinion of the King of Siam will be quoted, or that of some

LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST

refined follower of Confucius, or that of some model Mussulman, or that of some young gentleman in the Indian Civil Service, who knows all about it ; and if these opinions on the matter of missions should clash with the judgment of Jesus Christ, then, of course, no more is to be said.

Christ, however, giving His laws from the throne of perfection, asks not for our opinion, but for our obedience. The only question left for us is, how we can best obey. One can best obey in one way, another in another ; one in this place, another in that ; one had better go down into the shaft, another hold the ropes. The principle is, not that every Christian is to leave work at home for work abroad, but that all Christians are charged with the evangelisation of all the world—to do it between them, somehow. Let us hush the war of theories and the wind of words, and set to work. If anyone here is to be drafted off for foreign service, he will know it in time, and know it by a token distinct as a hand on his shoulder, or a voice in his ear. The Church, too, will know it, certainly, as the Church did of old, when the Holy Spirit said, “ Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” After that, no thought of hazard must stop you. The difficulty is not your concern, however massive it may be ; the charge to you is “ Forward.” Say, then, in the spirit of the negro whose simple story has many times been told, “ Does Jesus Christ ask me to leap through that stone wall ? Here I go at it ! ”

My third statement is this :—These men had hazarded their lives in a great *service to their fellow-men*. It is surely a great service to save lives, and a noble thing for men to do it at the hazard of their own.

Lady Edgeworth, in the days of King Charles the Second, was suddenly called upon to defend the family castle of Lissom, in the absence of her husband. In doing so, she had to fetch fresh powder from the castle vaults. On her return, she asked the woman who had gone down with her what she had done with the candle ; the answer was,

“ Left it stuck in the barrel of black salt.” At once the glorious lady went back to the spot where the candle was burning down into the powder, put her hands together like a cup, lifted it out, and so saved the lives of others at the hazard of her own. When this story starts up alive out of the old yellow manuscript, I cry, “ *There*, that was a noble thing to do ! ”

The lifeboat, with its crew of braves, shoots out into the night, over hills of swaying water, down into valleys of blackness, through stings of keen spray and bursts of white fire, to fetch twenty men off from a wreck. When, as they return, the cry comes on the wind, “ All saved,” my heart bounds, and I shout, “ Nobly done ! ”

“ The Son of Man came not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them ” ; and missionaries are His enlisted instruments for doing so in the foreign field. If it be a great thing to hazard life in saving the lives of bodies, it is a little thing to hazard it in saving the lives of souls—lives that can think, lives that can love, lives that hold the secret of personality, lives that can be born again, lives that can live without the body, and which, if “ the heavens were turned into darkness, and the moon into blood ”—if all the objects that eye can look upon, or finger touch, or ear thrill with, were blown away in the roar of one sublime explosion—would still be as much alive as ever ! Millions of such lives are on the earth at this moment, and millions of these have not heard yet of Him who came to save the lost.

The fathers of modern missions used to be asked if they thought all people were lost but themselves ; and if they thought that none could be saved unless they could be indoctrinated with Calvinism ? They were told that many of those whom they considered lost were, in fact, the most thoroughly saved men living. They were living on archipelagoes of scented islands, that rested like baskets of flowers on the light of the tranquil wave. There they walked through green darkness, or under dazzling blossoms

LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST

that hung from stem to stem, or watched the beautiful birds scintillate past, or plucked rich fruits from trees planted by the hand of Nature, allowing them to live in the perfection of indolent delight :

“ The guiltless men who danced away their time,
Fresh as their groves, and happy as their clime.”

It is of no use to tell such stories now ; opponents of missionaries have shifted their arguments, and their opinion of the heathen, at least of those in Africa, often seems to be like that once unfairly attributed to Dean Swift, as to his parishioners, “ That they have no souls, or, if they have, they are souls not worth saving ! ”

When, however, we know facts, we say that the heathen are so terribly lost, even as to this life, that the thought of how they sin and suffer is enough to make even old blood boil and thrill. As to the future, if they or we could be saved without Christ, Christ would not have come to save us. Christ did not die on the cross to save us from a trifle. Christ makes no mistakes in telling us what He saves us from. Soften His words as you may, tone down the thunder if you can, that word *perdition* points to something terrific ; and, whatever its meaning, it must be a tremendous meaning. The Christless must be lost ; and we who know the secret of salvation ought to hazard our merely mortal lives, if this be needful, in order to make the Saviour known.

I would not, if I were you, throw myself away ; I would not be made a dead man of for nothing ; I would not let my wheel shave the edge of a precipice ; I would not bathe even in the brightest waters where sharks play ; I would not navigate the air without good reason for knowing myself master of the situation ; I would not scale the Alps, to touch the highest peak, merely to say so ; I would not skim the black and bending sheet of ice, making for the spot marked “ Dangerous.” I would not hazard my life in any way merely for a nervous tonic, or to defy opinion, or to work off superfluous energy, or to win a glory that

in ten years will sink like a bubble in the depths of time—such ends are not great enough to hazard life for; but if already the knowledge of the Lord “covered the earth as the waters cover the sea,” and all men were known to be saved but one man somewhere in India, a Christian would be justified, though at the certain loss of his earthly life, to set out in search of that one man, and in some way or other, as he went along, to make the lands ring with the cry, “Lost, lost, lost! a soul lost. Come, help to seek and save that which is lost.” And in so doing, he would but tread in the steps of Him who, leaving the safe ninety-and-nine, went out in search of the lost *one*. Whole nations we know are still lost in ancient superstition; and if Christ, in some indisputable way, says to any one of you personally, “Go, make Me known in the dark places of the earth, and I will go with you, though we might have to go through fire and water, through forests of death, and fearful clouds of crime”—he, even if a timid disciple, would be strengthened to say, like Luther, “I am no Saint Paul, I am afraid of death, I am; but there are things worse than death, and if I die, I die!”

Fourthly, these men remind us how *our faithful and mighty Master, through all hazards, keeps His servants alive until their work is done*. They were amazing illustrations of the power of Christ. Look at Paul in particular. When you think of the hazards of which his life was full, you see that nothing short of that power could have carried him into them courageously, or brought him out of them alive. But the story of hazard which had left the last impression when this sentence was written, and to which it specially refers, was the story of the mission to Lycaonia. This was a region of down land and grass land, where the natives were all shepherds and drovers, who hardly knew anything beyond the life of sensation. Paul and Barnabas had come to this place in the course of establishing a chain of stations along Asia Minor—doing, in fact, what our own missionaries are now doing along the line of the Congo,

LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST

and what Dr. Krapf, the Church missionary, more than ten years ago, advised in East Africa. At first, when these simple people heard the preachers, they felt what certain savage islanders felt on first hearing Bishop Patteson, when they said, "This man has come all the way across the great sea to tell us that God loves us, that we shall not die like sheep, and cows, and fishes, but that after we die we shall live again." As the day wore on, and as they listened to the wonderful strangers, the wonder deepened, and they began to think that the great Powers were then and there among them, alive and speaking. Paul, they thought, must be Mercury, and Barnabas, looking the prince he was, they thought must be Jupiter; but, just at the point of high enthusiasm certain Jews who had been on the track of Paul, and who had tried to stone him at the last station, turned the tide of feeling, and so wrought upon the semi-savages, who were quick to love, quick to suspect, quick to act with ferocious precipitancy, that their looks darkened, and some began to pick up stones.

Once in our own land, when Whitefield was preaching in the open air, and saw certain roughs in the crowd begin to pick up stones, he began to waver, but his wife plucked his gown, and said, "Play the man, George!" If you were now to see a crowd like that at Lystra you would begin to waver. Look at it. Faces lit up into a glare, eyes out of which devils are looking, hands clenched on stones snatched up to pelt with, fists that are shaking furiously, teeth tightened with desperate resolve, or parted to let yells tear their way through a thousand throats. Who is that in the centre of this angry crowd? It is our Paul, a friend so dear, and a sufferer so quivering, that we have been afraid lest the wind should visit him too roughly; a refined and most sensitive gentleman; an oracle in an aspen leaf; a man with a heart so quick, and a frame so frail, and a spirit of such infinite delicacy, that even in calm times he stands before an audience in "weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling"; there he is

at the mercy of these lunatics, stricken, hustled out of the city, flung down, and, as he lies on the red wet grass, down come upon him the crashing strokes of a wild stone tempest. This was no mere play, intended only to give him a scare. These stoners knew their work, they meant to do it, and they only left their victim when they thought they had left him dead. Then they vanished; and disciples came and stood round that still heap. A doctor was there; he stooped and felt the wrist. "Dead." "*Dead*; all is over." It almost takes our breath away to hear that soon after this Paul rose, walked back into the city, and set out next morning, ready to be stoned again.

Some years after, we find him referring to this; he does not make much of it; no report could be shorter; a mere trifle, he seems to think; but he just mentions it, and says, "Once was I stoned." Achan never said, "Once I was stoned." To my mind it looks as wonderful as for a man to write, "Once I was beheaded," or "Once I was sawn asunder," or "Once I was burned to ashes at Smithfield." I do not say that this was a resurrection, but it does appear to me to have been a miracle. Paul could not die at that time; he had fourteen inspired epistles to write, and a glorious career to run; the power of Christ brought him alive through that death, and he was ever after a marvellous illustration of what the power of Christ can do. If any of you shrink from service through fear of danger, look at Paul, and learn that not one of Christ's servants can die while he has work to do.

My last remark is this:—*Men like these are of all men most charged with the power that gives success in the mission-field.* The two men whose names are inscribed on this monumental text had "hazarded their lives"—literally, had "delivered up" their lives—that is, had been *martyrs*—martyrs in will, if not in fact—for the "name of the Lord Jesus Christ." On account of this, both were so grandly filled with the spirit that makes success, that the successes of the one at Antioch, and the successes of the

LIFE HAZARDED FOR CHRIST

other all his life long, were splendid miracles of the Holy Ghost. Along with other uses, one use of this record is to remind us that those who most completely give themselves to God are the men to whom God is most gloriously given, and that those who at Christ's call to service most totally offer themselves up, and let themselves go, are the men whom the " King delighteth to honour."

Now and then, while the fight is going on with the hosts of darkness in heathen lands, the enemy will send false telegrams from the seat of war, scaring weak souls by the report that Christ has been defeated. Sometimes correspondents in the interests of the opium trade, or others, in the interests of the slave trade—that " sum of all villainies," which the Gospel will one day fling into the bottomless pit—or others, like the men of Gadara, vexed at the loss of their swine, or simply because they hate the doctrine of the cross, will write to tell us that the cause of Gospel missions to all the world has totally failed, and that all the world knows it. No assertions are in spirit so dogmatic, so sectarian, and so intensely propagandish as these ; so it comes to pass that sometimes even Christian courage wavers ; the heroic age, we are told, is dead ; and " littleness is written on the brow of to-day."

Yet the known results of Christian missions in the first eighty years of their history are not more striking than those of the last eighty years. We have reason to believe that the most remarkable missionary work of the present age is that which lies beyond the reach of exact registration. Only within the last few weeks we have heard of a pundit in Calcutta, who is preaching Christianity under the forms of Hinduism, who declares that it is contained in the Vedas, and who says, " I believe that the most merciful Khristos died for me on the hill of Calvary." There can be no statistics of thoughts like these ; no statistics of secret discipleship or indirect influence ; no statistics of seeds waiting for the sunburst, or of trains waiting for the spark that shall fire them off. After all, our confidence is founded,

not on human reports, past or present, but on the sure word and power of Jesus Christ.

He is with us now, and is saying to this congregation, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Does no heart leap, does no voice cry—has no one on his lips the words, "Here am I. Send me! I shall lose my life, perhaps; but no matter, I have another life, a life that has no such word as 'defeat' in its language, and no such possibility as death"? Our prayer is that it may come to be written of many who are here—written soon—written, if not on earth, by the witness that is in heaven, in the record that is on high—"These are men who have 'hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.'" Christians, if now you all renew your vows of consecration, though you may not all be called upon for the greatest sacrifice, yet, being ready for that, you will be ready for any other—ready to hazard your popularity, to hazard your money, in the service of the great God our Saviour, to whom be all glory for ever.

JOHN HOWARD HINTON, M.A.

THE AWAKENING CALL

SURREY CHAPEL, LONDON,
JUNE 16TH, 1830.

“Awake, awake ; put on thy strength, O Zion !”—Isaiah lii. 1.



THE AWAKENING CALL



THESE quickening words were addressed to the ancient Israel when the purposes of divine mercy were ripening, and their captive tribes were about to re-people the desolate land. You will probably deem us guilty of no violence to the Sacred Oracle, if we consider it as applicable to the spiritual Israel, in the anticipation of those greater blessings of which all that was done of old was but an emblem and a shadow.

I need not now stay to prove that brilliant prospects are before the church, or to expatiate on the glories of the latter day ; nor is it necessary here to argue the near approach of them. The prospect of a renovated world and a reigning Saviour is assuredly not one to which you are indifferent. The voice of our returning Lord sounds in our ears, and is adapted both to arouse the dormant from their slumbers, and to quicken the watchful to action.

I

To begin with, we consider the facts which justify this appeal.

1. It is obvious, in the first place, that the passage assumes *the possession of sufficient strength* for accomplishing the end designed. The friends of God are not called upon to apply themselves to the conquest of His enemies without adapted and proportionate means. We are not summoned to do anything without strength, or beyond our strength ; the exhortation is simple and intelligible, " Put on *thy strength*." Of course it will be here understood that we speak of the possession of means, or of instrumental strength alone ; and necessarily so, seeing that nothing but an instrumental agency is assigned in any case to man. As to effectual

THE AWAKENING CALL

agency, "*all things are of God.*" With respect to our own province, however—that, namely, of instrumental action—our strength is ample, though the conversion of the world be the object of it.

If it were necessary to establish this sentiment, we might observe that the conversion of the world, as to the instrumental accomplishment of it, is left altogether in the hands of the church. It is committed to the saints, and no other parties are to be employed in it ; a fact from which alone we might conclude that they are in possession of sufficient strength for the purpose. Where otherwise would be the wisdom, or even the safety, of such a trust ?

But wherein does our strength for the reconciliation of the world consist ? Strength, in all cases, is the possession of adapted and sufficient means. Now the means of converting a sinner is the truth of the Gospel, as comprehended in the Sacred Oracles. We have no means of converting a sinner but this, and, if we proceed rationally to the work, it is by some method of bringing the Gospel to bear upon his heart and conscience. The question, therefore, whether we possess adapted and sufficient means for the conversion of sinners, resolves itself into one respecting the adaptation and sufficiency of the Word of God. *Is divine truth adapted and sufficient to this end ?* To this point inspired testimony is most direct and express. See the language of David in the nineteenth Psalm. Hear also the apostle affirm that the Holy Scriptures *are able* to make us wise unto salvation. Matters of fact bring us to the same point ; for sinners have been converted by divine truth in every age, and none have ever been turned from the error of their ways by any other means. A weapon which does its work so well can suffer no imputation on its adaptation and sufficiency. Nor upon any other ground can we suppose that it would have become the chosen weapon of the Most High ; for then it must have entailed, either a disappointment of the expectations formed from it, or a necessity for the direct interference of His power to remedy a defect of His wisdom.

We maintain, then, that the church is in possession of adapted and sufficient means for the conversion of the world. It needs nothing more than to bring the truth of God into close contact with the heart of man, and the expected result will follow. Now, if there be in our hands adapted and sufficient means for bringing about the universal triumphs of the Gospel, there is manifest justice in the stirring appeal by which we are roused into action.

2. We observe, secondly, that the text assumes, not only the possession of adequate strength, but *the fact of inadequate exertion*. It is appropriate only to a state of comparative indolence and slumber. That this was the case with the exiled tribes when the period of their restoration arrived, is well known ; but it may seem hard, perhaps, and to some incredible, that we should have any design of applying this topic to present times. There *have been* ages when the church slumbered, but these surely are long past ; and, as for the present, this is pre-eminently the age of exertion and of zeal.

It is not, dear brethren, either in ignorance of what is doing, or in depreciation of it, that we speak ; but, admitting that there is much to commend and to be thankful for, we may not spend the short time which is allotted to us here either in eulogy, or in thanksgiving. Neither can we now indulge in retrospection—a too favourite employment, perhaps—and put the incipient exertion of the present in flattering comparison with the sluggishness of the past. Be it so, that we do a little more than those who did nothing, are we to be everlastingly feeding our pride with this fond recollection, while, if we look at our utmost exertions in comparison with our means and our obligations, we shall find ample reason to cover ourselves with shame ? At all events, congratulation is not our object now ; but the much more salutary, though less pleasing, one, of showing how far yet the Christian body at large is from bringing its whole resources to bear on the accomplishment of its triumphs.

For this purpose let us first look at contributions of a

THE AWAKENING CALL

pecuniary kind, in which it is obvious that the principal efforts of this age, and the whole efforts of many individuals, consist. Duly thankful to every contributor, and not wanting, we hope, in Christian respect and kindness to any, whether contributors or not, we must yet ask whether, even in this direction, anything like the whole resources of Zion are brought forward. We know the honoured liberality of a few individuals ; but why is such liberality yet an individual matter, and not general in proportion to our wealth ? The eulogy of a few in this respect is the scandal of the many. When will all Christians be such that the now conspicuous few shall be lost in the crowd ? Even if the actual amount of money raised at the present day were proportionate to the wealth possessed, there is about the general system of its collection something so unlike the hallowed principle and the eager forwardness of primitive times, that, if the record of it were inserted in the New Testament, it could scarcely fail of being pronounced an apocryphal chapter.

But there is another direction in which Christian activity, if consistent, might be expected to appear. We refer particularly to direct individual exertion for the salvation of souls. This capacity of action unquestionably holds a place among the resources which the church possesses for the advancement of its triumphs. It is not only a part, but a very important part, of Zion's strength. We may go further, and say that it is by far the largest and most important part of it, and that to which all else is either subordinate or inferior. To this all pecuniary contributions are manifestly subordinate ; the only possible utility, and, indeed, the only design, of them being to enable some persons to do this very thing. And, as for the Word of God, which has doubtless a sufficiency, and sometimes an efficacy, apart from direct instrumentality, it is *more* adapted to produce the wished-for effects when it is associated with the force of the living voice, and the breathings of affectionate anxiety. The direct communication and personal application of divine truth, therefore, takes the precedence

of all other means for the conversion of sinners. It is emphatically *Zion's strength*.

Only try the experiment. If this method alone were adopted, and every person who knows the Lord were to make only such efforts for the conversion of others as the most scrupulous prudence might sanction, what an immense multitude of instruments would immediately be brought into operation, all of them fitted for their work, and peculiarly fitted for it in their several stations, because they would bring into bearing the personal and relative influences of life. This whole amount of activity would be constant, without expense, without sacrifice, without violent effort, without exhaustion. It would in every case engage the heart, that most effectual of all methods of reaching the heart of another. The church has no capacity of magnitude and force for a moment to be compared with this. The whole missionary host does not constitute a tithe, nor the tithe of a tithe, of it; and, if the system of universal personal endeavour were but acted upon, the entire missionary apparatus of the present day, magnificent as it now seems, might be almost overlooked in the much wider and vaster activity of which it would form but an inconsiderable portion.

How can it be said, with any semblance of truth, that in this respect Zion has put on her strength? The great exertions of this age are made upon a principle which tends to paralyze the principal aggressive force of Christianity. Everything, or almost everything, is to be done by societies. But the strength of the church does not lie in societies. It would be of no advantage if there were a society, with all its officers, for the conversion of every house, any further than the force of individual character was brought into bearing; and, if this could be otherwise secured, the machinery of societies were much better dispensed with. A great part of what is done by Mr. Secretary, Mr. Treasurer, the committee, and the collectors, is just so much withdrawn from what the same persons might do in their single capacity, if those whom they have to stimulate would but be active

THE AWAKENING CALL

without them. The complicated movements of public bodies, which constitute so large a part of the efforts of the present age, and occupy so large a space in the public eye, instead of being of any intrinsic value, are an indication that the force of character is too feeble to act without such artificial help, and a deduction of a very large percentage from the resources which are available for the conversion of the world. The thing of principal value is that every man should be at his post, and effectively discharging his particular duty, by labouring vigorously for the conversion of those to whom he has access. The strength of Zion lies in the many thousand hearts which love her Lord, and the many thousand tongues which are fitted to plead His cause.

A society, for the most part, is a scheme in which many Christians give their money to enable some to plead for God while the rest are silent, and as an apology for their silence. It opens the mouths of the few, and shuts those of the many; and thus, upon the whole, while so perverted, it does more harm than good. Combined endeavours for the accomplishment of objects which are beyond the reach of individual strength are admirable, when *added* to the exertion of individual strength for that which is *not* beyond our reach; but, apart from this, they are feeble, and, when used to supersede it, they are injurious and absurd. The mechanism of societies bears upon no man's heart or conscience; it has itself no heart, but tends to withdraw from operation the main mover of the moral world, and to substitute for it a mere engine for collecting money, and for giving receipts, which many persons take as a discharge in full for all their obligations to Christianity, and to the world. Our strength lies nowhere but in the heart, and the heart of the poorest Christian constitutes a much more important portion of it than the treasures of the wealthiest. If every Christian would but try heartily to convert every sinner he meets with, it would effect more than all the thousands which are poured into the treasury of the Lord, and the machinery of all the religious societies in the world.

The truth is, therefore, that the church sleeps. Let us all hear the voice of Him Who is at once weary and grieved at our slumbers: "Awake, awake, O Zion! Put on thy strength!" What we have yet exerted is only our feebleness. We have much more powerful means of making an impression on the world than we have yet employed, and the Captain of the Lord's host summons us to the use of them. Does Zion know that she is asleep? Or will she say that the imputation of slumber is a calumny?

The force of the language we are considering goes beyond the mere awakening of activity. It calls, not for a partial, but for an entire, employment of our resources. "*Put on thy strength.*" The meaning cannot be less than this: The scenes which are in prospect will require your *utmost* efforts; the victory will be quite as much as you will be able to win; put into requisition, therefore, all your powers, and exert your whole strength. From what is known of God's administration, it appears that He has always proceeded upon the principle of proportioning the call for exertion to the strength which is possessed. Where this is small, works of the utmost magnitude are wrought, as it were, without hands; but, if it be more considerable, His methods bring it into full employment. On one occasion He said to His ancient people, "*Stand still, and see the salvation of God;*" but on another He proclaimed, "*Quit you like men; be strong.*" And it is like Himself; for, as He does nothing in vain, so neither does He allow any prodigality or wastefulness in His works. Whenever He gives strength He means that it should be employed. We cannot, therefore, suppose for a moment that the conversion of the world will be brought about by anything less than the entire energy of the church. None of that which is given her is meant for waste, or for purposes of self-indulgence, or worldly aggrandisement; and the keeping back of any part of it proportionately hinders the expected victory. Nor is it credible it should be otherwise, when we contemplate the magnitude of the end in view. It might well

THE AWAKENING CALL

have been doubted—by many persons it is actually doubted—whether the resources of the church in their amplest extent be adequate to the conversion of the world; but, if we maintain the affirmative on this point, we surely are not disposed to go further, and to imagine that *a part* of those resources is equal to such an achievement. To expect it from the whole energy of the church is faith; but it is madness to expect it from less. Let us remember, therefore, that the realization of the blessed prospects before us is not to be anticipated because something is doing, or because some individuals, or some portions of the Christian world, are actively employed. *Zion* must put on her strength; the whole church, and every individual in it, is called upon to labour, and to labour to the utmost of his means. Is this too much? Would we rather mingle with the mass of Christian activity a leaven of self-indulgence and worldliness? It can be done at no price less than the proportionate extinction of our hopes.

II

We proceed, secondly, to consider the topics by which this call may be enforced.

I. Here is obvious *the interesting character of the object to be attained*. The end contemplated in the text was directly interesting to the parties addressed. *Zion* was called to exert herself *for her own triumphs*.

It was for their own restoration to the land of their fathers that the slumbering exiles were summoned to awake. We, also, should remember that the triumphs of Christianity are *our* triumphs, and the increase of the church is *our* enlargement. We are a portion of *Zion* itself, and our condition is identified with hers, whether of sorrow or of joy. The advancement of *Zion* is identified with the glory of her Lord. The kingdom of grace is His kingdom, and His honour will arise out of its universal establishment. In His church He reigns; and the extension of the church, therefore, is synonymous with the extension of His authority and dominion.

2. The call may be enforced, secondly, by *the proximity of the most blessed results*. Triumphs, and even our ultimate triumphs, are at hand.

Now, the prospect of success is one of the most natural stimulants to exertion. Every man is willing to labour in his calling, if he may but see the fruit of his toil. Most cheerfully does the husbandman sow, if he may reap ; and the soldier bear the perils of war, if he may gather the laurels of victory. The motive becomes yet more powerful in proportion to the amount of success which may be anticipated. To what unwonted activity would it give birth, for example, if it were said to the husbandman, This year your harvest shall be unusually abundant ; or to the merchant, By this voyage you shall amass unprecedented wealth ; or to the soldier, By this battle you shall gain a decisive victory ; and, if the husbandman exclaims, Now will I sow plentifully, for I shall reap also plentifully ; if the merchant, Now I will venture a rich cargo, for I am sure of a large return ; if the soldier, Now I will fight bravely, for I know I shall conquer ; how much more we, whose harvest is of immortal joys, whose merchandise is the purchase of redeeming blood, and whose victories achieve the glories of Immanuel ! If hope were absent, the arm of strength might be unnerved ; but strange is the heart that wakes not at her voice, and enters not with vigour and with joy into all the labours which can be pursued beneath her smile.

This consideration is presented to us in a manner peculiarly forcible. Labour for God has always been encouraged by the assurance of success ; but in this respect our situation is different from that of Christians in any preceding age. The precious promises, illuminated by the lamp of prophecy, seem to be approaching the fulness of their time, and hastening to the realisation of the anticipated blessing, while the movement which has arisen within the church itself, and the hallowed sympathy in the great work which pervades almost all its departments, encourage and confirm our hope. We are expecting now, not merely the success

THE AWAKENING CALL

which would have attended devoted efforts for God in any circumstances, but those larger results which shall lead to the universal diffusion of Christianity. It is not now that the ministry of the Gospel shall take one of a family, and two of a city, but that a nation shall be born in a day; for the glory of the Lord is about to be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. There has been one Pentecost, but there comes a second, and a second of superior glory, amidst the results of which it shall be said, "Remember ye not the former things, neither let them come into your mind." Dear brethren, is it such a call that fails to awaken us? Shall we not now arise, and put on our strength? Can we be slothful while such a recompense is attached to our labour? Or is there no bounty upon exertion, by which we can be induced to throw off our supineness?

3. The appeal may be yet further enforced by *the necessity of exertion in order to the expected results.*

The glories of the latter day will doubtless be illustrious manifestations of divine power, and the manner of their introduction will show the honour to be God's. But we are too apt to think of them as though they would be achieved by a direct and exclusive interposition of the Most High, apart from a continued and proportioned employment of inferior energy; as though, in a word, the great change were to be wrought by some mighty power while men slept, or, at least, while we continue to pursue the ordinary courses of business or of pleasure. Yet such a sentiment, when we come to examine it, is clearly contrary to all God's ordinary methods, and to the most decisive indications of His will. We know that God has decreed it, that His Word has foretold it, that the promises teem with its glory, and that the Saviour waits for His reward; but, unless we arise and labour, it can never be accomplished. God has as truly predetermined the means as the result; and His decree as certainly precludes a deviation from the method, as a failure in the end. Although the necessity of human instrumentality does not arise from any weakness on the

part of the Almighty, but solely from His good pleasure to employ it, the necessity of it becomes as absolute on this latter ground as it could be on the former. His purposes are as immutable as His nature ; and He will no more change His plan of operation, than He will abandon its final result.

We have not now an opportunity to dwell upon all the humbling and elevating tendencies of this sentiment ; we notice only its influence as a stimulus to exertion. "Awake," says the voice from heaven, "put on thy strength, for days of triumph are at hand." And those triumphs require your strength, they cannot be achieved without your activity. Your supineness throws to an immeasurable distance the period of Zion's joy ; and, were there not hope, either of arousing you, or of seeing a generation succeed you of a different character, it would cover the whole prospect with darkness, and write vanity on all the promises of God.

4. The language of the text may be enforced, finally, by *the actual suspension of the issue upon our obedience*. It suggests the animating sentiment, that the final glories of the church are waiting for her awaking, and for that alone. It is as though the voice had said, "All things are ready, and the hour is come ; now, therefore, awake ; put on thy strength, and the battle is won."

It is an obvious fact, that, whatever progress the Gospel is making, the ultimate triumphs of Christianity are still in abeyance. We see not yet all things put under His feet, Whose right, and Whose destiny, it is to reign. Nothing like a *rapid* extension of the Gospel is visible in heathen lands. With the most heartfelt thankfulness for the tens of thousands who have been rescued from destruction, we have to recollect that the millions and the hundreds of millions are perishing, and that the Gospel is fitted to become the salvation of them all. Why has it saved no more ? Why have the great bulk of those who have heard it despised and rejected it ? The triumph waits *because the church sleeps*. We conceive, and we cannot hesitate to express our conviction, that her slumbers provoke the

THE AWAKENING CALL

admonition of her Lord. If we should point to the efforts which are making, and the thousands of wealth that are expended upon His cause, it might be considered as no answer to His appeal. Even here there is matter of humiliation rather than of complacency. But His reply might be, "This is not your strength. Seek every man the conversion of his fellow, and say every man to his neighbour, Know the Lord. Bring to My service, not only the mechanism of societies, but the fervour of the heart. Give me, not only your money, but your importunity. Offer on My altar, not only your wealth, but your supineness; not only your prayers, but your personal exertions. Try me now *herewith*, saith the Lord, and see if I will not pour you out a blessing."

If this were the principle of His conduct it would be perfectly just, for it is only upon *sincere* devotedness that we can expect Him to smile. But consistency is a necessary evidence of sincerity. And how can devotedness to God be deemed consistent, when there is a cherished neglect of some of the most obvious and obligatory modes of its exhibition? If the various expressions of missionary zeal were genuine fruits of love to the Saviour and His cause, would not the same principles produce the equally characteristic fruits of personal endeavour for the same end? Can he be supposed to have much pity for a sinner perishing at the distance of half the globe, who shows none for one that is in his own house? It is impossible; and it is high time that such delusions should be banished from among us. Whatever there is of missionary contribution or effort, apart from personal and actual endeavour to save the sinners around us, is but a mockery of God, and an imposition on ourselves.

And we have said already that there is no prodigality, or wastefulness, in the divine administration. He produces nothing but for some useful end. But, if He were to bring on the universal extension of Christianity while the resources He has provided for it are not fully employed, it would be

a manifest departure from this rule of His conduct. He would have generated strength adapted to an invaluable end, without having given scope, or a summons, to its exercise. We ourselves are Zion's strength. If we dedicate not ourselves to the work, it is through supineness and sloth, through self-indulgence and worldly love, through indifference or fear ; and is this a state of things which we can expect God to honour ? Will He assuredly give the victory to a host which gazes idly on the foe, and attach a bounty to a spirit which deserves no other name than that of ingratitude and unfaithfulness ?

We cannot hesitate to express our belief, therefore, that the final glories of Zion are waiting till she puts on her strength : but we believe, also, that they will wait no longer. Let her but throw off her slumbers, and the dawn of the expected day will simultaneously appear. All things are ready for her triumph, which waits only for a last and proportionate effort.

We have publicly, and perhaps, also, privately, addressed the God of Israel in the language, "Awake, awake ! put on strength, O arm of the Lord ; awake, as in ancient days !" Have we heard His answer to our supplications ? It is this : "Awake, awake ; put on thy strength, O Zion ! It is well that you have acknowledged the necessity of My blessing, now betake yourselves to the fulfilment of your labours. In your own hands are the means of accomplishing all that you have sought. You call upon Me to put on My strength ; I require you to put on yours. It is not My slumbers that hinder the triumphs of the Gospel, but your own."

What is the influence, then, of this language upon us ? We individually, if we know and love the Lord, are the parties addressed in it. For Zion to awake and put on her strength, is for every Christian to awake and put on his strength, in the cause of his Redeemer. Are we individually disposed to do so ? Do we mean each of us to do, not only something, but all that we can, for the conversion of

THE AWAKENING CALL

sinners, and of every sinner for whose conversion we can do anything at all? With respect to the perishing of distant lands, for whose help our pecuniary aid is properly and earnestly solicited, are we about to make a contribution justly proportioned to our wealth, and the inestimable value of the object? And, with respect to those to whom we may have direct and personal access, our children and our parents, our servants and our labourers, our relatives and our friends, our neighbours and our acquaintances—do we mean to do anything for these? Even if you subscribe to a home missionary society, or if you are a visitor in a Christian instruction society, the first sphere of action may yet be overlooked—it is your own house, and your immediate circle.

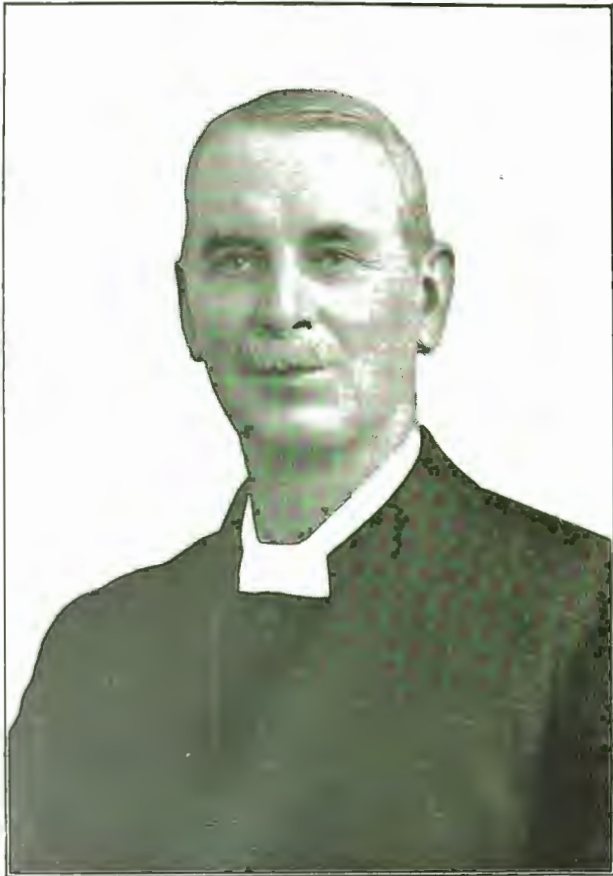
Do you mean to do anything there? For these, which are the most hopeful of all efforts, we have immense strength, but it has not yet been employed. Tell us no more, and do not any more deceive yourself by imagining, that you are identified with the cause of the Saviour, or are anticipating with joy the glories of the latter day. The final triumphs of Christianity are nothing to you; at least, they are less dear to you than your carnality and your sloth. Though they should never come, you would not strive for the conversion of sinners. Vain is it to tell you of the blessedness of Immanuel's kingdom, or the greatness of your obligations to Him; your heart acknowledges no commanding sympathy with the welfare of the world, or the glory of the Saviour. You profess His name, but you are a dead weight upon His cause, and no loss could it suffer if you were to abandon it. But, if yet you cannot abandon it, O become worthy of it! Bring home to your heart, by serious meditation, the quickening appeal which is made to you from above. Awake from your slumbers; put on your strength!

ALEXANDER SMELLIE, M.A., D.D.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME

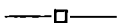
BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL, LONDON,
MAY 1ST, 1919.

“ For the sake of the name they went forth.”—3 John 7 (R.V.).



[Lafayette.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME



ONE of the most alert and enlivening of our men of letters has said recently that, among the fascinating books which have never been written, he thinks his favourite is "A History of Trade Routes from the Earliest Times." He lets his own imagination play on these trade routes. He sees the dotted ships on the wide waters, and the crawling trains of emigrant wagons, and the tribes on the trek, and men extinguishing their camp fires and shouldering their baggage for another day's march, and families loading their camels with figs and dates for Smyrna, and fishermen hauling nets, and desert caravans with armed outriders, and, in later centuries, the Greenland whalers, and the trappers round Hudson's Bay, and the puffs of smoke where the expresses run across Siberia and Canada and northward from Cape Town. Then, passing from trade in its narrower sense, he pictures the commerce of other sorts which has travelled along the roads and over the seas of the world. How the seed of a wild flower lodges in the boot-sole of a soldier in Vespasian's legion, and the boot reaches Dover, and plods on, and wears out, and is cast by the way, and rots in a ditch; and from it, next spring, Britain gains a new blossom. How Bede labours in the cloisters of Jarrow, and never leaves them, and is intent on his books, and yet his candle throws its beams far, and his best pupil, Alcuin, is summoned to be teacher to the Court of Charlemagne. How the wandering scholars of the Middle Ages, young and poor, lift their knapsacks and set forth for the Universities—Oxford, Cambridge, Paris, Bologna; each of them echoing Augustine's cry, "O Truth, Truth, thou knowest that the inmost marrow of my soul longeth after thee!" These routes and roads and oceans, and the wayfarers and voyagers on them, are an entrancing spectacle. They speak of the unappeasable aspirations of men, of the desire of the moth for the star, of

FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME

the law and the passion of our nature which force us to forget the things behind, and to reach forth to the things before.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch will have it that two main motives have governed those endless migrations—the motives of love and hunger. He allows religion its subordinate place. The Moslem invasions, and the Crusades, and the Pilgrim Fathers are illustrations of its driving power. But, none the less, its place is secondary. There have been comparatively few of whom the Johannine word in its simplicity and in its fullness holds good, "For the sake of the Name they went forth." One has regretfully to admit the truth of the indictment. Perhaps in the Apostle's day it was not true. There was an impetus, an impulse, an abandonment to Christ, which made the primitive believers zealots for the furtherance of His Kingdom. "We are but of yesterday," Tertullian said, "and we have left you nothing but the temples of your gods." But the happy moment fled too quickly. It has had its resuscitations and revivals since, when, for a little, Christians repented of their indolence, and bestirred themselves to run the errands of their Lord. But it may be doubted whether the disciple and the Church, as we know them, are much distressed by this wholesome penitence, or half so desirous as they should be to constitute themselves Christ's evangelists to east and west and north and south.

Why is this? Why does not the cause of foreign missions grip all of us by the heart? Why is participation in it an affair of the circumference, and not of the centre? Why are we not going forth, in one way or in another—pioneers, pilgrims, propagandists—"for the sake of the Name"? Let us try to answer these questions.

Partly the explanation lies here :

I

THERE HAS BEEN A SHIFTING OF INTEREST.

It is not that believing men have ceased to be philanthropic, or are not wishful to exalt the Name which is above every

name. Rather it is, in numerous cases, that they are finding scope and need for their philanthropies at their own doors, and are recognising with keener insight than formerly what a manifold service may and must be rendered the Name in their immediate surroundings. They mean to build Jerusalem in England before they start laying its foundations and raising its walls in China and India and Africa. We have witnessed in our time, before the war, and now, when the war, through the great mercy of our God, is over, an awakening of the conscience to new perceptions of how much is heathen and wrong amongst ourselves. We are beginning to understand, as if some stern and beneficent angel had instilled into our careless eyes three drops of euphrasy and rue, the hindrances which are put in the path of the Gospel by ignorance and poverty, by houses that are not homes, and streets that are depressing and mean, by drunkenness and uncleanness, by the inequalities and injustices of society round about us. If we have tolerated these things too easily and too long, we are resolved at last that the dark places shall be cleared. It is a righteous earnestness, though it has its perils too—the risk of substituting the betterment of the community for the conversion of the man; the danger of forgetting that the Church's primary and principal solicitude is not domestic, nor intellectual, nor industrial, nor economic well-being, but the healing of sinful hearts by that supernatural medicine which God has provided in Christ Jesus. Let the Lord capture and possess the citadel, and under His flag the whole environment will be transformed.

But the mending of conditions in Britain will not suffer from the liveliest care for the missionary enterprise abroad; it will be stimulated by such care. You recall the enlightenment and the enthusiasm with which Dr. Chalmers planned and worked for the poor in his Glasgow parishes of the Tron and St. John's. And what precluded so wise a diligence? First, the kindling by God the Spirit of the Divine life in his own soul—a Divine life which was the expulsive power

FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME

of a new affection, sending his prayers and his energies out in all directions. When Andrew Fuller visited him in Kilmany, he wrote of the visit afterwards: "I was struck with the importance that may attach to a single mind receiving an evangelical impression." And, next, the yeoman and untiring efforts of Chalmers on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible Society. At a time when the Church of Scotland was strangely apathetic about Christ's cause in the remoter parts of the earth, he strained every nerve to establish little missionary associations throughout Fifeshire. He is a living demonstration of the truth that anxiety for the prosperity of the Kingdom beyond the seas ensures the noblest campaigning for the Kingdom at home. And he is not a solitary witness. There can be no incentive to labour for the neglected, the tempted, and the lapsed among ourselves more effectual than an intelligent and intimate familiarity with the victories of Christ in foreign lands. He who knows these victories from a personal investigation of them, and who assists them forward with every ounce of his strength, will toil with perseverance and with success for the regenerating of his own kith and kin. "That which put glory of grace into all that he did," it is recorded of Mr. Greatheart, "was that he did it of pure love for his country." And we love our country most purely and most fruitfully when we refuse to be confined within its boundaries, and when for the Name's sake we go forth to all the countries of the world.

A second dissuasive, to damp our ardour and retard our progress, may be this :

II

THERE HAS BEEN A BROADENING OF SYMPATHY.

A characteristic and illuminating study of our day is the science of comparative religion. It has taught us a more adequate appreciation of the faiths of the non-Christian races. It shows us the elements of good in them. We see the nations of men seeking God, if haply they may feel after Him and find Him. We perceive that the quest,

pathetic as it often is, is not barren. At no time, and in no corner of the earth, has God altogether concealed Himself. "Have you not heard His silent steps?" the author of "Gitanjali" asks. "He comes, comes, ever comes. Every day and every night, He comes, comes, ever comes. Many a song I have sung in many a mood of mind, but all their notes have always proclaimed, 'He comes, comes, ever comes.'" But if it is argued that the result of these lessons that we are learning should be the relaxation of our endeavours to commend Christ and His evangel to the wide world, why, then, we must reply that appreciation may be broadened to an excessive degree, so broadened that it becomes a positive crime and a bitter cruelty to our neighbours. Because they have the glimmer of morning, shall we deny them the full midday beam? Because they greet our Redeemer from afar, shall we refrain from bringing them near, to touch the hem of His garment, to discern in His hands the print of the nails, to look up into His face, each with the confession and the thanksgiving, "My Lord and my God"?

We may think of two of the highest types of non-Christian religion.

Buddhism has its fine qualities. The legend of its founder is immortal. Its insistence on the eightfold path to holiness is a rebuke to our sloth and slumber, a salutary and necessary rebuke. But Buddhism regards human life with disillusioned and almost cynical eyes. Life is brimful of disappointment; it is vanity and a striving after wind. The charioteer urges his horses across the plain, and in their pride they appear to spurn the ground; but to the watchman on the top of the wilderness-tower, horses and chariot and charioteer creep slowly and dismally along the sands. That is life.

The world which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help from pain.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME

Therefore Nirvana is the goal to be coveted—Nirvana, which is the extinction of desire, and the escape eternally from the fevers and vexations of existence. But we contrast so dreary a teaching with the thought of life in Christ, forgiven, assured of the friendship of God, cleansed, growing in grace, abounding in every good word and work, journeying towards a conscious and blessed immortality. The Buddhist is in sorest need of Jesus.

Or there is Islam. And, instead of the Mohammedan estimate of life, we turn to the Mohammedan estimate of God. He is One, and we are subject to Him in all things. That is a truth to nerve the mind. It drilled the Moslems into political unity. It made them conquering soldiers, who swept everything before their tempestuous advance. But we set the God of Islam by the side of the God of the New Testament, and the difference is absolute. He has His ninety-nine designations in the Koran, but that of Father is not among them. He is Ruler and Judge. He is over men, but He is never in the midst of men. He is an external potentate, a lonely and unapproachable despot, who does not bear our sins and who is not afflicted in our afflictions. "The God of Mohammed," Dr. A. B. Davidson has said, "is like the desert from which he sprang, monotonous, an unfigured surface, an unresponsive immensity." He is poles apart from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who for us men, and for our salvation, bade the sword awake against His Fellow—the sword whose hilt was as sharp in the hand of the Father as its blade was sharp and deadly in the heart of the Son. The Moslem calls out for our Christ.

And Buddhism and Mohammedanism disclose the non-Christian world at its best. There are millions whose only religion is animistic, to whom the universe is peopled by vague and tremendous terrors, who are beset by hostile principalities and powers, and who have not a gleam of hope in living or in dying. Let us broaden our sympathies as we may: let us acknowledge gladly all broken light of

DR. ALEXANDER SMELLIE

goodness and of God wherever we encounter them ; and yet, and yet, we are culpable, selfish, inexcusable, if we do not go forth for the sake of the Name.

But we are confronted by a reason for our lethargies and procrastinations even graver and more sad.

III

THERE HAS BEEN A SLACKENING OF BELIEF.

It is required of apostles and missionaries that their convictions of truth should be incandescent, firm-set, profound, the fountain-light of all their day, and the master-light of all their seeing. Whether they communicate the message by their own lips and lives to the dwellers in the regions beyond, or whether, staying at home, they send and sustain those who do, and thus divide the spoil, the message must be of paramount importance to themselves. Otherwise—if it “fits too quickly on them like a worn, familiar glove,” if it has lost any of its supremacy and its stringency and its pricelessness, if it can only be spoken in apologetic tones and with bated breath—it is not the decisive Word of the Lord for which the world is hungering and thirsting. Men do not want guesses and surmises. They want affirmations, authoritative pronouncements, words on which they may rest themselves, as, long ago, the Hebrew people rested themselves on the words of Hezekiah, King of Judah. An Englishman resident in Japan describes its landscapes : “There is no fire here. It is all soft, dreamy, quiet, pale, faint, gentle, hazy, vapoury, visionary—washed in neutral blues and greys and greens. Even the seasons are feeble, ghostly things.” One is afraid that there are spiritual landscapes as indeterminate. But the nations have small use for, and will reap small advantage from, a Church washed in neutral blues and greys and greens.

And the Church of our time, what shall we say of it ? “Our talk of sin,” Principal Forsyth declares, “is palpably ceasing to be the talk of contrite men. It has no note of

FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME

humiliation in it. We are not frightened at ourselves." But a man must be frightened at himself, must be smitten to the dust by poignant and piercing accusations of the sinfulness of his sin, if he is to condemn, and to comfort, and to cure the prisoners of sin elsewhere. And if the black is not so utterly black as it once was, the gold and the red have surrendered some of their lustre, their vividness, and their appeal. The grace of the Father and the precious blood of the Son, Bethlehem and Calvary, Christ and His death and His resurrection—are they superlative, are they indispensable, to us Christians of the twentieth century?

None other Lamb, none other Name,
None other Hope in heaven or earth or sea,
None other Hiding Place from guilt and shame,
None beside Thee.

Any diminution of faith in those cardinal verities must cut the sinews of missionary effort; why should we disturb Hindu or Chinaman in his ancestral creed, if God's revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ crucified and crowned is not the one solitary outgate from the evils and miseries of mankind? Our reasons must never be feeble and ghostly things. Our accents must be ringing and confident.

You remember that great Baptist, the tinker whom John Owen envied. "I have been in my preaching," he said, "as if an angel of God stood by at my back to encourage me. Oh, it hath been with such Power and heavenly evidence upon my own soul, while I have been labouring to unfold it, to demonstrate it, and to fasten it upon the conscience of others, that I could not be contented with saying, 'I believe and am sure.' Methought I was 'more than sure' (if it be lawful so to express myself) that those things which then I asserted were true." When, like Bunyan, we are "more than sure"; when the Word shivers throughout ourselves as a trumpet-call, we cannot sit still, and we go forth for the sake of the Name.

One other source of trouble remains, the deepest source.

IV

THERE HAS BEEN A LANGUISHING OF LIFE.

For the Name's sake they went forth when the Church was young—went forth, spontaneously, joyfully, from Jerusalem to Antioch, from Antioch to Troas, and over the Ægean to Macedonia, from Macedonia to Athens and Corinth and Rome and Cæsar's household, from Rome to the gates of the West. The Name laid warm hands on them. It would not let them be. It was so much their wealthiest treasure that they were driven to share it with other men. It should be as imperial and as imperious to you and me. Its compulsions ought to fetter us, and its sufficiencies ought to garrison us, and summer and winter we should be thralls of its enchantments, bondslaves who love it and will not go out free, till we are led in triumph behind the chariot-wheels of Him whose it is; till, by faith, we leave the profit of the present to follow our vision.

V

THE COMPULSIONS OF THE NAME ARE MANY.

First and foremost comes the compulsion of debt. It is our Saviour's Name. He stooped for us to the Cross. And if we really beheld the miracle of Calvary, the marvel of it and the magnitude and the exceeding grace, we could not do enough for the Son of God who nailed Himself for our redemption to the Tree; from the Tree, as the Latin version of a psalm says, He would reign over us and do with us whatever He pleased.

And another compulsion is that of pity and help. The Name is the Good Shepherd's name. He had, and He has, compassion on the multitudes, and He expects that we His followers shall be baptized as He was, into a sense of all conditions. We are cold, we are hard, we are un-Christ-like, if we do not succour these sisters and brothers of ours, who have our losses and griefs, with none of our

FOR THE SAKE OF THE NAME

gains and strong consolations, and if we are unmindful of the sheep scattered abroad and ready to perish.

A third compulsion is that of duty. The Name is our Master's name. He has allotted to us the task of making disciples of the nations, and if we would be faithful to Him we have no option in regard to it. When Jesus Christ says to this man "Go," he ought to go cheerfully and immediately; and to that man "Come," he should come without a whisper of expostulation and without an instant's delay; and to His household servants "Do this" or "Do that," their feet must be shod then and there with the sandals of alacrity.

Aye, and it is the compulsion of hope. The Name is that of our returning Lord. Soon we shall no longer read of Him in a book or look towards Him leisurely across a chasm of intervening time and space. Soon the heavens that hide Him from our sight will open, and He will reappear. We shall be caught up to meet Him. We shall stand in His presence. "And how will it be with me and thee when the King comes in?"

Compulsions of debt and pity and duty and hope emanate from the Name, when our life is throbbing, radiant, full. But in what way, and by what charm, shall it become such a life, cleaving no more to the earth, mounting up as on the wings of an eagle, running without weariness, and walking the dusty high roads so that it does not faint? How, but by the constant appropriation of the sufficiencies of the Name? It is symbol and synonym of a wisdom, a strength, a holiness, a patience, a love, which are inexhaustible, and which are ours for the claiming and the taking. In one of the most moving biographies ever penned we are admitted to a transfiguring experience which God granted Mr. Hudson Taylor. It was the autumn of 1869, when for years he had been not simply a child in the family, but a devoted worker in the field. But each week brought him, he mourned, its register of failure and sin. He prayed, agonised, fasted; he made resolutions; he sought

additional times for retirement and meditation ; but all was without effect. Then one day it pleased God to reveal His Son in him, in Christ's breadth and length and depth and height. " As I thought of the vine and the branches, how great seemed my mistake in having wished to get the sap, the fullness *out* of Him ! I saw not only that He would never leave me, but that I was a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. The vine was not the root merely, but all—root, stem, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, fruit. And Jesus is not that alone. He is soil and sunshine, air and showers, and ten thousand times more than we have ever dreamed, wished for, or needed." When you and I are thus completely identified with our Lord Jesus Christ, when our impotence is yielded up to Him, and His omnipotence abides in us, and surges through us, and flows out from us, every compulsion finds its willing response, and every want calls forth its glorious supply. We have life and abundance, and for the Name's sake and in the Name's sufficiency we go forth. He that is feeble is as David, and David is as the angel of the Lord—nay, as the very Lord Himself, who reflects His own likeness, and repeats His own words, and performs afresh His mighty deeds in broken and emptied men and women.

JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.

THE MEASURE OF THE ALTAR

TOWN HALL, READING,
OCTOBER 3RD, 1893.

“ And these are the measures of the altar after the cubits.”—Ezek. xliii. 13.



[Elliott & Fry.]

THE MEASURE OF THE ALTAR



VERY earnestly I recommend you to read carefully this vision of Ezekiel. You will not fail to notice that after other measurements had been taken at last the prophet gave those of the altar. When I read it in the quiet of my study, that was the point at which I became excited. Whilst he was measuring gates and posts and porches I cared little, but when he began to measure the altar, who could but pause?

Then came this disappointment—"after the cubits." I thought he was going to measure the altar. And what is a cubit? said I. And he mocked me with this reply: "A cubit is a cubit and an hand breadth." Ah! that undefined hand breadth; that plus quantity that is in everything. "And from the bottom upon the ground even to the lower settle shall be two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser settle even to the greater settle shall be four cubits, and the breadth one cubit. So the altar shall be four cubits; and from the altar and upward shall be four horns. And the altar shall be twelve cubits long, twelve broad, square in the four squares thereof."

Do you understand that? No man ever understood the altar. Remember that and be calm. The altar is not to be understood. There are some places at which we can only pray, and wonder, and weep, and wait. It is the man with the footrule in the church that I dread! He tells me, forsooth, how long I preached. Can any man preach with that person in the audience? The use of the measure is to point to the immeasurable. The measurable is algebraic, symbolic, indicative. The altar means the sky, the sky, God. At first we are greatly taken by bulk, by magnitude, and we talk of the great mountains and the great seas. It fits our age well, but we shall outgrow it. Great mountains! Why, a child, give him time, can climb to the top of any

THE MEASURE OF THE ALTAR

one of them, and wave a banner there. No height at least can keep a child back; there may be ruggedness of way, but of that we are not speaking, but of mere height, mere greatness.

How great we used to think those houses down in your village. You did! I did! We passed the great house, ivy-covered, with a kind of suppressed, but not wholly unconscious awe. Then you came to Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, London, and went back, and you said: "Where is that great house?" Ay, where? "That is it!" "No." "It is!" "No, no!" "Certainly that is the house!" "I thought it was so large, and had so many windows in it, and that it reared itself among all the other houses, very important and almost majestic." That is it, but how it has come down! Why? Because of the greater sights you have seen, the greater houses that have passed before your vision.

Thus all life goes down in one sense and yet up in another. The man who has communed with God fears no opponent. Goliath looked so huge when I saw him from the human standpoint, but after five minutes with God I sought him and he could not be found. So you tabernacle with God, live and move and have your being in God, walk in the heavenlies. Then, when you come down to earth, with its battle and stress and cross and pain and need, you will understand what the Apostle meant when he said, "If you look at affliction from one point it seems intolerable, often beyond words and imagination, but if you look at it from another point you will say, 'Our light affliction is but for a moment.'" How so? Why, we look not at the things that are seen; not at the cubits, but at the altar; not at time, but at eternity; not at the present, but at the future. It is heaven that must one day explain the earth.

Now these are not mere incidents—they express a law. There is a law of growth, there is a readjustment of perspective and proportion in life. Sometimes it applies to men—the preachers that we used to hear with such awe!

and now what say we? With an audacity that is tinged with insolence, we ask whether they would be as popular to-day. That question itself may indicate the operation of a very wonderful law of advance and progress, difference of standpoint and difference of point of view. The question may be put wisely; sometimes it is put without sufficient consideration. I honour the great souls of the past; I do not proceed to measure them. If I did I should have to take ourselves into the sum total of their magnitude. They are living still, and if the children have exceeded the fathers, the children need not despise them. We represent to-day, not ourselves, but the mighty dead, the sainted, crowned dead. Their blood runs in our own veins.

Let us look at this law of altar cubits a little while. It admits of divers and useful illustrations. *Take the alphabet, your English alphabet.* There are some six and twenty letters in it. That is the measure of the alphabet after the cubits. Now pronounce the alphabet. You cannot! You have got all the letters in one huge mouthful and cannot pronounce them. And most of the letters are themselves dumb, waiting for the vowels to touch them into music and into life. But suppose a man should say that was the English language—there you have the English literature, there you have the “Paradise Lost” and the “Principia” and “Hamlet” and all the poetry that has ever been written, and all the philosophy that has ever been dreamed or published, you have it all in so far as the whole is expressed in the English language. In a sense, yes; in another sense, no. And yet without the alphabet where should we be? Who could move? Who could express themselves in the English tongue? But are you content with the alphabet? Yes, on the lower plane; when it comes to the higher things you are not. You smile at the notion of being contented with the alphabet when I refer to letters, to literature, to poetry, and to philosophy. Yet how many are there who have been in the Church forty years and are in the alphabet still, and who, when they go to church,

THE MEASURE OF THE ALTAR

want to hear the alphabet pronounced. Unless you say " A B " and right down to " Y Z " there are some measurers, not sent from heaven, who say you have not preached the Gospel. Ah! the Gospel is a sky, a wind, a pathos, a spirit, as well as an alphabet. It has its writings, it can hand them to you, but ask for its inspiration, it breathes through all the centuries and makes a man live according to his kind.

Of what wonderful application is the thought possible in relation to the Bible. There are many persons who say they read the Bible through. They cannot! Some say they read it through twice a year. They cannot! There are persons, or have been in history, who knew all about the book—what was the initial letter in each chapter, or how many verses there were in each section, which was the middle verse in a particular book, as Genesis, or Joshua, or the Kings, persons who knew which words were above the line, under the line, and through the line. They knew all these things, but they did not know the Bible. That was the measure of the Bible after the cubits—a bookbinder's estimate, a printer's specification, but the Bible, the sanctuary, the inner spirit, the Divine intent—these do not admit of statistical treatment. And you have never read the Bible until you have read the spirit of it, got into sympathy with its song. Do I seek, then, to discourage men from trying to read the Bible through twice a year? I do not; I only point out to them the difference between the measurable and the immeasurable, between the literal and the spiritual, between the thing they can do and the thing they cannot do.

The specific reference of this is to the altar. There is an altar that can be measured; there is an altar that cannot be measured. Have we come to the higher altar? *Have we come to prayer?* Prayer! What is prayer? Now you are asking a wise question. When you have settled that you will dismiss a very frivolous enquiry as to the answerableness of prayer. First, define "answer." Prayer is

answered, must be answered. God permits us to talk to Him, speak out our whole heart to Him, to tell Him exactly what we would like to have, as one who should say, "Little children, what is it you want? Tell me all about it, in your own way, in your own words, and take your own time about it. Now what do you want?" And we tell Him what we want. Is that prayer? No! The prayer has not begun yet. We have had a statement, and a statement in supplication form, but the prayer has not begun yet. You pray for fine skies for your Union meetings and anniversaries—that is not prayer. You have not finished with the Lord's Prayer.

What is the Lord's Prayer? I will tell you. It is not the disciples' prayer, not the little board hung up for the disciples to learn by heart. What was the Lord's Prayer? This: "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." That is prayer, and it was never left without reply. Are we to measure prayer by our ignorance? You have asked for poison many a time. You have supplicated God for your own ruin without knowing it. You have omitted the Lord's Prayer. Jesus prayed again—I am so thankful for that "again"—a second time. Blessed be His human weakness and His holy love, Jesus amended His prayer, enlarged it, won a victory with it, and said while the blood ran from His temples, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." Now, you have said that when the little child died, and the little child became an angel instantaneously; if you had omitted that "nevertheless," that immeasurable quantity, you would have felt your soul to be in despair and your spirit to be within the very reek and flame of perdition. But that "nevertheless" turned your desire into prayer, consecrated your wishes, left the case in the hands of God. There are those with measuring lines in their hands who say, "Now, do you think prayer is ever answered?" They never pray! I say it solemnly. This shall be to me for the moment none other than the House of God, and, under its holy roof, I say they never

THE MEASURE OF THE ALTAR

pray! They may use the language of prayer, they may respond to prayers that are read, they may say words that have a devout colour and tone, but that is not prayer. It is the last thing the heart does. The "nevertheless" is the goal of prayer! When a man has said that he can add, "Though I am slain yet will I trust in Thee!" Young souls, do not you be disturbed by the people who write about the answerableness or non-answerableness of prayer. The best answer to any attack upon the altar is another prayer: the best answer to every assault upon the Bible is another edition of ten thousand. Some persons ask me for a book that will help them to discover and defend the doctrine. They say, "Do you know of such a book?" I say I do. "What is it?" "The Bible!"

Shall we go further? Dare I go further? Why, *this law, largely and reverently applied, fixes its operation upon the very Christ Himself as we knew Him after the flesh.* I tremble to say it, but Paul said it, and he is our elder brother and leader, the apostle of insight! He said, "Henceforth we know no man after the flesh. Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh yet henceforth know we Him no more!" The Incarnation stands between the natural and the supernatural, and lays its wounded hands upon both. Jesus was here but for a day or two, a mere bracket in the literature of duration and evolved and ever-involving Providence. As to seeing Him, it was a glance and He was gone. Gone, that He might be nearer! Invisible, that He might be better seen! This is a great mystery. I can only speak to the higher spiritual experience, to those who, having not seen, have believed; and he who believes, sees! We wanted the dear One to remain with us all the time, and He said, No! it is expedient for you that the measurable should become the immeasurable, the visible the invisible, the physical the spiritual! I can work more for you in Heaven than will be possible under present conditions! It is for your sakes that I disappear from the reach of the bodily eye!

This is a great law. We never would have known our friends if they had not died. You never would have known that old father of yours if he had been living still. You would have seen the mere clothing and attitude and habitude, and he would have been but a series of little household anecdotes; but now that he is gone there is a great appeal to memory, and a sublime inspiring of the higher fancy. You see him now as God meant you to see him, and you are glad. The old pilgrim has put his staff down and gone into ineffable rest. It is so all through and through life; and again I say that it is so with regard to Christ. I wish I could see Him sometimes! Oh, for one grasp of that right hand that was always breaking the bread and giving it for the world's hunger! It is still doing the same kind office—He lives to give!

May I go still farther, and then stop. *We see the cross no more after its cubit measures.* The cross was measurable, the Roman foot-rule was laid upon it—so much vertical, so much horizontal, so much in weight—was that the cross? No! That was the Roman gallows, that was not the cross. Oh! why do we not preach the cross, the eternal cross, whose shadow lies even over the light of summer? Men need the cross so interpreted. But have we not made a gallows of the cross, the model of the Atonement? Who can measure the word "atone"? There are those who are the victims of definition idolatry. They want to know what you mean by this term and that. There are indefinable terms, there are terms that have no equivalent in other symbols. "Atonement" may be one of these terms. I have seen it once. A man may only see the cross in its truest sense once, but that once spreads itself through all the days. A man may only take, mayhap, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper once. Have you taken it so? For convenience, for expedience, for merely ecclesiastical purposes, and for occasional spiritual helps, it may be necessary to have it every Lord's Day, or every month, or every year, at certain periodic intervals. No doubt, but the soul cannot drink that Blood more than once!

THE MEASURE OF THE ALTAR

Do you suppose that the cross can be measured in cubits? Where was the atonement rendered? In eternity! Do you suppose that Christ was born in Bethlehem in any other than a merely visible, and temporal, and earthly sense? He was never born in Bethlehem! When did He die? He is the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. Before the sin was done, the atonement was made! You cannot anticipate God. You cannot surprise the Eternal. He does not conceive of the cross as an after device; He does not attempt to make a Roman model into a living atonement. The centuries come and go; they are the breath of eternity. The very hairs of your head are all numbered.

This gives us a new view of all our society reports and society operations, and all our church work. "I preach," says one minister, "to a very small congregation." How do you know it is small? Who told you the lie? A small congregation! Impossible! One man is a congregation to the right preacher. One listening soul will take the fire out of him. "We only added one man to the Church last year." "Who was he?" "I think his name was William Carey." When you added William Carey to the Church, you added India, and you added the world! "We only added three to the Church last year," and my lords are sitting examining the schedules, and saying to one another, "I see, sir, that only three were added to the Church last year. Had not we better lower the grant this year?" That is the measure of the altar by the cubits. That is not Christian. You must come to a novel statistical method and a larger measurement, and who am I that I should nibble my brother's grant because he has only added three to one church, and because he has only subscribed £1 10s. 4d. to the Missionary Society, and I may have subscribed through my church £100? The £100 may be the lesser sum; His grace may be on the £100; the glory may rest on the £1.

We must have statistics; we must have reports—certainly. Do not let any man imagine that he has got

ahead of me so far as to imagine that I do not recognise the importance of these things. I recognise the necessity, but I say they may be measured, or they may be measured unwisely, and I say that a report in figures may give no correct representation of the altar or of Christian service. I have known some men whose small spheres I have envied. Small spheres do not mean small service. Understand that you can measure by it the cubit and not measure by the spiritual lastingness and amplitude of the results of your ministry as they are viewed by God.

Kind Father, dear Jesus! Once a man wanted to build a temple to Thee, and he fumbled and groped and mistook, and could not do it. And Thou didst come to him and say, "I see the temple and I take it. It is all roofed in and glorious—it is in thine heart!" Thou sweet, sweet Woman-man Christ, Sister, Mother, Brother, Son of Man! Thou didst change water into wine, and turn the mites into millions of gold! It is what we would do that Christ looks upon, regards, and accepts. And so there at the World's Fair the other day a man from Japan smiled upon the Christianity of America and of England, and said: "Japan ought to be very much obliged to those countries that send missionaries to her," and he laughed a fool's laugh. No, sirs, we do not send missionaries, we send Christ. The missionary is the earthen vessel, the human messenger, the brother man, but when we send a missionary, we send the Lord. And the time will come when even Japanese sneering will not be accounted rational argument. Go on sending Christ through your missionaries, the Cross through the men, the Gospel through the preacher, and do not turn aside to argue with any man about it. Make up your mind that this thing is right, and do it, and you shall have praise at last.

Many persons are very meddlesome with processes. They think that you are very unwise, that you are a very reckless man. There is a mousey kind of prudence that never did anything but steal its morsel of cheese from some other plate! They are people that never lost their lives,

THE MEASURE OF THE ALTAR

and therefore never found them. But after you have wrought out the end to a great success, they come and say to you, "Well, of course, you see—evidently you were right!" Able prophets! What magnificent commentators upon things they do not understand! You have your policy, you take it from the Christ-heart, and you mean that all this world shall hear this Gospel, whether it will hear or whether it will forbear, spiritually. Having made up your mind to that course, turn neither to the right hand nor to the left, salute no enemy by the way. Say you are doing a great work and cannot stop to argue.

JOHN WATSON, M.A., D.D. (IAN MACLAREN).

THE GOSPEL WE TAKE TO THE
WORLD

BRUNSWICK STREET WESLEYAN CHAPEL,
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,
OCTOBER 2ND, 1894.

“ We were bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God.”—
1 Thessalonians ii. 2.



[Elliott & Fry.]

THE GOSPEL WE TAKE TO THE WORLD



WHEN any man comes forth from the multitude and sets himself to address his fellows with serious intention, one is tempted to ask four questions :

Has he a positive message?—some word to quicken the conscience, or satisfy the heart? If he only proposes to air his own doubts, or attack other people's beliefs, then let him consume his smoke, and hold his peace. By his speech every man either helps or hinders this travailing world, and if he does not help he is bound to hinder. St. Paul fulfils this condition, for the Jews might count him a heretic, and the Greeks, a madman, but no one could deny that he had something to say, and had some right to call his message a Gospel.

Is the Gospel his own? is our next question, or it is only a mechanical echo? Repeating in ornate words, beautiful with hoar frost, what once came from the burning lips of believing men, is the cheapest, coldest, weakest thing in speech. It were better to proclaim the merest shred of truth with passion than to deliver the whole Gospel of God by rote. When one has bought the Gospel with agonies of faith, and it is fused with his imagination, his reason, his conscience, his emotions, his words are power. Let a preacher believe with the marrow of his bones, and men may deny and hate him—they may even send him to the cross—they will be obliged to hear him. The vibration of his soul makes your nerves tingle. "My Gospel," St. Paul used to say with emphasis, for he did not learn it in the schools of the Pharisees, nor even from his fellow apostles, but achieved his faith in hours of bitter trial, in visions of the third heavens, and in the fellowship of God's Son.

THE GOSPEL WE TAKE TO THE WORLD

What is the burden and content of his Gospel? The copyright of this majestic word "Gospel" seems to have expired, and it appears in strange application. There are material gospels which are meat and drink, social gospels which are hours and wages, political gospels which are votes and privileges, intellectual gospels which are culture and dreams. We quarrel with none of them—we only criticise their title. Nothing is worthy of this royal word which does not deal with that part in us which shall exist when the petty affairs of this life have passed away like a shadow; which does not stir the pulses in the soul, and bring to a white heat its secret longings for holiness and peace. It was within the range of the soul life, with its depth and height and distant horizon, that St. Paul's Gospel moved. It was the gospel of Salvation.

What, then, is the origin of the Gospel? Granted that it was St. Paul's living possession, who was its creator? Granted it was his testimony, who was its inspiration? St. Paul's answer is clear and consistent, from the beginning to the end of his ministry. This gospel may be spoken by men of like passions with ourselves, and may be contained in what is contemptuously called a book of revelation. It may condescend to the images of human life, and demand its justification by personal experience. That does not affect the question. According to the apostle, it came in the first instance from the Eternal Himself as surely as if He had audibly spoken to His servant. It is the Gospel of God, and therefore St. Paul declared it boldly. For the notes of the gospel are reality, individuality, spirituality, and divinity.

I

When St. Paul makes this immense claim of divinity for the Gospel, you may understand him either in a general or a particular sense, and everything depends on your reading.

One can say, with strict accuracy, that every sublime

thought which has ever visited the human mind came from God, because He alone is the source of the good and the beautiful. No one has, therefore, any interest in denying this diffused divinity to the gospel. If it be agreed on every hand that Browning and Tennyson were touched by the Divine Spirit when they wrote of Truth and Righteousness, then it is evident that St. Paul must have been richly inspired when he gave to the first centuries the most radiant ideas on religion outside the gospels. But on this reading his gospel remains only one among many, with no more authority to bind the conscience than "Christmas Eve," no more certitude for the heart than "In Memoriam." This is to level up letters and to level down the gospel at one stroke, and in a general appreciation of all good books you let slip the solitary Divinity of the Gospel.

Or we may take St. Paul's phrase at its highest value, and understand him to declare that he received his gospel as a message from God, by direct and special revelation. If this be true, the gospel is invested with the most awful sanctions of mercy and judgment. No one can reject the gospel without risking the just indignation of God; none obey it without securing unto himself for ever the loving-kindness of God. God, who partially reveals Himself in the parables of Nature, and shines more clearly by the inward light of conscience, has at last broken the silence that veils the finite from the infinite, as it were.

No doubt it is a startling idea, and may give pause to many intelligent and reverent minds, when one speaks of the gospel as if it were a letter from the Almighty. Surely he forgets that we are not now living in an early age, wherein a transcendental God had intercourse with men by miracles, but in this later time, wherein an omniscient God touches us on every side. It strains the faith of many to hold this absolute view of the gospel; their tendency is to regard it as simply the most brilliant exposition of religion. Certainly every one finds it difficult to resist the influence of

THE GOSPEL WE TAKE TO THE WORLD

the atmosphere in which he lives, but let us face the situation and understand that to minimise its divinity is to give the gospel away. It is not a conciliatory concession to honest doubt; it is a surrender of faith which, depriving the gospel of its inherent power, deprives the world of its splendid offices. This divinity has been the charm and strength of the gospel. It was because men believed God had spoken they hearkened, believed, struggled, conquered, and finally attained unto life everlasting. Upon the verily, verily of the gospel, the saints of the past risked their souls and endured. Nothing can compensate for the loss of this certitude.

II

This gospel may be submitted to several tests. One ought to settle in his mind this question of its divinity. Place the gospel, the message declared by the prophet in Isaiah liii., and expounded by St. Paul in his letters, but chiefly as given by Jesus in His discourses, before reason, and ask whether it is such as you would expect God to send. There lies in the background of every man's mind a certain idea of God, the accumulated product of ages of thought and experience. That is the ultimate basis of every argument and speculation regarding God. We say, God will do this, and God will not do that, with the conviction that we must be right, or that our most sacred instincts are at fault. How far does the gospel fulfil our highest reason? It is an appeal one ought not to be afraid to make. Is not the heart of the gospel Jesus, and has the world ever seen or imagined any one liker God? If He was not God's Son, whence did He come, and what better can God's Son be? We have a collection of sayings which no one doubts fell from His lips. Are they not final with the mind?

Are they not also irresistible to the heart? There is presented a sacrifice of overwhelming pathos and majesty, the tragedy of the ages. Can anyone imagine a love that

shall eclipse the love of Bethlehem, of Nazareth, of Gethsemane, of Calvary? It was the conception of the greatest prophet outside the Hebrew nation that the reality of all our shadows exist in the unseen, and here in the gospel which contains the ideas of the Christ Life, the Christ Sacrifice, the Christ Death, the Christ Love, is the substance of those dreams that have floated, like intangible mists shot through with light, before the finest minds of humanity.

Then place the gospel upon conscience, and inquire whether it is likely to have come from Him who is the Supreme Righteousness. The sombre fact of life is sin. What is the first desire in a man's heart? Is it not that the entail of sin be broken, and he be loosed from its intolerable burden? We lean to our own philosophies and religion with admiration. They are profound, ingenious, beautiful. But they labour under a general disability; they admit sin at every point, yet they confess that they cannot save from it. Sin is proved to its depths; it is analysed to its last element; it is condemned eternally, by the Cross of Christ. This is the first chapter of the gospel; the second shows how the principle of sin is met, and broken, and destroyed by the sacrifice of Jesus, and that the intensest demands of conscience, and the wildest hopes of my heart, are satisfied. When one sees the correspondence between the eye and the light, it is fair to argue a common Creator; when one realises the harmony between the will of conscience and the will of the gospel, you conclude that both are the will of God.

III

Think then of the moral force of the gospel. Who was the most influential personality in the Roman world of the first century? Nero, the emperor? Seneca, the philosopher? People might have said so in that day. In the afterlook these men are but ghosts—mere shadows flung on the screen of time. Nero is remembered for his crimes, Seneca is searched to discover traces of St. Paul. The ruling man of

THE GOSPEL WE TAKE TO THE WORLD

the time, and its king, was an obscure Jew, who was dragged from prison to prison, in appearance abject, in speech contemptible. This man saved the world when it was dropping to pieces, and inaugurated a new civilisation. With what? Let him speak for himself. With the gospel of Christ, of which he was not ashamed, because it was the power of God.

Search far enough, and you will find that the most efficient and beneficent force in history is the gospel. It saved letters in the fourth century; it created modern art—architecture, music, painting; it is the only stable basis for society. We owe our peaceful homes, our pure family life, our national energy, our most inspiring ideas to the Cross of Jesus. If it had free course, and its ends were attained, this world would be in the days of gold. Is it not of God?

IV

Remember, too, its amazing and inextinguishable vitality. There have been periods when faith languished, and morals grew corrupt, and it seemed as if the voice of God were silenced. The gospel of St. Paul was gone, an exploded fable, a worn-out force. It was so before the Reformation during the reign of rationalism in Germany, in the England of last century, and when moderatism chilled the heart of Scotland. One might have despaired of the kingdom of God. But what happened? Suddenly a voice was heard—as Luther from his cell, Francke from his German parsonage, Wesley from an English university, Chalmers from a Scottish parish—with a familiar, forgotten sound. The gospel had been crucified and buried; they had laid a stone on its tomb, and sealed it with their seals. The gospel rose, like its Lord, from the dead, and was once more abroad in the land. It was at first as a voice in the wilderness, but soon the echo was heard, and the wilderness and the solitary place was glad, the desert rejoiced, and blossomed like a rose.

Yes, and if this land should be given over to neglect of the gospel, with its attendant decay of morals, there will arise some man, perhaps from the plough or from the bowels of the earth—nay, from the presence of God Himself. He will not have preached one year before the whole massed powers of evil will have been driven back, as flies the darkness before the rising sun, for this message you carry is the “ everlasting gospel ” of God.

V

If the Gospel is divine, then it follows that a minister of Christ should preach it with authority. Let us be the humblest and meekest of men in private life, but as evangelists let us magnify our office. It is not for us to suggest or discuss ; it is for us to declare, to offer, to command, above all, to beseech and persuade our hearers, as ambassadors of Christ. We are alarmed at the spread of sacerdotal doctrine in our time ; we are aghast at the arrogance of sacerdotal claims. We dread the influence of this teaching on the religions of England. We would fain arrest its progress. There is only one exposure that will avail, only one arrest that will be effectual. It is not invective nor satire ; it is not logic nor learning ; it is the wider and more confident declaration of the gospel.

Against the priesthood let us put the prophethood ; and none that remembers the long contrast between the two orders, that extends from Moses and Aaron to Caiaphas and John the Baptist, need be afraid.

Over against an infallible Church, which hath never been seen, let us set an infallible gospel, verified in the experience of a multitude no man can number. They exalt St. Peter, the priest, holding the keys of the kingdom of heaven for the binding and loosing of sins, but we exalt St. Peter the Apostle, unlocking the golden gates of the kingdom to three thousand souls on the day of Pentecost. For many minds the idea of the priest will ever have a mysterious fascination, but surely there is no office on the face of the earth—so

THE GOSPEL WE TAKE TO THE WORLD

august as to stand before even a handful of village folk, and declare the gospel of Christ.

If this were merely a system of theological science, or some modern theory of life, we should have no right to invite young men to risk their lives for its propagation. But if it be the very light and love of God, then it is a sacred trust. We dare not conceal and keep the gospel to ourselves. It is not ours alone, it is the heritage of the world. If it be true, there is no man anywhere the Father does not love, no man anywhere for whom our dear Lord did not die, no man anywhere that hath not a right to hear the good news before he dies.

Believing in its divinity, we disparage no elementary value of any religion that has preceded. But goodness is but the starlight before the sun. May the sunrise come more quickly! We do not think only of what the heathen suffer. We are overcome by the sunset of what they lose who have never seen Christ. We cannot live in our day and be untouched by the Time spirit; and there come moments when faith fails. Perhaps we take down our books and read the apology for Christianity. Let us look away from our libraries. Let us gather the news that comes from China, from Africa, from the islands of the sea. Is not this the Son of God? We believe again. In our land sin is destroyed by the Cross, as if He had died there. Is not this the atonement of God? We believe again. With a great cost of substance, and far greater cost of lives, has this gospel been sent. Most happy expenditure! Most blessed sacrifices! Unfaltering testimony comes back every year from far, confirmed by the faith of nations we have never seen, and sealed with the death of martyrs who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

JAMES CULROSS, M.A., D.D.

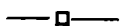
TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS
WASTE ?

MOUNT PLEASANT CHAPEL,
SWANSEA,
OCTOBER 6TH, 1885.

“ When the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste ? ”—Matt. xxvi. 8.



TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE?



A FEW days before our Lord's crucifixion " they made Him a supper " at Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, a neighbour, if not a relative, of Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus. As the guests reclined at table, Mary passed round behind them till she came to the place occupied by Jesus, and there she paused. She had in her hand an alabaster box filled with ointment of spikenard, very costly. Bending down, and never asking herself what the onlookers might think, she broke it open, and poured it on His head, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Her deed was not understood—was misunderstood and challenged—by the disciples. Blind to its love-motive, it seemed to them a piece of romantic, senseless extravagance, and they exclaimed, with angry surprise, " To what purpose is this waste ? " It might have been sold, one of them computed, who had been reckoning up the value in pence while Mary was anointing her Lord for the grave—it might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor, and if so, would have kept a little family in comfort for a whole year.

Could Mary's deed be vindicated? She says nothing for herself, she attempts no defence; but the Lord takes up her cause, and answers for her. To have sold the ointment, and bestowed the price on the poor, might have been a good and thoughtful use to make of it. " Blessed is he that considereth the poor." But the use that Mary put it to was nobler still. She seems to have understood the Lord's repeated foretelling of His death; and her deed in anointing Him for His burial was more seemly than if she had placed a garland of amaranth on His head, and crowned

TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE ?

Him. Her deed told the price at which she estimated the Despised and Rejected of men, and expressed her love to Him—love pure, deep, fervent, single-hearted, the love of a woman's soul, love that counted nothing too precious to spend on Him. "She hath done a beautiful deed," the Lord says ; beautiful in spirit and meaning, beautiful in propriety and grace, beautiful by reason of the simplicity and truth of the doer. It was the deed of a spirit that soared above the commonplace and ordinary in its exceeding love. Of all the honours done Him on earth, this was the queenliest and rarest, and we do not wonder that wheresoever the Gospel is preached the deed of this woman is told for a memorial of her, and that, being told, it gives birth to deeds like itself in other lives.

"To what purpose is this waste ?" This very question confronts us to-day in presence of the missionary enterprise. Reckon up the outlay ; valuable time given to it by men to whom time is gold—valuable time, and much thought and energy ; a large amount of money contributed every year ; not large, perhaps, when set over against what we are able to give, or what we spend on luxury and pride, yet very considerable, and annually increasing ; and, lastly, a large expenditure of human life. In the beginning of our mission in India, sickness followed sickness, and man after man fell ; and in our youngest mission—that on the Congo—it has been the same, only more deadly ; indeed, to some onlookers, the going of our missionaries thither seems like that ride into the jaws of death at Balaclava. Every man who goes out goes at the peril of his life ; and we have no security, as yet, that the risk is materially abated.

"To what purpose ?" The question is not put only by those who are out of sympathy with the missionary enterprise, who regard it as Utopian or Quixotic, who sneer and find fault, and who would see in its success no special gain to humanity ; but by some perplexed Christian brethren also who are full believers in the work of

evangelizing the world. I wish, if possible, to reply not simply to the question itself, but even more to the mood of mind out of which the question springs. And inasmuch as the Congo is chiefly in the thoughts of those who propound the question, I shall freely accept that Mission for illustration.

In the outset, it is clear that we at home have no right to push others into danger—even for the Gospel's sake. The summons must come, not from us, but from Jesus Christ, and must be heard in the inmost soul of the individual man, and be personally responded to. Now, it should be remembered, as matter of fact, that under our missionary arrangements there is no conscription; there are no bought men; we have no medals, or clasps, or dignities, or rewards, or other bribes to offer; every missionary is Jesus Christ's volunteer, a volunteer who has been warned to count the cost, a volunteer according to the words, "Thy people shall be free-will offerings in the day of Thy power." I am not trying to relieve our Society of responsibility; undoubtedly we are accessories both before and after the fact. But as to the missionary himself, his going into the place of danger and service is, primarily, not a matter between him and a committee, but between himself, solitarily, and the Lord who bought him.

It is clear, still farther, that we are bound to place a high and sacred value on the lives of our missionaries; to pray for them, to use all the measures that science and experience suggest for their safety, and to man our stations sufficiently, so that no life may be endangered through the overstrain of care and labour in an unfavourable climate. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints; and precious should it be in our sight also.

All this being not simply admitted, freely and without burden, but insisted on, we can survey the mission field at large, or any part of it, and can face the question squarely, To what purpose is this waste—this expenditure of treasure and of life?

TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE ?

I

The first thing to take into account is, that we are acting under Christ's Commission, which requires us to carry the message of salvation to the whole world. As widely as the curse of sin extends, so widely must the tidings of mercy reach. This is not debatable matter, and therefore need not be dwelt upon. To argue it in such an assembly as this were a piece of foolish impertinence. It is settled among us, once for all. By the will of Jesus Christ, this round earth, in all its isles and continents, must hear the great evangel of heaven. Africa cannot be missed out. It has been put upon us in providential ways to undertake service of the most important kind in that continent, and in a special province of it. We are there because God sent us. There was not a mere vague Macedonian cry borne across the waters to any ear it might reach ; but God assigned a share in the work to us as certainly, I believe, as He summoned Moses to bring Israel out of the bondage of Egypt. We should have been guilty if we had declined the service. We should be guilty if, even in our hearts, we were to draw back now. Whoever may be counting up and grudging the price already paid to bring Africa to the feet of Jesus Christ, it is not our missionary brethren ; they have endured hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and they give no sign of flinching ; none of them has pronounced or whispered the word " Halt " ; they are as full as ever of devotion, and courage, and high hope. It is a good land, they say. Let us go up and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it. If it be so that we are doing the bidding of the Lord, in His Word and His Providence, then is there no place for the word "*waste.*" We cannot speak for our brethren who have passed from our midst, and tell what they would say from the high places to which they have attained ; but I am persuaded they would tell us this, at least, that so far from grudging their lives in the cause, they did not know a nobler use to which life could be put.

II

Looking to the Congo for illustration, take into account next that our brethren are doing preparatory work of the most necessary and valuable kind. Though so recently since a beginning was made, yet already a piece of true work has been done that will not need to be done over again. "Navvies' work" I have heard it called. Yes, in a sense; but navvies' work that reveals to the people the Christian heart, and that will help them all the more easily and fully to grasp the Gospel in its true significance, and to understand the spirit of our blessed Master, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. They will be able to see the Christ in His servants, even more than through a book, though that book were the Bible. But you have read the story of the Congo to little purpose if you do not see that far more than "navvies' work" has been done. Fields of future labour have been opened and partially surveyed, instruction has begun, friendly feelings have been awakened, the name of Christ has been spoken, glimpses of that Face have been seen from which the glory of God shines forth, the languages are in the way of being mastered, and ere long the Scriptures will be given to the people, and they will be able to read in their own tongue, wherein they were born, the wonderful works of God. True, our brethren are not yet reapers; but, to use a parable, they are surveying the country, making roads, throwing bridges across the rivers, clearing the forest, trenching the moorland and wild, and preparing the soil, where immortal harvests are yet to wave. Are you impatient? Do you think God slow? Behold! The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath patience; be ye also patient. He that believeth shall not make haste.

III

Next, take into account how our missionary brethren, in their self-denial and labours, their hardships and perils, are asserting a great Christian principle—the principle that

TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE ?

nothing is to be held back from Jesus Christ ; that our whole being is to be surrendered to Him, freely, and for love's sake. This principle, accepted in the heart, is an element—one of the greatest—in every true and noble life. You meet it everywhere in the Bible in one form or other ; it is the very genius of our religion. You find it (to take a single instance) in that brief expression spoken by Paul to the sailors and others on the reeling deck, where the ship, with its two hundred and seventy-six souls, was tossed in Adria, the very terror of the tempest giving emphasis to his words, "*God, whose I am.*" God's redemption, as Paul understood it, was not the mere breaking of bonds and delivering from death. It was not as when one comes on some wild animal caught in a snare, and undoes the snare, and lets the panting, struggling thing return to its wild freedom again. Paul felt himself the glad captive of redeeming love ; and he tells this out when he says, " God, whose I am." This is what gives truth and greatness to a human life—this is what keeps a soul in its orbit—the inwrought conviction, *I belong to God—I myself, body, soul, and spirit.* Now, apart from all successes in the mission fields, our missionary brethren are doing us immense service at home—if we only saw and felt it—by their practical assertion that we are not our own ; and that our business is to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. Count this in as not the least among the gains of our mission work.

IV

Consider, further, that the sufferings and losses which occur in the service are but in the line of the history of the Kingdom. No strange thing is happening. " I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee." It has never been otherwise from the beginning. How was the Kingdom founded ? " HE went forth bearing His cross." " Ought not Christ to have suffered, and to enter into His glory ? " All helpers of man must come within

the circle of man's pain ; the more glorious the help they bring, the nearer the centre of that circle must they stand—He in the very centre, wearing the sharp regalia of thorns—the Helper with the bruised Heart. How could He lay hold upon men—how could He show them God—how could He conquer carnal, selfish hearts—but by the magnanimity of suffering love? It is not the mere deliverance, however blissful, that does it. You sit, all unconscious of danger, within the spring of a tiger ; its eyes glare and its limbs quiver. One who sees your danger shoots the wild beast dead with his rifle. You owe him your life, and cannot help be thankful to him as your saviour. But suppose he had no rifle, and had sprung in between you and dealt with no weapon in his hand except a hastily snatched club, and had saved your life thus, coming forth torn and bleeding—how different your feeling ! How your redeemed life would have been his ! It is not the mere deliverance that binds you to him, but the love that wrought it freely by suffering. *Christ died for us* : that is the note which tells how deliverances have been wrought, and how the Kingdom has advanced and made way from the beginning. "The blood of the martyr," they said in the old days, "is the seed of the Church" ; and the principle of the words is as true and as applicable to-day as ever. On every victorious banner is blazoned a cross with this for motto, *In hoc signo vinces*. If the laying down of Life for Christ's sake were taken out of history, it would at best be a poor record of ignoble selfishness or mean ambition—the quenching of earth's last glory—a record unutterably sad. It is the meek of the earth—the men who love not their lives unto death—that have carried forward the Kingdom of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. This is the line of advance, and has always been ; and to-day, in the missionary service, the advance is being made along this very line. It is the line of victory. We know what the end shall be. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for

TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE ?

His law. We know on whose Head the many crowns shall rest. Earth's monarchs, the proudest and highest-throned, shall shut their mouths and do homage before the Man with the marred countenance.

V

Consider another thing. The heroism shown in connection with missionary enterprise is in itself an immense contribution to the spiritual forces that are at work in the world for good. We are already compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, from the days of the man (in deaths oft) who said, "Neither do I count my life dear unto myself," down to the present. It humbles one, and restrains his speech, to remember how little of the heroic there is in his own life; but, at the same time, if there is anything in him to catch fire, the heroism of the mission field enkindles holy ambition and endeavour. Those who know no better taunt us with serving for money. "Doth Job fear God for naught?"—with mere change of proper name that taunt is held out still. "Skin for skin," the devil said, "all that a man hath will he give for his life," and some are found to believe it. One has only to glance over the great missionary story from the first till now to find the disproof. Many in the missionary band I do not hesitate to call "*martyrs*," ranking them with those who have gone to the stake or the scaffold for the truth's sake, and who by their death have helped to pay the purchase-money of our religious light and freedom. They would never have been found in the sphere of danger but for the name of Jesus Christ; they would have discovered creditable opportunity to slink away, if they had not loved His service better than life. Do you think their quietly-heroic example nothing to this age? It is no breach of charity to say that there are too many of us who like a comfortable religion, with no Hills of Difficulty or Valleys of Humiliation in the way to the Celestial City, and who to the mail of olden heroes, with its "glorious

dints," prefer the soft clothing of them that are in the king's houses. Does not the heroism of the mission field rebuke our selfishness and love of ease? Does it not bring a sense of shame into our bosoms? Does it not appeal to all that is truest and noblest in our Christian manhood? Does it not make our heart beat high to think of it? Beyond its direct value in the foreign field—and that is very great—this missionary heroism is fitted to tell powerfully at home. It rouses from inglorious sloth and slumber like a trumpet-blast. The story of it is an inspiration—a new chapter added to the Book of Acts, written out in clearer characters than ever, "Ye are not your own;" "Yield yourselves unto God;" "Gird up the loins of your mind;" "Endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ;" "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." We feel—we are compelled to feel—as we read the great story, that it is a sweeter thing to do good than to enjoy selfish ease and pleasure; a more satisfying thing to win souls than to build up a fortune; a nobler thing to suffer for Christ than to acquire world's renown.

Some of our missionary brethren have been smitten down just as they were beginning their career, with great profitableness dawning for them; and their life, to look back upon, is seemingly incomplete, broken off, defeated in its purpose. Have they fallen in vain? Shall we raise them a broken column for monument? Does their death, so prematurely, mean so much "waste"? Or is it, by some Divine paradox, "gain"? One leaps into a boiling sea to save a child's life—do you experience no instant thrill of heart as he takes the plunge? Do you withhold your admiration till the child is brought safe to land? Do you measure magnanimity by success? And if two lives should be lost in place of one, do you call it "waste"? Do you not feel that history is for you the richer, and Divine influence the larger, by one golden deed, a deed finer in quality than David's three mighty men, who broke through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem

TO WHAT PURPOSE IS THIS WASTE ?

that was by the gate? And how shall we measure the influence of life laid down for Jesus Christ? Thanks be to God for the martyrs!

VI

Once more; because our missionary brethren are doing Christ's work, we "know" that their labour is not in vain in the Lord. In due season there shall be reaping. He has given us a right to count on that. For one day—far off, or nearer than we think—"He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." Good men have prayed and laboured and suffered and gone down to the grave without actually seeing much fruit; they have even at times taken up the lamentation, "I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain." Their labour was not *really* lost—no labour done for God ever is; but they did not see what came of it. The Saviour shall *see*—shall see and *be satisfied*. The results, so to speak, overpay the sufferings. They shall be of a nature to give Him satisfaction, being wholly good. They shall be, moreover, of a measure to satisfy Him, being proportioned to the grandeur of His own conceptions and desires. *Our* cup holds but little, and is soon filled; as it is soon emptied again. What must it take to satisfy *Him*! And as none but Himself knew the travail—not the mere torture and shame of the cross, but what the Greek litany calls His "unknown agonies"—so He shall have a joy peculiarly His own—ineffable, measureless, corresponding to the grasp and quality of His own nature, so that *He* shall say, "It is enough." The whole missionary enterprise throughout the centuries, so far from being "waste," is a contribution toward this issue, and has its place in "the many-linked chain" that draws earth up to God.

Put these things together, and let them have their full weight, and we shall not regard the expenditure of life and treasure as so much waste, but rather as the precious seed of the great Harvest of God.

DR. JAMES CULROSS

In the meanwhile, in one closing word, I remind you of Christ's appeal to His people through the missionary enterprise—the appeal that comes most directly and powerfully home to the Christian heart. He understood us best. He does not allure us with the promise of a terrestrial paradise, or this world's renown. He looks forth into our midst—looks into this gathering to-day—looks into our eyes with those eyes that closed in death to save us, and asks : *Who among you will die for Me ?*

JOHN CLIFFORD, M.A., D.D.

THE INEVITABLENESS OF MISSIONS

LEICESTER,
OCTOBER 2ND, 1900.

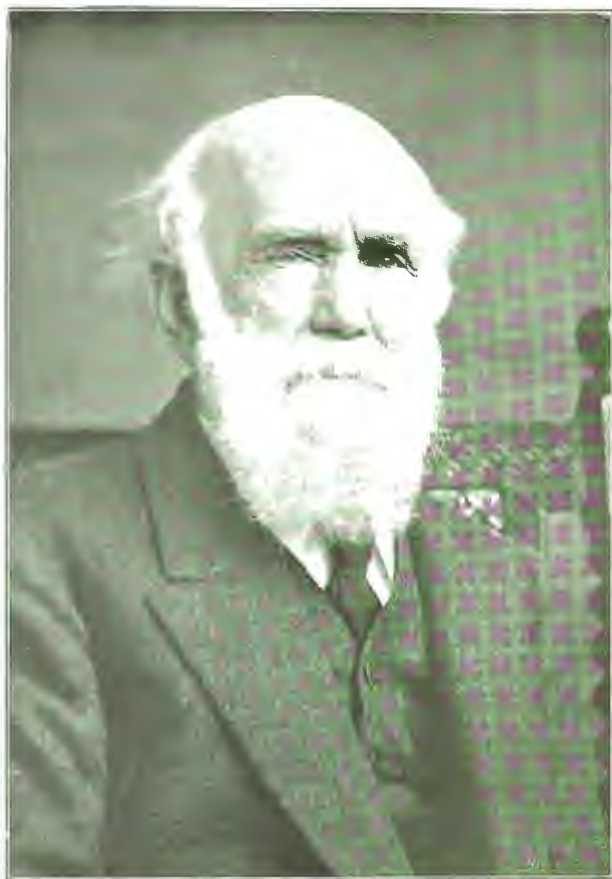
“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

“To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,”

“According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

EPHESIANS iii. 8-11.



[*Reginald Haines.*

THE INEVITABLENESS OF MISSIONS



PAUL is a missionary : a man sent of God to open the eyes of the Gentiles and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

He is much besides : he is a man of singular richness of character and vast endowment ; of prolonged and various training and wide experience, of extraordinary versatility and magnetic charm, finely courteous and nobly austere, capable of playing many parts and excelling in every one, moving with ease in any society, and adding grace and strength to all ; but, in the soul of him, always the evangelist, the herald of the good news of redemption for all the nations of the earth.

First of all, and fundamentally, he is a disciple of the Saviour, the proud and exultant "slave" of the new Master who has redeemed him. Next, he is the apostle of Christ, of Christ Himself, and by His mandate ; "not from men, neither through men, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." He is an orator of passion and courage, eager to "make all men see"—not only hear, but see—God's eternal purpose of liberation for them in Christ, and interpret their life and duty and destiny in the light of that revealed mystery. He is a teacher of religion, an expert of the highest rank, a master of the "wisdom and knowledge of God," or, in the speech of our day, of the philosophy and science of God ; an apologist, keen, alert, cogent, skilful, and convincing ; a founder and guide of churches ; a traveller and a citizen ; but every speech is an appeal for Christ, every controversy an evangel, every journey a mission of salvation, and if he stays in a city it is only that as a citizen he may consolidate the conquests he has won as a missionary. He says, "One thing I do," and that "one thing" is the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles ; for that he was laid hold of

THE INEVITABLENESS OF MISSIONS

by Jesus Christ, and to that he gives himself with such entireness of soul and strength of passion that his missionary activity fills his life; everything else is supplementary and instrumental; the whole redeemed and renewed man, to the last fibre of him, is subordinated to the glory of God, his Redeemer, in the salvation of men.

In this letter to the Ephesians he appears as

AN AGED MISSIONARY IN CHAINS.

For nearly thirty years he has hazarded his life for the sake of the Gentiles; but age has not withered his hope, or persecution worn down his zeal. The divine heat burns as fiercely, nay, more fiercely, in the old man's soul in the Roman dungeon than when he set out to prove in the synagogues of Damascus that Jesus is the Christ. Socrates assured the Athenians that no one could go about telling them the truth, and withstanding them when they wished to go wrong, without jeopardising his life. Paul knew that from the beginning, and having counted the cost, he was prepared to pay it to the uttermost farthing. He was familiar with peril, had mastered the secret of patient endurance, and therefore "took joyfully that spoiling" of his fortunes in Jerusalem which had issued in his incarceration. Now the authorities of Rome had him in their grip, false charges had been rained upon him in a perfect hurricane, and his life hung on a thread. A Temple riot, got up by the Jews because he had been seen in the streets of the holy city with Trophimus the Ephesian, ended in his arrest and arrival at the bar of Cæsar as a captive, but he knew he was not Cæsar's captive, but Christ's, and that his chains were not those of the Roman Emperor, but those of his Saviour and Master. He was "Christ's prisoner." That was the real fact; Christ's prisoner, not Cæsar's. Life is to us as we are to it. For Paul to live was Christ, and therefore there was music in those clanking chains and a setting free of the energies of joy and thanksgiving in an imprisonment which brought him to the very centre of the nations,

and multiplied a thousandfold his opportunities of preaching to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. The prison became a pulpit, and from within the walls of the dungeon messages of salvation went on and on, echoing to the ends of the earth and to the last syllable of time.

In all this

PAUL IS NO MORE THAN A PATTERN CHRISTIAN,

a pattern of what we must be, what the whole Church must be; that is, first, foremost, and always missionary, everything else supplemental and instrumental to the supreme task of conveying to men all over the earth the exhaustless wealth of Jesus. To us—"to us is this grace given"; this is our highest distinction and honour, to open the door of faith to all men in all lands and in all ages; and to open it, not for a fragment, a scarcely discernible rudiment of the Christ, but for Him in all the matchless fullness of the wisdom and power of His redemptive grace. The Church does not exist for itself. It seeks the lost, with dauntless love and quenchless enthusiasm, with insatiable desire and pleading tenderness; seeks like a mother who cannot give sleep to her eyes, or rest to her heart till her babe is again on her breast; seeks and seeks on and on till it saves all, saves the very last of the lost. It shuns isolation, or only seeks it to acquire discipline and nerve for the long and toilsome search, for the mighty tasks of liberation. It goes—"goes," that is the word, it goes, and keeps on going with the Gospel in its heart and in its hands; goes to every creature; to the whole creation. Wherever it travels, that is its goal. If it seeks the deserts of Arabia it is because it is the surest route for Ephesus and Rome and Spain. If it ascends Mount Hermon and dwells amid the transfiguring and transporting glories of communion with Moses and Elias and Christ, it is to receive the message, "not Moses, but Christ"; "not Elias, but Christ, the beloved Son." Hear Him! and then, with the strength born of concentrated and exclusive adherence, to cast out, with

THE INEVITABLENESS OF MISSIONS

irrepressible ardour, all the devils that cripple and blind and madden society.

The Church that ceases to be missionary in spirit and in work, in experience and in achievement, loses every right to be regarded as a Church of the Redeemer.

HERE IS A MINE WITHOUT A BOTTOM, A MINE OF
INCORRUPTIBLE GOLD.

Try to assess Paul's wealth! Take full stock of the addition he has made to his being by becoming a Christian; see him in his original poverty shut down and shut up in the body of his death, flung aside as a derelict, "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked," and now behold him! He has bought of Christ the white garments in which he is clothed, eye salve with which he sees; gold refined in the fire, with which he is rich—but how rich you cannot say, unless you have by searching found out the Almighty, and know the mind of the Lord. For he has—yes! this is the awe-inspiring fact—he has annexed God, and in Christ is one with Him, with the whole of God; God's infinity supplying all his needs, and flooding him with increasing strength to work for the salvation of the lost human race. God! think of it!—God is made to him inexhaustible forces of liberation and illumination, wisdom and ministry. Just as steam is made to Watt and his successors the power of locomotion, and electricity is made to Cyrus Field and his compeers and successors the power of communication, so Christ is made, from God, power and wisdom for salvation. He can travel into regions of thought and action from which he was excluded before, and achieve results wholly impossible before. God's forgiveness drives out his despair and makes room for an inextinguishable hope. God's love lifts the oppressions and contradictions from life, and shoots human existence through and through with the glorious assurance of the triumph of personal righteousness. God's power in raising Christ from the dead drives away "the shadow feared of man," and discovers death as the expansion of our being,

the disappearing of the seed-corn to spring into the sprout which shoots up into the green stalk that waves in the breeze, and carries the augmented powers of a hundred seeds! He has riches that neither man nor angel can ever trace out. The riches of Christ—

“ Nor tongue nor pen can show
The love of Jesus—what it is
None but His loved ones know! ”

But this, at least, is indisputable: that in the experience by which this wealth is made the everlasting strength of the missionary resides. Here is the permanent motive of Paul's work; not that he had known Christ after the flesh, but that he knew Him after the power of an endless life; not that Jesus had told His disciples to go and preach His gospel to every creature, though he rejoiced to know that that was His blessed will; not that he was sent and commissioned by the church at Antioch, though he was thankful for any aid that church gave him; no, not in these; but in this, that he knew Christ's infinite helpfulness to himself, and was possessed of a personal experience of the “grace,” the mighty energy, of the redeeming God; assuring him of the measureless resources of Christ for a corrupted and lost world, and impelling him to offer to all men the whole wealth of God, the Father and Redeemer of men. To him, in this experimental way, came the advancing and driving flood of power working in him and through him for the salvation of the whole world, until the moment when he finished his course, and ascended to receive from the hands of his Lord the conqueror's crown!

Faraday said, “I can do nothing with the record of any experiment until I myself have reproduced it in my laboratory.” Exactly!

**YOU CANNOT BE A MISSIONARY ON THE STRENGTH OF
ENDORING A RECORD.**

The recognition of the grandeur of the work of Paul is not enough to inspire witness-bearing for Christ in China

THE INEVITABLENESS OF MISSIONS

even unto death. You must reproduce Paul's experience in the laboratory of your own soul. Missions owe their energy to personal experience of the grace of God in Christ Jesus. It is because that supernatural experience is repeated that missions can never die.

Men talk of arranging treaties to keep missionaries out of China. They say our Protestant messengers have created troubles. They ought to know better. It is greed for territory in the nations of the West that has roused the slumbering hatred of the foreigner in the breasts of the Chinese. If none but Protestant missionaries had gone to China there would have been no sorrows they could not heal.

But in vain they attempt to contract the missionary out of the countries of the world. He goes not for territory, not for gold, not for political power ; but to carry to men redemption and renewal, the peace and joy, the new life that are in Christ, and nothing will hold him back. Did Governments keep Carey out of India ? They thwarted him, they delayed his arrival, but he held on his way, silent, patient, plodding, invincible, carrying at his girdle the keys of the Kingdom for the whole of Hindustan. Could difficulty quench the faith or stop the march of that strong, steadfast hero, John Williams of Erromanga ? Never ! He could give up his life for the natives, but he could not beat a retreat. Did not Bishop Patteson offer his service and yield up his life to those who in blind ignorance caused his death ! Was it not Commodore Goodenough who, though struck down at the moment he was trying to open friendly intercourse with a barbarous tribe, begged with his last words, in the spirit of the Christ of Calvary, that nothing in the nature of revenge should be exacted for his death ! What kept on his course in its orbit that fiery, meteoric spirit, Henry Martyn, shining with sevenfold brilliance, what but the attraction of the Sun of Righteousness ? Hear the shout that comes from the great soul of Livingstone in Africa, and reveals the man : it is old, familiar,

hackneyed as a proverb ; but it has a new and splendid setting in the experience of the lonely worker for the dark tribes of that troubled land, and comes baptised in the power of his wholly surrendered life.

The undecaying strength of missions has been and is the perpetual miracle of conversion ; the repeated advent of Jesus Himself to souls in the power of His saving and renewing grace. When the Church had the freshest and clearest vision of Christ, then the fires of missionary zeal burned brightest, and the hazard of all for the work was most complete. Every special renewal in the consciousness of men has been attended with the uprising of the exultant note, " Unto us is the ' grace ' of a special endowment given to preach the Gospel to those who know it not. Jesus Christ bids us preach His Gospel to every creature," and to know Him and win Him and be found in Him, is the one unfailing source of that evangelical aggression by which the whole round world is yet to be brought to the feet of God.

THIS IS THE AGE OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE WONDROUS
VARIETY OF MAN.

The entire globe is open. Man cannot hide from his fellows. The " open door " is a part of the plan of God. We are all the Father's children, and He will bring, and He is bringing, His family together. God is making the world one. He is creating and equipping the saint, the hero, the full-grown man of the future, and bringing all races to share in his equipment. The mighty power of the redeeming God will break down all our walls of partition and make of all of us, what He made of *both* Jew and Gentile, even one. The process may be checked, but it is really inevitable. It goes on. You see it in the United States, where all races are being cast into a burning fiery furnace, Irish and Italian, Swede and Swabian, French and Finn, Chinese and German, to come out as gold seven times purified. You may see it in London, if you will. But few

THE INEVITABLENESS OF MISSIONS

recognise the fact, and fewer still see its meanings. Men keep up their racial separations, and feed race pride ; use their place and power to oppress the feebler tribes and keep up their fight against God. But Christians can accept no goal other than that of gathering together in one all the children of God scattered abroad ! Impelled by the transcendent grace of God, we must cherish a sense of personal unworthiness, nourish self-suppression and broad sympathies, together with the sublime superiority of Paul to mere racial distinctions ; and so take to man, as man, the unsearchable riches of Christ. We know him, as a pigmy and a paragon ; in his childish ignorance and in his finest culture ; as hardly emerged from the beast, and as only a little lower than God ; but wherever we see him, we see his need of the Saviour from his sin, of the riches of His mercy and wisdom and power ; we see his wondrous possibilities in Christ ; a social outcast to-day, a joint-heir with Christ to-morrow ; a criminal, who has lost his place in the social order, but a possible citizen of the Kingdom of God ; a cannibal, but on his way to become a prophet of God : dead in trespasses and in sins, but to be quickened together with Christ, and raised up together with Him into the heavenly order of life, and clad and dowered with all the forces of that new and enlarged existence.

With that passion for the Son of Man, and that great hope for all men, we must go into the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

BUT LET US RISE TO A STILL HIGHER PLANE.

After all, a man's wealth is what he is, and not what he has. His real treasures are in himself ; and all that is outside is dependent for its values—his books and business, his pulpit and pictures, his money and land—upon what is inside. One man with a box of books is richer than another with a Bodleian library. A tent-maker in the markets of Rome is poor indeed ; in the churches of Philippi and

Ephesus and Corinth, he is distributing fabulous sums of wealth ; for he has gone on adding to his knowledge of Christ, and thereby deepening his humility, quickening his sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and feeding the fires of his devotion to his life-task of enriching the world with the salvation of God.

It is still the same Christ that lives, and because He lives this fuller unfolding of Himself will go on as long as the generations roll. He is a Person and not a system, a Spirit and not a letter, a Life and not a book. All real wealth is in persons, not in things ; you cannot exhaust any person ; least of all, the Greatest Personality of the ages. The demonstrated sufficiency of Christ for the various spiritual necessities of different ages and different human conditions all through the centuries is a Divine warrant for the expectation of successive communications of the grace of God in Christ for all the ages to come.

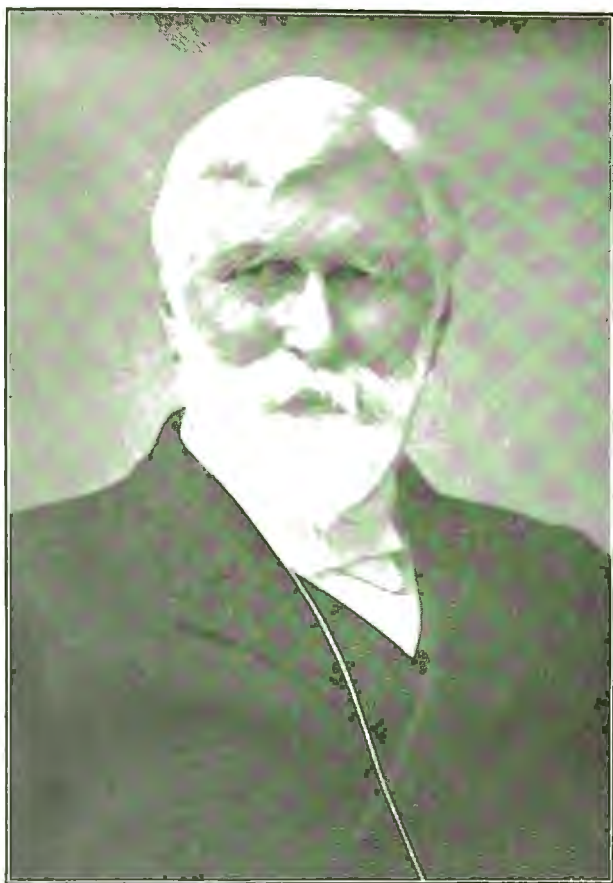
Dean Stanley declared to Tennyson, " Christianity, far from being effete, is as yet undeveloped." It is a fact. The riches of Christ are not yet traced out, and will not be till all the races and civilisations of the earth have been reached, and each people and tribe, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, has contributed its quota to the unfolding of the energies of the Son of God.

RICHARD GLOVER, D.D.

**THE SPHERE AND SCOPE OF
MISSIONS**

**IN THE CITY TEMPLE ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED
MEETING OF THE BAPTIST AND LONDON MISSIONARY
SOCIETIES, APRIL 24TH, 1901.**

“ And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”—St. Mark xvi. 15.



THE SPHERE AND SCOPE OF MISSIONS



CRITICS have some doubts as to the authenticity of the final verses of this chapter. There is no doubt of the fact that, as a historical reality, Christ, departing, charged His disciples to face the world, and, by the Gospel, to conquer the World and bring it to Himself. He spoke not for an age, but for all time. He is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever, and His charge remains the same, and man is the same in all essential needs and in all essential powers. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Saviour saith to the churches. No precept, as no prophecy, is of private, local, personal significance only. It has a message to all times and men. Here is the mountain top of Galilee, and amidst the rebukes of men, persecutions abroad, and feebleness at home, the Saviour, with the calmness and benignity of His spirit, breathes upon us, and not varying His order says to-day to us: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

In trying to deal with this charge my work lies exclusively with elementary truths and elementary duties; with surface things, but with things, therefore, the more easily overlooked and forgotten.

Let me ask you, then, first of all, to mark that :

I.

IN COMMENCING THEIR WORK THE SAVIOUR MAKES THE DISCIPLES ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO THE SOUL OF MAN.

There are many woes of men : Poverty, Care, Sickness, Oppression. The catalogue of human ills is immeasurable, illimitable; but the trouble of the soul is what Christ fixes their eyes on as the supreme ill. And, forgetting no other ills, nor lesser ills, He makes the disciples first carry a blessing to the soul. The Gospel is not directly of benefit

THE SPHERE AND SCOPE OF MISSIONS

to the outward circumstances, nor a relief to the outward care immediately. It is a thing addressed to the reason, to the conscience, and to the heart of man. And He makes the disciples remember first of all that man is Soul, and that the first and foremost need of man is something that will touch that soul, break its bondage, set it free, and quicken the possibilities that lie within it. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to the soul." The Saviour is not regardless of other troubles. He wrought miracles to fill the empty net, to feed the transient hunger of the multitude, even to increase the gladness of marriage joys. No sorrow of the human heart fails to command His sympathy. He means to set men free from every ill. All power is given to Him in heaven and in earth to effect that, and He will effect it. But He begins with the soul, and He makes His disciples think supremely of the soul of man, and remember that wherever man is found there is a spirit with the fire of God in it, something kindled with Diviner qualities, a conscience with a burden, a heart with a largeness of regard that looks into eternity, a child-something that gropes for its Father-God; and He requires that, neglecting no other need, they think chiefly of this.

Christ would have us do this, I suppose, for many reasons.

For one thing, it is, thank God, easier to do a big than a little thing, to save the soul than to reform it, to emancipate immortally the man than to give him a little transient delight and joy. That is one reason.

And He does so, I suppose, further, because, if you can save the man, he saves you the trouble of doing anything else for him. He will look after the rest himself. You want sobriety. Save him, and sobriety is instinctive. You want the power of self-denial. Save him, and it is quickened in his heart. You want brotherhood, you want staying power, you want aspiration, you want education. These things all come if you give liberty to the soul and link it to its God. All the things that all philanthropists wish—civic liberty, self-respect, manhood, brighter homes,

higher citizenship—all these things are “ things that accompany salvation.” Give the man the Gospel, and you have given him in that one gift a tree of life with twelve manner of fruits that bears its fruit every month, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations

Further, when you do this you do something that remains. The lower philanthropy is often disappointing, for when depression or temptation overtakes the man, there is apt to be a sad relapse. That which was given was not founded on a rock. But when you emancipate the spirit by the grace of Christ, and link it to its God, all things are fixed and rooted, and are amongst the things that cannot be shaken, but will remain. Therefore the Saviour here gives this to the disciples and to us, as the first charge, that we are to remember that every man is a soul, and that his first need is that which will enlighten and bless and emancipate the soul. Christ means to heal every woe, but He begins with the biggest. Let us repent, brethren, of inadequate faith in man, and reverence him. And let us learn from this word not to speak down to men, and enfeeble them by excusing them, but to speak up to them and lift them by honouring them. “ Go ye into all the world,” expect in every man a soul, “ and preach to it the Gospel.”

II

WE HAVE A GOSPEL THAT CAN ENRICH THE SOUL OF MAN.

We deal sometimes in large names for small things, and if it were man that called this “ a Gospel,” it might be a designation of that which gives a transient delight and a mere momentary or shallow joy. But Christ, who measures His words, calls it “ Gospel.” He teaches us that we have glad tidings of great joy which brings brightness ineffable and wealth incalculable to every soul of man that receives them.

THE SPHERE AND SCOPE OF MISSIONS

We forget too often that we have a Gospel, forget it partly because we have lost the power of meditation, and the soul cannot take sufficient flight and has not sufficient leisure of adoring meditation to let into it this great conception. We have lost our sense of the greatness of the Gospel, partly because we are fussy in our activities, and partly because we are hurt by material comforts. We have also to recognise that the intellect of man just now is rather occupied with Law than Gospel, with the reign of Law in nature. Probably some future Paul will have to start an antithesis between Law of nature and Gospel, something like that which the original Paul did between the Law of Moses and Gospel. Anyhow, we are preoccupied with the reign of Law. We are indebted to the scientific genius of man for great generalisations, and for showing us how individual laws dominate widely separated things—the same law moulding dewdrop and planet; one principle co-ordinating facts that once seemed arbitrary and uncontrollable and incapable of being catalogued in any way. And owing to this sense of the reign of Law that we all have, we are gradually coming to devote too much regard to *the ordinary*, to what is well within the sight, the scrutiny, and the intelligence of man; to accentuate training rather than conversion, and resolution rather than regeneration, and influences of man rather than the sublimer influences of God that we are made to admit and to absorb. One day, I doubt not, Law will be an "Ivory Palace of the King," a temple in which we shall worship a living God. To-day it is rather a prison or a tomb of God and man. For our progress to be sound, the supernatural should grow with the natural in our regard; but as it is, law is pushing out God more and more. And the outcome of such an impression, the result of the atmosphere we are breathing, is that we have come to look on man as a very small thing, and on God as a small thing; and on all that happens as due to the play of forces whose measure you can easily take. And even the immortal future you can almost calculate by

a dismal equation, which affirms that the future cannot be greater than the total of present forces, increased perhaps a little by exercise. This view leaves no room for a link between the soul of man and the soul of God. And, in the absence of this inter-communion, the future can be only as to-day. What has been shall be, perhaps a little more abundant, but not essentially different from to-day.

In contradiction to this, mark, brethren, that we have a Gospel. And the Saviour reminds us of it. Whatever truth there may be in this impression of the universal domain of Law, there are Facts, and Truths, and Helps, and Smiles of God. There is a living God in a living world, and these constitute a Gospel with wealth richer than all gold, a joy deeper than all love, a treasury of infinite enrichment and benediction for the souls of men. We have a Gospel, and if the first lesson of my text was faith in man, the second is faith in God, who hath not left Himself without a witness, nor left us without His help, but has provided a Gospel for every drooping heart of man. Men need a Gospel, abroad and at home, and we have got one.

Man wants God in every age, clime, condition; has sought for Him; has said, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him"; has wrestled with Him and said, "What is Thy name?" We can tell men where they can find Him infallibly and assuredly. We can point to the cradle of Bethlehem, and tell them that the infinitely lowly Lord God Almighty is there. And we can point them to the cross of Calvary and say that the God who has shared every sorrow He has ever looked upon, shares our bitterest and our darkest woes and is there. That God is not an absentee from His world, but is always where we should expect Him to be—in the thickest of its needs, and the deepest of its darkness and the sternest of its woes. We point them to Him and show them God, in sweetly questionable shape, in form that the child will venture to approach and kiss and the sinner to approach, adore, and trust.

Man wants to know what God is, and we can say, "He

THE SPHERE AND SCOPE OF MISSIONS

that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. He that hath seen Christ, especially in the garden and on the cross of Calvary, hath seen the Father." We can point out and prove the majesty of love that must oft-times make Him a God of sorrows and acquainted with grief. We can declare and point to them, that in God's heart is Love in its tenderest forces, Love that follows every soul He has made, seeking to save with individual influence every soul that lives, sharing every grief of the heart. Man wants forgiveness. "Thou hast set our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance" is a word that trembles to the lips of men on every shore, and we can point to a living God that ends that trouble in the only way in which any trouble can be ended by either God or man, namely, by sharing its curse. We point to Christ on the cross, owning our guilt, praying for the forgiveness of mankind, "Father, forgive them," winning forgiveness thus. And we can tell them of Christ who by the Cross has got power to forgive sin and set them free.

Men want grace of Heaven to help them, something stronger than their spirit, and we can tell of the patient Holy Ghost who despairs of none; who undertakes for the feeblest; who has a touch that can turn all that is evil into good, restore the years that the canker-worm has eaten, and turn the very sins into which men have fallen into humility, watchfulness, charity, gratitude, making them love much because much forgiveness has reached them. We can tell of a Holy Spirit that can make the feeblest more than conqueror.

Men want solace in their grief. Our horizon is girt with graves, and we can tell of one empty grave, a chink through which the glory of the world to come can stream. We have the news to impart that the great Samson hath borne away the gates of Gaza and left them open, that our souls might rise with Him to newness of life.

The faith of the world is a very dismal one. It is this, that all life is to be swallowed up of mortality; but our

faith is that all "mortality is to be swallowed up of life"—a great contradiction. "Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

And we have all manner of added comforts. The comfort of heavenly guidance and of answers to prayer, and of the lowly fellowship of the living God, and of His protecting guard at every turn. The comfort of His readiness to use every effort and to bless it. So that it is not a small Gospel that we have to carry to the hearts of men, something that will polish the exterior and refine the movings of the mind, but an infinite treasury of all manner of spiritual and enduring bliss.

Brethren, the Saviour calls on His disciples to believe in the Gospel—to believe that God has turned His back upon no man, but that He loves us and is our Saviour.

Do you think men will not welcome that abroad, in their thick darkness and gloom and despair? Will they turn away from that morning without clouds? Can we do without that at home? Men are, I think, beginning to see that to give up the Christ of the Gospel is to give up a little more than they bargained for. The air is so full of sweet thoughts of God and Providence and Heaven that men forget that all these come from Jesus Christ. But they are beginning to feel that, if they give up the God of the New Testament, Christ Jesus, they have to give up the Christ-like God of the Old Testament as well—"the husband of the widow and the Father of the fatherless," and the God who is "afflicted in all our afflictions." We have to rule God out, so that He stands all the day idle; He is superfluous, perhaps dead—at all events, He is of no importance and negligible. And to be without God turns out to be without hope in the world.

Yes, to-day, for the cultivated Englishman as well as for the heathen in his darkness, there is a choice of two creeds, and of two only. I may believe in Christ, the God of love, of pity, of tenderness, the Giver of life and blessing

THE SPHERE AND SCOPE OF MISSIONS

to men. If I refuse Him, I have to believe in Death—nothing else. Your materialism knows no other deity. You are a Kali worshipper as much as any who bow in darkness in Calcutta, or at the shrine of Bhiwani. To all who reject Christ, Death is the only King of kings, Lord of lords, Heir of all things, pitiless Master of our fate.

Thank God, we have a Gospel, and we believe in Christ, in the God who is Light and Life and Love; and, having that Gospel, we have to do our duty by it, and give it to others.

III

Next I have to say

WE CAN IMPART THIS TREASURE TO MEN BY PROCLAIMING IT.

To utter is to give. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." It is very strange that this part of my text awakes so little thought. It seems to most to be quite an easy thing to preach the Gospel. And yet, perhaps, if it is marvellous that we have to believe in men, and more marvellous that we have to believe in God, it is almost the most marvellous thing of all that God calls upon us to believe in ourselves as able to utter and lodge this saving truth, and to convey conviction, and, by the light of His Spirit, shed its lustre and communicate its quickening influence to the souls of men. I say we can give this treasure by uttering it. Do you observe the greatness of the work assigned us? He speaks of our work in very much the same terms and spirit as that in which He speaks of His own. You know what He said of Himself: "I have manifested Thy Name to the men Thou gavest Me." "I have declared Thy Name and will declare it." As if His whole work in word, miracle, bearing, teaching had been spelling out the Name of God, so that men might know Him. And of His success He says—what? "I have given them the Word which Thou hast given Me, and they have received it."

He speaks of our work in words that almost recall the description that He gives of the work of the Holy Spirit. We, like Him, have "to take the things of Christ and show them to men." To-day He crushes us and lifts us, burdens and blesses us, by saying: "You can give this Gospel." Who is sufficient for these things? John in Patmos did not see enough to let him worthily declare the Gospel. How can we utter the Gospel and tell of that brooding Love, that Sorrow and Pity of God which planned the Incarnation and sought to redeem man? How can we declare that Love of God who chose for earthly throne a Cross? Who can declare the tenderness of His Quest for souls! the solicitude and yearning with which He seeks us, and the delight which like a tide rises in His heart when we turn our faces heavenward, and permit ourselves to be carried to the fold? Who can describe the Joy God has set before Him, and that still lies in front, not completely tasted; the Joy which has sustained Him in all His activities of redemption, and will at last reward them, and then will overflow and fill the universe with rapture?

And yet Christ says: "Go ye and preach." And you can preach, and I can preach what no angel in heaven is fit to preach. What no spirit of the just made perfect can do adequately, we yet can do in some effective measure. Yes, there is One behind us and One within us who will use our hand to wipe away the tear, and use our lips to speak the Word of Life. We can say a little of the love we saw and in which we sought refuge, and which has not failed us. What Christ is none can tell, but you can show a stray beam of His glory, enough to make others seek Him, enough to start their quest, enough to move them forward till they come to that Face through which the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines—through which it shines and makes the heart of man sunshiny and warm with love, attainment, and delight. We have never failed, brethren—not in the past, when we have gone forth weeping, often needlessly weeping, expecting

THE SPHERE AND SCOPE OF MISSIONS

failure, deploring unfitness: even then we have "come back with rejoicing, bringing our sheaves with us." And there is no failure before the disciples when they obey this Word. We have to believe in ourselves, and to repent before God for making our powers less by believing them less, for ensuring failure by expecting it; and we have to look up repentant, and praying to be fitted for this work which none can do, which yet all can do. So to-day Christ says we are able to enrich mankind by uttering this treasure. Nay, let us utter the Gospel, and they will claim it for themselves: and God, who goes before His people, and is with them with His energy and help, will see that our efforts do not fail.

I have very nearly done, but there are two or three other words in our text which accentuate the rest, and incidentally gives us:

IV

THE SCOPE OF OUR WORK.

"All the world," "Every creature," "Go ye out"—these are remarkable words. If I was at the beginning instead of at the end of the sermon there might be much said upon this last point. Is there any lesson that the Church needs to-day more than this: "Go ye out"? Are we not dying of self-edification, and might the Church not be saved, as men are individually saved, by self-forgetfulness and self-effacement, and by seeking to save the world outside at our own door, and all the world outside in distant lands. I do not enlarge, but I ask you to learn from this word that the chief business of the Church is outside herself.

And then do not fail to mark what comes in so sweetly, accentuating the lesson of faith in man with which we began. "Every creature," "All the world." We, alas, give up hope very easily. We look upon classes of our fellow-men as too obdurate to expect any success with

them. There are the speculative: We give them up at once. There can be no mathematical demonstration. They will not be content with anything else. So we leave them out. We despair of those who live for enjoyment. They are wanting pleasures that we cannot give, and so we do not speak to them. There are those sodden with drink, and we think that the very power of the will is sapped, and that the capacity of manhood is destroyed; and so we forbear to speak to them. And the blasphemers we forget, overlooking the fact that what is to-day blasphemy may turn to-morrow to adoration. And the Saviour comes and says "Every creature." Despair of none; Address each. No soul is hopeless. Every heart has gates that it can lift up to let the King of Glory in. Every heart has a Throne which, till God fills it, is empty—is an aching void; every spirit some capacity of bliss.

Oh, if at home we would address ourselves to those absolute outsiders of whom we despair, I have the feeling that our churches would soon be filled by more virile souls, with larger convictions and consecration than are to be found in our midst to-day in the hearts of the more easily converted. It is not Sunday-school children only that we are to speak to, nor the aspiring, and the honourable, and those half converted by nature before grace touches them, but "every creature," to the drunkard, and blasphemer, to the lewd, the ignorant, the out-of-the-way, the heathen. Oh, brethren, what ample room for repentance there is that we have had such feeble faith in man, in God, and in ourselves!

"The sacrifices of God are a broken and contrite heart." Let us bring Him such sacrifice to-day. Let us resolve, God helping us, that to the poor poor and to the poor rich, that to the poor wise and the poor ignorant, that to the cultured heathen at home and to the heathen in depths of vice abroad, we will deal fairly; that henceforth we will not eat our morsel of the Bread of Life alone, but share it; and when we go forth the tongue will be loosened, and by

THE SPHERE AND SCOPE OF MISSIONS

our stammering lips God will speak to the people, and we shall find that the word that we carry will make saints, heroes, martyrs, who will gladden the Saviour's heart with joy, and be His crown. There will be no failure, but, exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think, He will bless our Gospel, and through it He will live Himself into the hearts of men with His infinite and varied benediction.

GEO. C. LORIMER, D.D.

LIVING AND DYING NATIONS

AT NOTTINGHAM,
SEPTEMBER 27TH, 1898.

“ For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead ? ”—Romans xi. 15.

[Russell & Sons.



LIVING AND DYING NATIONS



WHEN the high meaning of Christianity has been interpreted to a man through his own experiences of guilt and of grace, he begins to comprehend its priceless value to the race, and to yearn and strive for its universal dissemination and supremacy. The reality of this connection between spiritual history and spiritual sympathy, Paul, with his usual logical force, has confirmed in his epistle to the Romans.

Not a few distinguished exegetes in dealing with this Scripture have obscured, if not entirely overlooked, its principal contention. They have viewed it as a kind of Calvinistic Gibraltar, and the character of their exposition has been coloured accordingly. The main intent of the Apostle was not to magnify God's sovereignty and to uphold the theological doctrine of predestination. The interpretation must always be harmonised with the broad announcement, "that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." What really concerns the inspired writer is not an abstract and altogether unexplorable thesis, but the sad spectacle of a decayed and dying nation.

I

THE APOSTLE'S ARGUMENT BRINGS INTO PROMINENCE A PROVIDENTIAL DISPENSATION.

His people are rejected. As he writes, the mutterings of the approaching storm are heard which is to leave them without a government or a capital. This banishment and restless wandering have continued until the present hour; and now, beneath the shadow of St. Paul's in London, on the steps of the Bourse in Paris, tramping past the mosques in Bombay, and pausing for rest near the Temple of Heaven in Peking, and dickering, bartering, cheapening, and speculating on stately avenue, or among squalid tenements in the

LIVING AND DYING NATIONS

New World, the Jew is to be found. Nor is he an object of compassion. He rather excites aversion.

While, in some respects, the decay and desolation of the Hebrew nationality are unique, they are not without some parallels. In our own time we have been called to contemplate the helplessness and hopelessness in China. China is dying in sheer inertness, apparently incapable of motion. And China's deplorable condition brings into relief the wasting away of other Asiatic peoples, and the disintegration of other Eastern communities. It would seem as though the entire Eastern world were rotting away, perishing from blood-poisoning, resulting from prolonged trifling with the deadly impurities which emanate from that putrefying corpse of religion, known as paganism.

Lord Salisbury intimates that the same phenomenon is presented by some "Christian communities." In this statement his Lordship betrays the misconception of the average Churchman. The Churchman usually assumes that the existence of a National Church necessarily makes a nation Christian. But this proposition is so absurd that it needs only to be stated in the light of the infamies perpetrated every day in lands where an Establishment is maintained by law, for it to be rejected with derision. No, if any community is wasting away where Christianity has been preached, it is because the community has never really become Christian. Is Spain the unhappy object-lesson? Unquestionably she is a withered and blighted nationality. But it is not a Christianised Spain that is dying; it is a Spain that never has been Christian in heart, and that is doomed to extinction unless she becomes Christian at once.

Our contention is, that an empire in which and over which Christ reigns, where the Beatitudes determine political action and private endeavour, and where the law of the Gospel is made the life of the soul, is secure against the encroachments of mortality. Such an empire has in itself the power of an endless existence. For rejecting this

wisdom the Jews lost their throne and sceptre. To-day, if communities in Asia or Europe are drifting to their ruin, it is because they are not in the hands of the great Pilot who never lost a ship.

Similarly as Judaism prepared the world for religion, Greece prepared it for letters and art, and Rome for jurisprudence and civil order. But though these nations ranked high, and are entitled to the gratitude of all generations, they, too, were cast aside on account of baseness and unfaithfulness to their trust. The Greek empire is no more; Greek genius is immortal. The Roman power is shattered; Roman law is indestructible. Perhaps, situated as these countries were—selfish, suspicious, and severe—it was absolutely necessary that they should be crushed, for their possessions to be made free to the race. They were indifferent to the masses of human beings beyond their own boundaries; and if they had been left alone by Providence, not unlikely all of their intellectual and artistic achievement would have been for ever lost in the abyss of their moral defilement. To save these, the nationalities had to be sacrificed. Their fall has been made the riches and the fulness of the world. The seed had to be destroyed to get the flower; the grape had to be crushed to get the wine; the vase had to be broken for the fragrance of the precious spikenard to be liberated, sweetening the ways of men. Ah! well may the mighty empires of our day, with their “far-flung battle line,” ponder the significance of these things.

II

THE APOSTLE'S ARGUMENT REVEALS VERY CLEARLY A POSSIBLE RESUSCITATION.

Thank God, the abandonment of Israel is not final; her forlorn condition is not hopeless. She is to be restored, and the receiving of her will be as life from the dead. Ethnic

LIVING AND DYING NATIONS

faiths smell of the charnel-house. Every now and then some belated enthusiast among us espouses their cause, and we hear much of the fascination of Hinduism, the sublime elevation of Buddhism, and of the ineffable solaces contained in Theosophy. And at times select circles in society go so far as to talk fervently on esoteric Buddhism, as though it were the most familiar of all themes; and of the astral soul and the atman as though they were the most intimate of friends. But when the thoughtful go down into the very subterranean chambers of these creeds he still finds them "full of vultures and dead men's bones." Hinduism is stupefaction, Mohammedanism is putrefaction, and Buddhism is obliteration.

Christianity, on the other hand, is life. Never once does it create the impression that it is an empty formula, a gorgeous ceremonialism, a thing of surplices and sacraments, of poses and processionings, nor a decorated painted tomb on the threshold of which men may pause occasionally to worship dead gods, dead hopes, and dead ideals. No; the Christianity of the New Testament is the Christianity of living waters, of living epistles, of living sacrifices, of living bread, of the living God, and of Him Who was dead but Who now liveth and liveth for evermore. What then shall we expect from such a religion? Given a Christ with life dwelling in Himself, and could it be otherwise than that disease and death would flee before Him? And a Church like unto Himself must always be a quickening, re-vivifying agency, an enemy to despair and apathy, the burden of whose message must ever be, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Whenever, therefore, I stand by a living Church, however small and lonely, I take heart of courage for the dying nations, believing that a pledge is thereby furnished of possible resuscitation.

The Apostle's position is that we are all concerned in the rehabilitation of the Jews. We were advantaged by their decline; so shall we also be by their advancement. Just

as the emancipation of Greece was a blessing to mankind, narrowing the territory of tyranny, rousing generous enthusiasm, and preparing the way for the extermination of the Moslem ; and just as the rise of young Italy from the grave of mediæval ecclesiasticism has contributed to the enlightenment of millions ; and just as the disenthralment of Cuba will lead to a higher type of man in its population, and has already stimulated the heroic virtues in the United States, so the restoration of Israel will bring with it the triumph of the Gospel throughout the earth. It is the fruit that nourishes us, not death.

Something like a counterpart to this we have in the history of conversion. To die unto sin is a great step, and yet it is only preliminary. When a man begins to slay his vices it is an excellent sign ; and when he makes for himself a whitened tomb, full of spices, called morality, and enters in, he is not to be discouraged ; and when, to add dignity to his state, he wraps himself, as dead ecclesiastics are often wrapped, in the splendour of full canonicals, he is not to be denounced, for each step he takes renders him less harmful to society. But this self-coffining and self-entombing are not everything. There should be a heavenly quickening ; and when this is experienced the soul will realise that conversion is nothing short of life from the dead. And as such a soul enters on a new world, and begins to make a new world for others, so, when Israel shall be saved, its ancient weaknesses and transgressions shall be purged away, and it will devote its energies to the world's salvation.

Thus, then, we give and receive. We send to alien lands our messengers of peace and hope ; and we are blessed in our sacrifice and service. But by and by these lands shall be wholly redeemed from barbarities, cruelties, and despair ; and shall become allies and friends, helpers in the work of elevating the race and perfecting all social institutions. Every new country converted to Christ adds to the security and the prosperity of all the others. If we leave the dead

LIVING AND DYING NATIONS

nations to rot, they will not perish alone. They will fill the air with the malaria of their carrion pollution; and they will thus entail a terrible vengeance on those refined communities who passed by on the other side, and cared not for their misfortunes. Well may Christian civilisation pray, as it realises this truth, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—meaning the dead pagan world, to which it is bound, as a Roman prisoner might be to a corpse, by the ties of its commerce and of its imperial ambitions.

III

THE APOSTLE'S ARGUMENT THROWS CONSIDERABLE LIGHT ON A PROFOUND AND PERPLEXING DISCRIMINATION.

I say considerable, not complete; for he himself near the close of the discussion exclaims: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." If Paul, under direct inspiration, should fail to penetrate the mind of the Almighty, it would only be arrogant intellectualism for us to pretend to do what he could not accomplish. As we review history, we perceive that its epochs are summed up in some great personality, and are achieved through its preponderating influence. What is said by the poet of the famous Arthur is typical of many another kingly man:

"And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less till Arthur came;

"And he drave
The heathen, after, slew the beast, and felled
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight,
And so returned."

And when God would let in the sun on a continent, and drive out the beasts, He called from obscurity the Cabots and Columbuses ; and when He would have the forests of superstition cleared, and broader highways built for thought, He awakened Wyclif in England, Savonarola in Italy, and Luther in Germany, and Milton and Cromwell, too ; and when He would rescue the tangled wilderness from heathenism, He anoints a Carey, a Boardman, a Judson, a Schwartz, a Duff, and a Clough. What were these men if not King Arthurs ?

Here we have the explanation both of the failures and successes of modern missions. The spectacle has been witnessed of Churches entering heathendom without any fitness for the work they would perform. They have gone burdened with as many rites and ceremonies, and with as many unintelligible observances, as may be seen in a joss-house or in the Temple of the Grand Lama. And then surprise is expressed that the heathen are not converted. Converted from what to what ? From one kind of superstitious formalism to another ; from one servitude to another ; from one grave in which their manhood has been buried to another ! Why should they change ? Another Church has sent messengers to Asia freighted with " the glad tidings " that all religions are essentially the same, that Jesus belongs to the same family of reformers as Buddha, Zarathustra, and Confucius, and that, therefore, the pagan communities should become Christians. But why ? Why, asks the pundit, should we change our Hinduism for your Unitarianism ? Why take the pains to come so many thousand miles to tell us this ?

May we not, with the greatest respect for those who differ from us, express the conviction that such enterprises are inevitably doomed to failure ; and even success would be no particular benefit to heathen lands. But, and we cannot evade the retort, it will be mockingly asked, Why have the Evangelical Churches, proclaiming, as they profess, the divine, redeeming Christ, accomplished so little ? Alas, for

LIVING AND DYING NATIONS

the shame of the confession ! I must make it in the interests of truth. While multitudes of our missionaries have been apostolic in their piety and faith, and have been true to their glorious Master, many congregations have been apathetic and calculating, and efforts abroad have been paralysed by indifference at home. It is not perceived, as it should be, that God has not only called the labourers into the work of the world's evangelisation, but the Gentile Churches as well. And if they are disposed to be critical, and to regard missionary endeavour as optional, not obligatory, and so to give of their superfluities, and that, too, very meagrely, what can follow but disaster ? Were you to act in this way by your troops, where would be the glory of your arms ? In war it is not the army alone that conquers ; but it is the army plus a patriotic and loyal country at the back of the army. This philosophy has not yet been practically mastered by Christianity.

Political leaders have of late been agitating

The question of an Anglo-American Alliance.

It is well. The united energies, faith and wealth of Great Britain and the United States, if intelligently directed, should be able in a few years to conquer heathen darkness, and bring all earthly principalities and powers into loyal and loving devotion to the Christ. If British and American Christians move side by side, their influence will prove potent in abating persecutions from which their brethren suffer in many portions of the world. And more than this, working together and praying together they can flood the East with saving light, and rescue from the benumbing and deadening influences of Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and even Fetishism, the great races and tribes which for weary centuries have endured their yoke. Let us do our duty. As the flags of the two living nations blend together, let us bathe them in the splendour of the Cross of Christ ; and as they move together about the globe, let us see to it that between them and over them ever

gleams the Cross ; and then shall follow the sublime resurrection of the nations, and then the angels' song of " goodwill to man " shall become the sweet antiphonal of all lands, uniting them in divinest love and in holiest service.

These things shall be | a loftier race
Than e'er the world hath known shall rise,
With flame of freedom in their souls
And light of knowledge in their eyes.

They shall be gentle, brave and strong,
To spill no drop of blood, but dare
All that may plant man's lordship firm,
On earth, and fire, and sea, and air.

Nation with nation, land with land,
Unarmed shall live as comrades free ;
In every heart and brain shall throb
The pulse of one fraternity.

New arts shall bloom of loftier mould,
And mightier music thrill the skies,
And every life shall be a song
When all the earth is paradise.

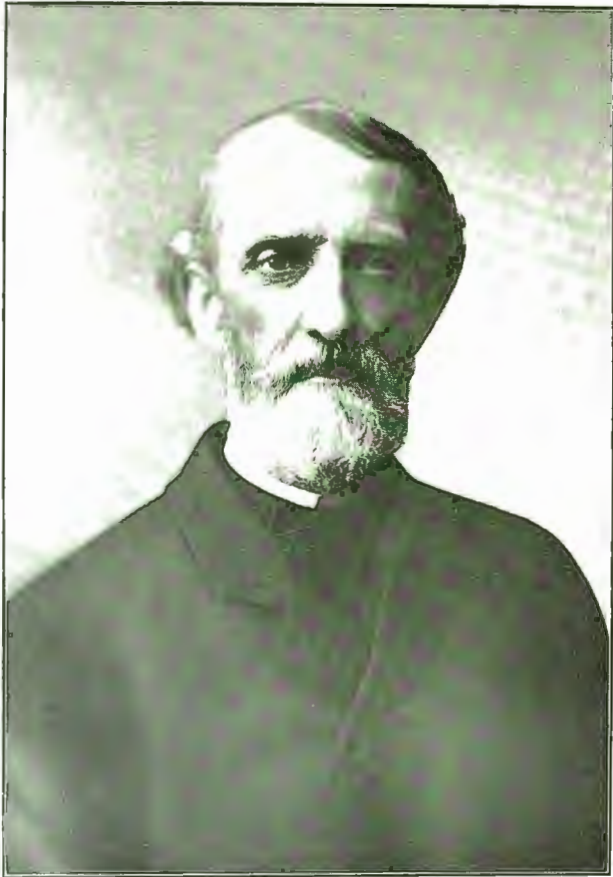
A. T. PIERSON, D.D.

THE MARKET FOR MISSIONS

BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL, LONDON,

APRIL 29TH, 1903.

“ The word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,” or “ that Jesus is the Lord,” “ and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”—Romans x. 8, 9.



[Elliott & Fry.]

THE MARKET FOR MISSIONS



I THINK it may truly be said that the tenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans is the unparalleled missionary chapter of the Bible. If you study it carefully with reference to the work of missions, every verse will become pregnant with a new and Divine meaning. Four thoughts out of this chapter I shall present to you this morning if time allows. (1) This chapter presents what may be called the Market for Missions; (2) It presents the Message of Missions; (3) It suggests the Methods of Missions; and (4) It presents the Motive for Missions.

I

When I say that it presents for us the Market for Missions, I used the word "market" because it somehow fits more completely to the thought I had than any other word. This chapter suggests to us that there is a market for the Gospel. There is no locality in the world where the Gospel is not in demand; there is no concourse of people in the world where the Gospel faithfully preached will not find eager listeners. The Gospel has a marketable value, and it has an infinite value, and the Gospel itself is the demand of the race. Then the word "market" has historical associations connected, for instance, with the market bell rung at the beginning and at the close, the market crier that proclaimed the opening of the market and the goods that were on sale, and the market cross which was the centre of the gathering, and which in European cities has come to be an historical ornament like the King's cross in many of the cities of Great Britain. And it is really a beautiful conception that in the emporium of the world and round about the King's Cross we ring the Gospel bell, and ourselves become the market criers, echoing, like Isaiah, the great evangelical invitation.

THE MARKET FOR MISSIONS

Now, in this chapter we have suggested to us three things that constitute the demand for the Gospel. For instance, Paul says of Israel that they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God; and in the text you have the three great obstacles to salvation in the human race, the three great needs of the human race which the Gospel comes to meet.

The first obstacle is that of ignorance. "Being ignorant of God's righteousness." The second obstacle is legalism. "Going about to establish their own righteousness." And the expression "going about" indicates a tireless and ceaseless activity, going round and round and round in an unsatisfying attempt to justify themselves before God, or save themselves from sin's awful corruption. And the third obstacle which creates another demand for the Gospel is that they have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. That is the obstacle of pride, fostering rebellion and leading to lawlessness, unwilling to bow before the supremacy of the Lord Jesus.

Now we are going into the market-place of the world, and by the grace of God we are going to make the obstacle of ignorance unable to exist. If we can do nothing more, we can do this: we can make it impossible not only for any nation, but for any living creature to say, "I did not know that Jesus Christ died for me." Then there is a spirit of legalism in the human soul. Men will do anything on the basis of legal effort, when they will not receive anything on the basis of an abandonment of all self-effort. How melancholy; on the top of one of the Alpine summits you will remember that cairn and stone that commemorates how several travellers fell dead, frozen, in a flurry of snow, blinded, dazzled, dazed, bewildered; they went round and round and round in their tracks, within two hundred yards of the shelter. And people are going round and round and round in their vain efforts to justify themselves, within

appreciable distance of God's open door of salvation. You cannot prevent men from going about to establish their own righteousness, but you can prevent them from being honestly able to say, "I never heard of this salvation."

A friend of mine went out on many miles' journey among tribes that had never heard of Christ, and preached the Gospel in the open air one afternoon. And there was an old veteran, something like eighty-seven years of age, who waited upon him at the close of his address, his long white hair and beard mingling together at his waist. He said, "Sir, I have been waiting for forty years to hear what I have heard to-day. I felt sure that there was nothing in Buddhism that could save me, and I felt sure that the great God must have some method by which a poor sinner might find holiness," and in five minutes he was bowing at the feet of Jesus Christ. Think of the millions scattered all over the earth that only need to know that Jesus Christ died, and God will make the spoken Word the means of their reconciliation and salvation. And what are we doing? what are we doing? With a hundred souls dying every moment, of whom the great majority never heard of Christ, away with our low standards of missionary-consecration and missionary-giving, and let us be consumed in the fire of a mighty passion for souls!

II

Now, let us pass for a moment to look at the Message of Missions. What is it? The text gives the substance of it. The Word, or message of faith, which comes from faith in the believer, and is addressed to faith in the hearer; the message that embraces the whole Gospel in a sentence: "And if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

THE MARKET FOR MISSIONS

Now, that is too important a text to pass over rapidly ; let us take time to see what it means. We have already spoken of men as going about to establish their own righteousness, and not submitting themselves to the righteousness of God even when they hear of the message. But what is the substance of God's communication to men who are seeking in legalism to justify themselves? The whole motto of legalism is "Do! do! do!" God's answer is "Done! done! done!" There is nothing to do, for all is done. And when such stupendous miracles as the incarnation and the resurrection have been wrought by God, manifestly, for you or me to attempt to add anything to such stupendous miracles is first-class impertinence and blasphemy.

Look at the whole philosophy of the God-man. There is only one place where it is presented in full ; that is, in the first two chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews. There in the first chapter you have the seven proofs that He was the Son of God ; there in the second chapter you have the seven proofs that He was the Son of Man. There is no attempt to reconcile the two, because to human intellect, with its narrow range and scope of intelligence and comprehension, reconciliation is impossible. There are some pillars that rise absolutely parallel to human view ; they are united, but the ridge is above the clouds. Parallel as far as we can trace them, they converge beyond the limits of human sight or of human insight.

Now, what is the philosophy of the God-man ? Simple, however profound. Man fell in his great representative. That man as man should rise, there was a necessity for a new representative—who should be man to have the right to redeem men, who should have something higher than man to have the power to redeem men. And so the Son of God, who alone had power to redeem, became the Son of Man, who alone has right to redeem. He wedded humanity with Divinity in an inseparable and perfect union ; but—mark this !—by as much as Divinity wedded humanity,

humanity was wedded to Divinity. And therefore, when Jesus Christ came down and became man, when He went back—by so much men ascended to a Divine level. It is as simple as it can be as a fact, however profound as a philosophy.

What is the Incarnation? It is the Son of God becoming man. What is the Resurrection? It is the Son of Man ascending to the right hand of God, for the ascension is always included in the resurrection, the power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him on His own right hand in the heavens. Resurrection has stepped up to the throne of God. When Jesus Christ came down, He brought God to man; when He went up, He took up man to God.

Now God sublimely says, "Don't you see, poor sinner, that you have nothing to do? You need not climb up into heaven to see if you can find an adequate Saviour; or when He has come down and suffered death for you, you need not go down into the place of departed spirits to see if you can hoist Him up out of that horrible abyss. No, no! it is all done." And so when men come to God and say, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" the sublime answer still comes down through the centuries, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." Oh, I love to preach this Gospel; I pray I may have twenty years to preach it yet, to tell men, "Stop your doing; your very doing is deadly; your very doing is an assault on God. Stop your doing, and go to believing."

And what is believing? Nothing but receiving. "To as many as received Him, even to them that believed on His name." And in that Gospel according to John—where fifty times we have the word "believe" and fifty times we have "eternal life"—you can put the word "receive" into the place of the word "believe" in any one of those instances, and it makes good sense. Blessed be God, it is so simple that a little child can understand it. It is only taking a proffered gift; it is only buying

THE MARKET FOR MISSIONS

without money and without price of the water you want to drink and of the bread you want to eat. That is the message of faith—two great, stupendous miracles wrought, making unnecessary anything for you to do, but simply to receive Christ as one that came down to die, and having died, went up to reign. A wonderful Gospel !

III

And now look at the Method of Missions. So simple. "It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." That might mean "whosoever shall call upon himself the name of the Lord shall be saved"; that is, "Whosoever shall say, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ; He is my Lord, my Sovereign."

By the way, I might have said with regard to the message of salvation, that it need not perplex us because confession is apparently put as a parallel term with believing. I read this a thousand times, before I ever saw what I now see. Can a man be saved without confessing? Certainly. There is only one turning to salvation: "He that believeth hath everlasting life." If he died the next moment and he had no chance to confess, he would be saved. What, then, does the apostle mean by saying, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"? Why, salvation is a more comprehensive term than righteousness; it includes more. There are levels of salvation. When you believe and are justified, you are on one level; when you confess and perform the first great representative act of obedience, you have ascended to a higher level; and when you go to proclaim the Gospel, you are on a still higher level. So many people are content to stay on the lowest level. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." That brings justification immediately. "But with the mouth confession is made" unto a higher, nobler, fuller, and more abundant salvation.

And so I say that the method of God's salvation is that,

having heard, you should call on the name of the Lord. Not only so, but from this point the apostle goes on to tell us how other people become believers. "How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe without a preacher?"—that is, a proclaimer, one to declare the word of the Lord, by which faith comes through hearing—"And how shall they preach except they be sent?"

Nowhere else in the Bible is there so plain a statement of the method of missions as you have in this great missionary chapter. And what about the "being sent"? I have heard sermon after sermon emphasising the duty of the Church to send out missionaries on the basis of this expression; but, personally, I doubt very much whether it refers to the Church at all except in a very secondary sense. Jesus Christ taught us in the ninth chapter of Matthew, when He looked abroad and saw the multitudes fainting, being harried as by wolves, as sheep that had no shepherd, and His great heart went out in infinite compassion for them. What did he say? "Go and urge men to tell the story." Not a word of the sort. "Go and make missionary appeals, and what some people call rousements?" No. "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He would thrust forth labourers into His harvest."

The great mischief and mistake of the Church's history has been that the Church has been deciding too much on the qualifications of candidates by reason of her own wisdom, and not sufficiently waiting on God to know what men and women He has sealed, and anointed, and is ready to send forth.

There is no time when the Church needs to wait on God in awful lowliness of spirit, and with profoundest prayer, and most humiliating fasting, more than when she is looking around for men and women to go to the foreign field. One of the greatest of modern missionaries told me that in a projected tour round the world, which I had in mind at that time, I should be bitterly disappointed. And he said,

THE MARKET FOR MISSIONS

“ I want to prepare you in one respect for disappointment. Some men and women, attracted by what is called the romance of missions, have gone out to missionary fields without proper waiting upon God, and without proper anointing of the Spirit ; and when the romance fades away, and they have to face the bold, bare, rugged crags of what had been to them a violet cloth in the distance, they are too proud to acknowledge that they are not in their place, and come home, and so they stay and go round in a perfunctory fashion to do the duties that require an angelic devotion to perform them properly.” God’s method of missions is for Him to do the sending, and for you and me to do the waiting to find out whom to send ; and then there is no question but that if He sends, He will raise up the means to support.

IV

But I must hasten. I want to say a word to you about the Motive of Missions. That motive is expressed in this chapter in a very few words. “ Brethren, my heart’s desire, and my prayer to God for Israel, is that they might be saved.” Go back in the ninth chapter, and get the further comment on the motive that worked in the bosom of Paul. “ I say the truth in Christ ; I lie not ; my conscience also bearing witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen in the flesh, the Israelites.” Was there ever a man that was moved in missionary labour by a deeper motive, by a more absorbing, and intense, and consuming passion for souls ? As much as to say, “ If the salvation of the people can be accomplished only by my sacrifice of myself, make me a sacrifice, but save them. If Israel can only be saved by my being anathema, let me be anathema. Nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ our Lord, but I am willing to be separated for their sakes.”

Some modern missionaries have given us an echo of this

sublime sentiment. We remember how Ignatius faced the fierce lion in the arena, and when they tried to get him to make some concession to the Roman deities by which to purchase his life he only folded his arms over his breast and said, "I am the grain of God; and must be ground between the teeth of lions to make bread for God's people." Hannington with his dying breath said, "Go, tell my brethren that I have bought the road to Uganda with my blood." Do you want to know what the motive is? For human souls' salvation. The great motive of mission—there is only one expression I know of to describe it—passion for souls, passion for souls. And such passion as that will beget mighty praying that we have never known before.

The motive of missions, when you have a passion for souls, is so mighty and so consuming that you make a prayer that is mighty and consuming, and it would not be so surprising if, when you pray in that way, the walls of the building where the disciples are met should be shaken. God is the same God. But He wants prayer that is not formal; prayer that is awakened by an intense desire, a mighty passion for souls, so that prayer simply becomes the vent of a fire that cannot be pent up, but must have some channel in speech and in speech to God.

There is a market for missions; there is a great message of missions; there is a divinely simple method of missions; and there is a divinely permeating, penetrating, impelling motive for missions. Then, my beloved, when we get so near to our blessed Lord as to see a dying world through His eyes, and think of men through His thoughts, and love men through His love, and have a passionate devotion to men through his Divine passion, the Cross will become to us, I will not say easy and natural, but it will be an object of rejoicing to us to share His suffering even as we hope to share His glory. We shall be able to say, as Paul wrote to the Colossians, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind in the affliction of Christ

THE MARKET FOR MISSIONS

in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church."

Did you ever ask yourself what those stupendous words mean? We talk about Jesus Christ saving men. Did Jesus Christ save you? How did He save you? Somebody brought the message to you. But for that, you never would have been saved by Him. So that it is true that Christ suffers *plus* the believer; Christ stretched out His hands on the Cross as far as He could, but you have got to go and touch those bleeding hands, and then touch somebody else on the other side, and so carry the current of that love till it goes round the world. And thus we would fill up what is behind of the afflictions of Christ in your flesh, and become the missing link between the Saviour and the lost soul. And it is not irreverence to say that Jesus Christ cannot save this world *alone*, though Jesus Christ alone can save this world.

There is one Church on earth that in modern times has illustrated the tenth chapter of Romans. We might have thought this ideal impracticable if God had not given something to us on earth that was a very close approximation to that ideal. A humble Church, the little Benjamin in all the tribes, and so feeble, and few, and so poor and humble that even little Benjamin is a mighty host in comparison, the little Moravian Brotherhood. Do you know the secrets of their history? I remember being thrilled by those secrets many years ago, when I began my study of missions, and my mind has been refreshed latterly by that exquisite little book of Andrew Murray's on "The Key to the Missionary Problem," which I wish were in the hands to every man and woman in the whole Denomination.

You know there were five great crises in the history of the Moravians. First—on May 12th, 1727—there was the day of the Statutes when they separated themselves unto God, and trampled on sectarianism, and covenanted with God that they would never again seek the glory of the Moravian Church or the spread of the Moravian Brotherhood, but

that they would take their position as a Church of Jesus Christ, above all things seeking His glory, and rejoicing in any means by which the Gospel reached the unsaved.

Three months after, on August 13th, 1727, they came to their great second day—a day of Pentecost when, after a day and a night spent in prayer, many days spent in continuous prayer, they claimed the full shower of Pentecostal blessing as the seal of an anointed service. And God came down upon them in mighty power, so that it was almost literally true that the place itself was shaken where they were assembled together.

Two weeks passed by, and on August 26th, 1727, they came to their third great day. What was that? It was the day when, having entered upon this new life of sanctified service, and having been anointed by the Holy Ghost, they set their great prayer-vigil going. And what is that prayer-vigil? Twenty-four brethren and twenty-four sisters on that day determined that by the grace of God they would keep up a continuous circle of prayer, each brother, each sister, in their own separate apartments, by lot accepting the hour when they should supplicate, so that through the entire twenty-four hours there was a ceaseless round of supplication. Many others have joined that prayer circle since, but the prayer-vigil has never been omitted for an hour for 176 years.

Then they came six months later, on February 10th, 1728, to the dawn of the Mission, when Zinzendorf, pointing to Turkey and to other lands that needed the Gospel, and especially to the West Indies, incited and inspired them by the contagion of his holy zeal to send forth brethren and sisters to labour for the Lord in foreign parts.

One more day: thirteen years later, on the 13th day of November, 1741, they came to the crowning day. He who had been the senior leader and known as "the eldest," wanted himself to go, and felt called of God to go to labour in foreign parts. And the question was, "How shall we fill his place?" and there seemed to be no person that

THE MARKET FOR MISSIONS

could step into the vacancy. And so they appeared in prayer before the Lord Jesus, and asked Him to come and be the beloved Eldest, that henceforth He might be the undying and unremovable senior leader in the Moravian Brotherhood ; and whenever any crisis or difficulty occurred, they submitted it to Him ; whenever persecution developed they took refuge under His protection ; whenever new labourers were needed they went to Him to thrust them forth ; whenever there was a deficiency of funds they went to Him to inspire due benevolence, and He has never failed them, of course, from that day to this.

It is no wonder that they have their day of the Statutes, and their day of Pentecost, and their day of the Prayer-vigil, and their day of the Dawn of Missions, and their day of the Election of Christ to the supremacy as the Eldest of the Elders.

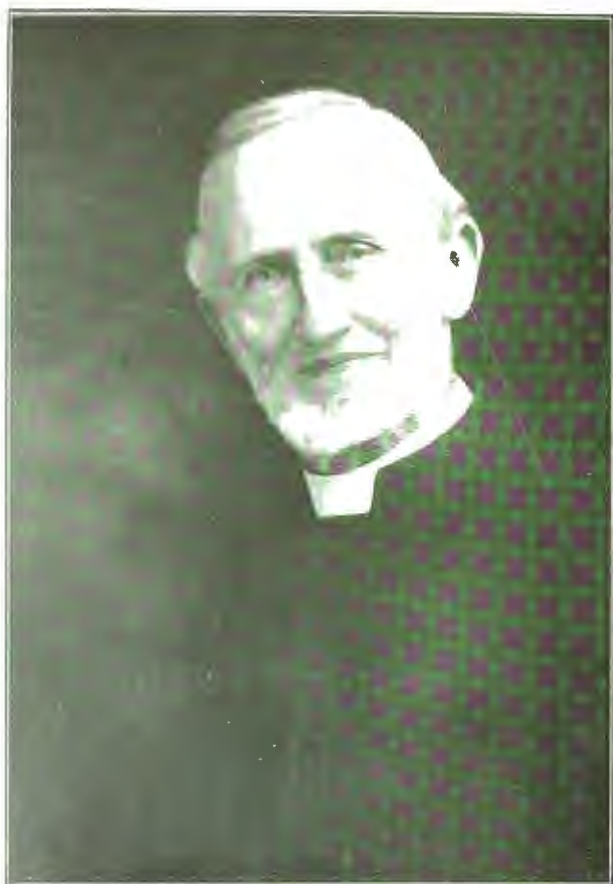
They entered upon an earnest career so remarkable that in the first twenty years they sent out more missionaries than the whole Church of Christ had done outside of them for two hundred years. Their missionary band became so large proportionately that it is forty-fold as large as that of the rest of Christendom. And their gift was abundant with all their poverty. Out of the abundance of their poverty they give fully as much in proportion as any other denomination to Christ. My beloved friends, here is the theory ; there is an approximation to the practice. What shall we do ? Let us be united in our adherence to this precious Gospel of the Son of God. Let us refuse any man the pulpit, any man an appointment to the foreign missionary field, that impugns the central doctrine of the Christian faith. Let us give as we never gave before, and pray as we never prayed before. And so shall we pierce the centre of a united and malignant foe, turn his staggering wing, and, sounding the imperial clarion of Christ along the whole line of battle, move forward, one united great army, to the victory of the Lord.

W. L. WATKINSON, D.D.

THE DESTINY OF ISRAEL AND OF
ENGLAND

PLYMOUTH,
OCTOBER 5TH, 1897.

“ In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land ; whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, ‘ Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.’ ”
Isa. xix. 23-25.



[Elliott & Fry.]

THE DESTINY OF ISRAEL AND OF ENGLAND



WHATEVER may have been the immediate and exact application of this passage, we need not stay to inquire, its grand teaching being sufficiently clear. The Egyptians were to the south, the Assyrians to the east, and Israel came between the two great empires. For generations Egypt and Assyria were at deadly enmity, and it was a great disadvantage to Israel to find itself placed between these clashing empires. A buffer state may be useful, but it occupies a by no means pleasant situation. The text indicates, however, that a great change is to come to pass. "The Egyptian shall serve with the Assyrian." That is, both of them shall serve Jehovah. The two great powers which have hitherto met only as foes are to meet in the worship of Jehovah. And, in consequence of this, there is to be fellowship between them. Friendly intercourse is established, because both nations are converted to Jehovah. And the fact must not be overlooked that this international friendship is brought about by the little central state. The road of communication runs through Canaan. Israel has reached the grand end of its calling; it becomes a blessing to the whole circuit of the earth. Of course, we see at a glance that this passage looks far beyond any immediate local realisation; it is a grand prophecy destined to find its full accomplishment in the latter days. "In that day," in the Messianic age, shall the ultimate fulfilment of this prediction be.

I

Let us seek to bring home to ourselves some of the teaching of this great passage. I observe first, then, that IT IS GOD'S PURPOSE TO PERFECT THE RACE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL INTERCOURSE AND FRIENDSHIP.

THE DESTINY OF ISRAEL AND OF ENGLAND

The text represents the ideal condition of things. It is not the purpose of God that the nations should exist as so many hostile groups. Hitherto this has been largely the case, but chronic national antagonism is not Heaven's design. Neither is it the design of God respecting the various peoples that they should dwell in a state of isolation. The Divine purpose is manifestly that the several nations shall complete each other through sympathy and reciprocity. Just as God binds the orbs of the sky into magnificent musical systems in which each star still preserves its own orbit and movement and colour, so does He by many subtle chords link together the scattered nations into harmonious constellations, into one vast and blessed brotherhood, each people still retaining the distinctive characteristics which are so precious to itself and to the race.

Geography indicates this. The good things of nature are not all found in any one land ; they are distributed over the planet, reciprocity is designed and necessitated by the very dispositions of soil and climate. We must voyage to China for tea, to Australia for wool, to America for cotton and wheat, to Africa for gold and diamonds, to the North for oil, to the South for silk and spices, and so on endlessly. Just as in nature the various flowers have their several nectars and perfumes to attract the bees and secure that cross-fertilisation which is essential to strength and fruitfulness, so God has given each land some special treasure that it may attract to itself distant peoples and secure that national intercourse which is essential to the fullest and highest civilisation.

Ethnology also gives a reason for national sympathy and intercourse. No one national type includes all perfections. The mental and physical differences of mankind show, just as clearly as geography does, that the nations need one another. The intellectual brilliancy of the French, the patience and thoroughness of the German, American audacity, the artistic instinct of the Italian, the practical genius of the Anglo-Saxon, the science of the West, the

idealism of the East—these show the real interdependence of the several races, and how necessary international intercourse is if mankind is to realise the fulness of power and happiness. It is an old saying that “no one man is a whole man”—that is, in each individual something is lacking which makes society necessary to us—and we may justly say that no one nation is a whole nation; it has limitations and deficiencies which other nations must supply.

History shows us the solidarity of the race, and how wonderfully any one people is enriched by the contributions of the rest. Take our own nation. In our gardens are the flowers and fruits of all climates; hardly one flower or fruit is indigenous to our island—the pear, the peach, the apricot come from Asia, the jessamine from the East Indies, the lily and tulip from the Levant, the tube-rose from Java, the carnation and pink from Italy, the dahlia from the tableland of Mexico, the heliotrope from Peru, the fuchsia from Chili, annuals from California, shrubs from Japan, blooms from Siberia, from the “bush” of the Cape of Good Hope, from the forests of Brazil, from the “scrub” of Australia; and this is only a parable of the fact that in a thousand ways our neighbours have contributed to make us what we are. The Italians and French taught us silk-weaving; the Flemings brought us our fine woollen trade; the Venetians showed us how to make glass; a German erected our first paper-mill; a Dutchman began our potteries; the Genoese taught us to build ships. And so history reveals that, through successive generations, the several nations have enriched each other in art, industry, literature, jurisprudence, language, philosophy, government, and religion.

The thought of God is the brotherhood of man, and all things prove it. The nations are not self-sufficing and designed to dwell apart. China is an object lesson as to the evil of national isolation. The nations are not doomed to perpetual hostility; they are not to grow by destroying one another. In the past, nations have seemed to be

THE DESTINY OF ISRAEL AND OF ENGLAND

enriched chiefly by the destruction of their neighbours. The conquering nations have expanded their territory by partitioning the territory of the subjected people. It has been the same in art. The ruin of Greece became the enrichment of the other nations in art and literature. The same thing was repeated some five hundred years ago in Italy. Italy was a vast storehouse of artistic treasure, and it was only when that storehouse was broken up, and its riches plundered, that the North of Europe regained and developed its intellectual life. And it has been the same with religion as we see in the history of the Jews. The "fall of them" was "the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles." But this is not God's normal way of making one people serve another; we must not misread this into history. By strengthening one another are they all to be perfected. Paul saw this: "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" We must get rid of the horrible idea that we can rise only by our neighbours' depreciation. And so with all nations in all things. We are infinitely more enriched by their prosperity than by their fall.

II

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS THE SUPREME UNIFYING POWER OF THE RACE

In the fulness of its meaning this is what our text signifies; Egypt and Assyria are reconciled at one altar, the altar of the living God declared by Israel. And the lesson here for us is, that the marriage of nations will take place where other marriages are celebrated—at the altar of God. In other words, the unifying power of the race is in the highest religious faith, the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Some suppose that the ameliorative reconciling influence will be found in *commerce*. They see in the white sails of

the ship the wings of the dove with the olive branch. That commerce ought to foster the sentiment of unity is clear enough, that such is its natural tendency we fully believe ; but there are malign influences which defeat the benign influences of trade. Adam Smith says : " Commerce, which ought naturally to be, among nations as among individuals, a bond of union and friendship, has become the most fertile source of discord and animosity." Seeley's book on " The Expansion of England " shows this fact very strikingly ; and heart-burnings among nations are still occasioned by the same thing. " Made in Germany " explains a good deal of the bitter feeling which prevails to-day between two of the foremost civilisations of the world.

Others think that the principle of unity will be found in the cultivation of cosmopolitan *literature*. Say they, Racine, Molière, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Goethe, Calderon are brothers, and the study of their inspired works will make us brothers the wide world over, lifting us above the rivalries, the enmities, the antipathies of climates, times, and places. Recognising the immortal work of humanity in literature and art, we shall come, sooner or later, to the recognition of our unity. Now, there can be no doubt that the tendency here is in the right direction. The influence of great literature is pacifying ; but it must also be remembered that such literature feeds the patriotism which is a peril.

Many to-day build great hopes on *science*. Science reveals the unity of nature, the spectroscope demonstrates the identity of the material of the stars, the law of gravitation prevails through the universe, and it is the boast of science that it establishes even more clearly the fundamental oneness and order of the cosmos. Now, many think that a feeling of this unity will take possession of the nations as they become more enlightened, and thus international concord and peace will gradually be established. Let us hope that science has some such tendency ; but science teaches another doctrine—viz., that all nature is full of strife and that civilisation itself is built on antagonism.

THE DESTINY OF ISRAEL AND OF ENGLAND

We are slow to believe that the spectacle of nature's oneness and harmony will ever subdue those fierce passions of humanity out of which rise national hatreds and strifes.

It is a great mistake to imagine that the alienations of nations arise out of intellectual misconceptions, and that they will be rendered impossible through literature, science, and commerce. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not even of your lusts which war in your members?" They come out of the greed of gold, the passion for rule, the pride of territory, the lust of power, and these passions are at the root of the jealousy and hatred of races. It is only as a great faith changes the spirit of man that discords will resolve themselves into harmonies. Someone said to Coleridge that the tendency of something or other was in the right direction. "Yes," said the philosopher, "and the tendency of that thistledown is towards China; but it will never get there." The tendency of commerce, science, literature is towards universal harmony; but they will never arrive there. These ameliorative laws and forces are efficient only whilst they are exercised by the sanctions and inspirations of a great religious faith which touches and purifies the deep places of the human heart.

"God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the bounds of their habitation." Here is the grand central truth, and just as this truth is realised in Jesus will the great reconciliation be brought to pass. Christ reveals the universal Father. "One God and Father of us all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all." He is Himself not Jew, Greek, Roman, or Saxon, but the Son of Man, the ideal Man, the pattern for the race. He is the one Saviour of the world. His Church is the "New Jerusalem which is from above, the mother of us all." And He has gone to prepare an inheritance for men of all nations, and languages, and peoples, and tongues. Christ is the great reconciler. He reconciles the alienated heaven and earth; He reconciles

our personal warring nature and gives us peace ; He reconciles the jealous nations, and shall beat their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruning hooks. The Prophet is fascinated by this idea in our text. Isaiah has a wide horizon. He feels that all nations are to be brought into unity, and that it will be effected by this faith ; and Paul cherishes the same great hope. He is carried away by the splendid vision. The unity that is demonstrated in science, developed by commerce, fostered by literature, is to be realised in the faith of God.

" Though sundered far, by faith we meet
Around one common mercy-seat."

" That in the dispensation of the fulness of time he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him."

In the Epistles of St. Paul we have an affecting instance which shows how soon the harmonising sentiment of Christianity began to assert itself. In his second epistle to the Corinthian Church, Paul urges the Corinthians to send help to their Christian brethren at Jerusalem, who were suffering from a famine. Now, those Greeks of Europe and Jews of Asia differed in many ways. They lived on different continents, belonged to different races, and spoke different languages. They had never seen each other, never heard of each other, till Paul came to Corinth. But the Gospel had bound them together by a common sympathy. The Corinthians learned that in the far-off land were men of a Syrian race who had been brought to God, who loved Christ, who hoped for heaven, and the hearts of the Corinthians warmed to these Syrian brethren, and they resolved to make a collection on behalf of those who were no longer strangers and foreigners. Paul rejoiced in this sign of the brotherhood of distant nations, and in the power of the Christian sentiment to make that brotherhood a glorious fact. He saw in the charity of the Church in Corinth toward the Church in Jerusalem a prophecy of the time when mutual national hatred will be effaced, and all

THE DESTINY OF ISRAEL AND OF ENGLAND

nations will be knit into friendship and goodwill by a common faith in the common Lord.

And that reconciling sentiment has been working ever since, until, eighteen hundred years later, we in Europe have just made another collection for another famine in Asia, sending an amount that would have astonished the Apostle, despatching it over a far wider sea to a people of another continent, race and language. It is this common faith in one God, one Saviour, one Home, working in all nations, that must gradually bring in the reign of good-will and peace. What commerce and science and literature fail to effect, faith and love and hope in Christ will bring to pass. "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

III

I observe, finally, that GOD HAS, IN A VERY SPECIAL MEASURE, COMMITTED UNTO US THE UNIFYING GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST. We see in the text how Israel is planted between the great world empires, and that it is her glorious calling to bring these empires to the worship of the true God. Now it is not too much to say that, to a large extent, England in this age occupies the position that Israel occupied of old, and that it is our special calling to bring all nations to the obedience of the faith. The sovereign purpose of God was seen in the election of the Roman, the Greek, the Jew; they were the chosen instruments for the effectuation of various purposes; and we must believe that the same sovereignty prevails in the government of the world to-day, and we may confidently affirm that it is the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon to evangelise the world, or, as John Milton said, "To teach the nations how to live."

It is sometimes a matter of derision that a small island like ours should cherish such large ambitions, but we know that it is of old God's way to choose the weak and the small, to confound the things that are vast and mighty. Look at

the small extent geographically of the theatre of revelations—Palestine ; of all historic lands the smallest. The length can, in no proper way of reckoning it, be held to exceed one hundred and twenty miles ; its breadth may be set down as averaging less than thirty. Now, the scoffer has often derided the geographical insignificance of the Holy Land.

Michelet, for instance, does so. He says : “ I appreciate Nazareth and the small lakes of Galilee ; but, to speak frankly, I am thirsty. I could drink them off at a draught.” But, in the next chapter, the philosopher comes to discuss Greece, and, forgetting his mockery of little Palestine, he speaks thus rapturously of the geographical insignificance of Greece : “ Greece, so small, has done more than all the empires. She is the instructress of peoples.” Why didn't he drink Greece off at a draught ? The lakes of Galilee would go as far as the rivers of Greece. The fact is, when he wrote of Greece he had no prejudices, and was prepared to see that an amazing disproportion may exist between the importance of history and the smallness of the theatre on which that history is transacted.

God influences vast spheres from small points—the touch is insignificant compared with the mass affected. When God wishes to move wide areas and long ages He comes into contact with one nation only, one city only, one family only, one individual only ; when an engineer wishes to accomplish his most splendid effect, he does not thrust with his back against a gable ; he presses his finger on a button. The question is not the surface touched, but the power that is released. Now, I say that *England stands much in the same position that Israel did*. It is the spiritual centre of the world. As Palestine came between Egypt and Assyria, so this island comes in a wonderful manner between the old world and the new. God gave spiritual gifts in a remarkable degree to Israel ; the revelation of Himself, the knowledge of His law, the sense of eternity ; and God has given us richly the treasures of His Gospel. God, in His government, has also given to us special powers for the diffusion of the Gospel.

THE DESTINY OF ISRAEL AND OF ENGLAND

Our language, our literature, our institutions, our spirit of adventure, our gift of colonisation, our striving and capacity of universality fit us for the task. We are a people gifted of God, and prepared of God for carrying out in an eminent degree His Gospel of universal salvation and blessing. The grand prophetic thought of our text is destined to be fulfilled in all its amplitude and splendour by this insignificant, murky island in the Northern sea.

(1) *Let us lay to heart that the high mission of our country is that it be made a spiritual blessing to the world.*—Other lands have not come under our influence that we may cripple them; not that we may exploit them, but that we may serve them. “He that will be greatest must be servant of all” is a truth for a nation as well as for an individual. God has preserved to us a spiritual faith. We have not fallen under the influence of scepticism as France has done, of Catholicism and rationalism as other countries on the Continent have done. We have an open Bible, an evangelical creed, an enthusiasm of faith; and we are to bless with spiritual blessings throughout the wide sphere of our imperial influence. Cynics may scoff at our assumptions and aspirations, but we must prove by our character, our services, our sacrifices, the loftiness and genuineness of our convictions.

(2) *We shall succeed in our great evangelical task if we are faithful.*—“In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of Hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance.” What an extraordinary promise, what a glorious outlook! That the idol shrines shall be forsaken, and that Jehovah will alone be exalted. The ibis-headed and ram-headed deities, sacred goat, and cat, and crocodile, moon-gods and sun-gods of Egypt, all were to go; the eagle-headed gods of Assyria, the winged bulls and lions, fish-gods and fly-gods of Phœnicia, all the rabble of the Pantheon were to go, and all the violence and

sensuality which pertained to them, and only God was to be exalted in that day, and God glorious in holiness.

So, dear brethren, the day will come when every system of idolatry, every superstition, every institution of shame and misery will be overthrown, and God will say—Blessed be India My people, and China the work of My hands, and Europe Mine inheritance. We shall be a blessing in the circle of the earth. It will come. Some of you have seen the lovely Bay of Naples, and no one who has seen it can ever forget it. The magnificent stretch of waters, the twenty or thirty miles of memorable coast that girdle it, the vast city with its painted palaces, its domes and spires, Vesuvius with nodding plume of fire and vapour, and over all the sky blue as Aaron's mantle. Now geologists tell us that the lovely bay is really the crater of an extinct volcano. In primitive ages it was a vast and awful abyss of flame and fury ; but the fires died down, the lava ceased to flow, the smoke rolled away, the glorious sea overflowed the crater, and now the lovely waters sleep and dream, reflecting the lights and colours of the sky. This world for ages has been a veritable mouth of hell, but its fires are slackening, its wrath abates, its darkness is less dense, its desolations and miseries come to a perpetual end, and truth and justice, mercy and kindness are covering it as the great deep profound. And there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams wherein shall go no galley with oars, no slave ship, no pirate ship, no man-of-war, shall pass thereby. " For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our King ; He will save us."

MARCUS DODS, D.D.,

THE PROMISE OF VICTORY

BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL, LONDON,
APRIL 27TH, 1887.

“ I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”—
John xii. 32.



(Moffat, Edinburgh.

THE PROMISE OF VICTORY



THIS world has commonly presented itself to thoughtful minds as a battle-field in which the powers of good and evil wage ceaseless war. In the words now read the Lord declares Himself to be standing at the very crisis of the battle, and with the deepest assurance announces that the opposing power is broken, and that victory remains with Him. "Now is the prince of this world cast out, and I will draw all men unto Me." The prince of this world, that which actually rules and leads men in opposition to God, was judged, condemned, and overthrown in the death of Christ. By His meek acceptance of God's will, in the face of all that could make it difficult and dreadful to accept it, He won for the race deliverance from the thralldom of sin. At length a human life had been lived without submission at any point to the prince of this world. As man, and in the name of all men, Jesus resisted the last and most violent assault that could be made upon His faith in God and fellowship with Him, and so perfected His obedience, and overcame the prince of this world; overcame him not in one act alone—many had done that—but in a completed human life, in a life which had been freely exposed to the complete array of temptations that can be directed against men in this world.

To understand the promise of victory contained in our Lord's words, we may consider, first, what Christ's Kingdom is; and, second, how He wins it. Or, as He Himself puts it, first, the object He had in view, to "draw all men" to Him; and, second, the condition of His attaining this object—His death.

The object of Christ was to draw all men to Him. The opposition in which He here sets Himself to the prince of this world shows us that by "drawing" He means attracting, as a king attracts, to His name, His claims, His standard,

THE PROMISE OF VICTORY

His person. Our life consists in our pursuance of one object or another, and our devotion is continually competed for. When two claimants contest a kingdom the country is divided between them, part cleaving to the one and part to the other. The individual determines to which side he shall cleave by his prejudices or by his justice, as it may be ; by his knowledge of the comparative capacity of the claimants, or by his ignorant predilection. He is taken in by sounding titles, or he penetrates through all bombast and promises and *douceurs* to the real merit or demerit of the man himself. One person will judge by personal manners of the respective claimants ; another by their published manifesto and professed object and style of rule ; another by their known character and probable conduct. And while men thus range themselves on this side or on that, they really pass judgment on themselves, betraying as they do what it is that chiefly draws them, and taking their places on the side of good or evil. It is thus that we all judge ourselves by following this or that claimant to our faith, regard, and devotion, to ourself and our life. What we spend ourselves on, what we aim at and pursue, what we make our object, that judges us and that rules us, and that determines our destiny.

Christ came into the world to be our King, to lead us to worthy achievements. He came that we might have a worthy object of choice and of the devotion of our life. He serves the same purpose as a king ; He embodies in His own person, and thereby makes visible and attractive, the will of God and the cause of righteousness. Persons who could only with great difficulty apprehend His objects and plans, can appreciate His person and trust Him. Persons to whom there would seem little attraction in a cause or in an undefined progress of humanity, can kindle with enthusiasm towards Him personally, and unconsciously promote His cause and the cause of humanity. And therefore, while some are attracted by His person, others by the legitimacy of His claims, others by His programme of government,

others by His benefactions, we must beware of denying loyalty to any of these. Expressions of love to His person may be distasteful to the man who yet most intelligently enters into Christ's views for the race, and sacrifices his means and his life to forward these views. Those who gather to His standard are various in temperament, are drawn by various attractions, and must be various in their forms of showing allegiance. And this, which is the strength of His camp, can only become its weakness when men begin to think there is no way but their own; and that allegiance which is strenuous in labour, but not fluent in devout expression, or loyalty which shouts and throws its cap in the air, but lacks intelligence, is displeasing to the King. The King, who has great ends in view, will not inquire what it is precisely which forms the bond between Him and His subjects so long as they truly sympathise with Him and second His efforts. The one question is, Is He their actual leader?

Of the Kingdom of Christ, though a full description cannot be given, one or two of the essential characteristics may be mentioned.

I

WHAT CHRIST'S KINGDOM IS.

It is a kingdom; a community of men under one head. When Christ proposed to attract men to Himself, it was for the good of the race He did so. It could achieve its destiny only if He led it, only if it yielded itself to His mind and ways. And those who are attracted to Him and see reason to believe that the hope of the world lies in the universal adoption of His mind and ways, are formed into one solid body or community. They labour for the same ends, are governed by the same laws, and whether they know one another or not, they have the most real sympathy, and live for one cause. Being drawn to Christ, we enter into abiding fellowship with all the good who have laboured or are labouring in the cause of humanity. We take our

THE PROMISE OF VICTORY

places in the everlasting kingdom, in the community of those who shall see and take part in the great future of mankind, and the growing enlargement of its destiny. We are hereby entered among the living, and are joined to that body of mankind which is to go on and which holds the future, not to an extinct party which may have memories, but has no hopes. In sin, in selfishness, in worldliness, individualism reigns, and all profound or abiding unity is impossible. Sinners have common interests only for a time, only as a temporary guise of selfish interests. Every man out of Christ is really an isolated individual. But, passing into Christ's kingdom, we are no longer isolated, abandoned wretches stranded by the stream of time, but members of the undying commonwealth of men in which our life, our work, our rights, our future, our association with all good, are assured.

It is a universal kingdom. "I will draw *all* men unto Me." The one rational hope of forming men into one kingdom shines through these words. The idea of a universal monarchy has visited the great minds of our race. They have cherished their various dreams of a time when all men should live under one law and, possibly, speak one language, and have interests so truly in common that war should be impossible. But an effectual instrument for accomplishing this grand design has ever been wanting. Christ turns this grandest dream of humanity into a rational hope. He appeals to what is universally present in human nature. There is that in Him which every man needs—a door to the Father, a visible image of the Unseen God, a gracious, wise, and holy Friend. He does not appeal exclusively to one generation, to educated or to uneducated, to Orientals or to Europeans alone, but to man, to that which we have in common with the lowest and the highest, the most primitive and most highly-developed of the species. The attractive influence He exerts upon men is not conditioned by their historical insight, by their ability to sift evidence, by this or that which distinguishes man from man, but by their innate

consciousness that some higher power than themselves exists, by their ability, if not to recognise goodness when they see it, at least to recognise love when it is spent upon them.

But while our Lord affirms that there is in Him that which all men can recognise and learn to love and serve, He does not say that His kingdom will therefore be quickly formed. He does not say that this greatest work of God will take a shorter time than the common works of God, which prolong one day of our hasty methods into a thousand years of solidly-growing purpose. If it has taken a million ages for the rocks to knit and form for us a standing ground and dwelling-place, we must not expect that this kingdom, which is to be the one enduring result of this world's history, and which can be built up only of thoroughly convinced men and of generations slowly weeded of traditional prejudices and customs, can be completed in a few years. No doubt interests are at stake in human destiny, and losses are made by human waste, which had no place in the physical creation of the world. Still, God's methods are, as we judge, slow; and we must not think that He who "works hitherto" is doing nothing because the swift processes of jugglery, or the hasty methods of human workmanship, find no place in the extension of Christ's kingdom. This kingdom has a firm hold of the world, and must grow. If there is one thing certain about the future of the world, it is that righteousness and truth will prevail. The world is bound to come to the feet of Christ.

Christ's kingdom, being universal, *is also and necessarily inward*. What is common to all men lies deepest in each. Christ was conscious that He held the key to human nature. He knew what was in man. With the penetrating insight of absolute purity, He had gone about among men, freely mixing with rich and with poor, with the sick and the healthy, with the religious and the irreligious. He was as much at home with the condemned criminal as with the blameless Pharisee; saw through Pilate and Caiaphas alike; knew all that the keenest dramatist could tell Him of the

THE PROMISE OF VICTORY

meanesses, the depravities, the cruelties, the blind passions, the obstructed goodness of men ; but knew also that He could sway all that was in man, and exhibit that to men which should cause the sinner to abhor his sin and seek the face of God. This He would do by a simple moral process, without violent demonstration or disturbance, or assertion of authority. He would " draw " men. It is by inward conviction, not by outward compulsion, men are to become His subjects. It is by the free and rational working of the human mind that Jesus builds up His kingdom. His hope lies in a fuller and fuller light, in a clearer and clearer recognition of facts. Attachment to Christ must be the act of the soul's self. Everything, therefore, which strengthens the will, or enlightens the mind, or enlarges the man, brings him nearer to the kingdom of Christ, and makes it more likely he will yield to His drawing.

And because Christ's rule is inward, *it is therefore of universal application.* The inmost choice of the man being governed by Christ, and his character being thus touched at its inmost spring, all his conduct will be governed by Christ, and be a carrying out of the will of Christ. It is not the frame of society Christ seeks to alter, but the spirit of it. It is not the occupations and institutions of human life which the subject of Christ finds to be incompatible with Christ's rule, so much as the aim and principles on which they are conducted. The kingdom of Christ claims all human life as its own, and the Spirit of Christ finds nothing that is essentially human, alien from it. If the statesman is a Christian, it will be seen in his policy ; if the poet is a Christian, his song will betray it ; if a thinker be a Christian, his readers soon find it out. Christianity does not mean religious services, churches, creeds, Bibles, books, equipment of any kind ; it means the Spirit of Christ. It is the most portable and flexible of all religions, and therefore the most persuasive and dominant in the life of its adherent. It needs but the Spirit of God and the spirit of man and Christ mediating between them.

II

HOW THE KINGDOM IS WON.

Such being Christ's object, consider, in the second place, the condition of His attaining it. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." The elevation requisite for becoming a visible object to men of all generations was the elevation of the Cross. His death would accomplish what His life could not accomplish. The words betray a distinct consciousness that there was in His death a more potent spell, a more certain and real influence for good among men, than in His teaching, or in His miracles, or in His purity of life.

What is it, then, in the death of Christ which so far surpasses His life in its power of attraction? The life was equally unselfish and devoted; it was more prolonged; it was more directly useful. Why, then, would it have been comparatively ineffective without the death?

It may, in the first place, be answered, *Because His death presents in a dramatic and compact form that very devotedness which is diffused through every part of the life.* Between the life and the death there is the same difference as between sheet lightning and forked lightning; between the diffused heat of the sun and the same heat focussed upon a point through a lens. It discloses what was actually but latently there. The life and the death of Christ are one, and mutually explain each other. From the life you learn that no motive can have prompted Christ to die but the one motive which ruled Him always—the desire to do all God willed in men's behalf. You cannot interpret the death as anything else than a consistent part of a deliberate work undertaken for men's good. It was not an accident; it was not an external necessity; it was, as the whole life was, a willing acceptance of the uttermost that was required to set men on a higher level and unite them to God. But, as the life throws this light upon the death of Christ, how that light is gathered up and thrown abroad in world-wide reflection from the death of Christ! For here His self-sacrifice shines completed

THE PROMISE OF VICTORY

and perfect ; here it is exhibited in that tragic and supreme form which in all cases arrests attention and commands respect. Even when a man of wasted life sacrifices himself at last, and in one heroic act saves another by his death, his past life is forgotten, or seems to be redeemed by his death, and at all events we own the beauty and the pathos of the deed. A martyr to the faith may have been but a poor creature, narrow, harsh and overbearing, vain and vulgar in spirit, but all the past is blotted out, and our attention is arrested on the blazing pile or the bloody scaffold. So the death of Christ, though but a part of the self-sacrificing life, yet stands by itself as the culmination and seal of that life ; it catches the eye and strikes the mind, and conveys at one view the main impression made by the whole life and character of Him who gave Himself upon the Cross.

But Christ is no mere hero or teacher sealing His truth with His blood ; nor is it enough to say that His death renders in a conspicuous form the perfect self-sacrifice with which He devoted Himself to our good. It is conceivable that in a long past age some other man should have lived and died for his fellows ; and yet we at once recognise that, though the history of such a person came into our hands, we should not be so affected and drawn by it as to choose Him as our king and rest upon Him the hope of uniting us to one another and to God. Wherein, then, lies the difference ? The difference lies in this, that *Christ was the representative of God*. This He Himself uniformly claimed to be. He knew He was unique, different from all others, but He advanced no claim to esteem that did not pass to the Father who sent Him. Always He explained His powers as being the proper equipment of God's representative. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself." His whole life was the message of God to man, the Word made flesh. His death was but the last syllable of this great utterance, the utterance of God's love for man, the final evidence that nothing is grudged us by God. Greater

love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. His death draws us because there is in it more than human heroism and self-sacrifice. It draws us because in it the very heart of God is laid bare to us. It softens, it breaks us down by the irresistible tenderness it discloses in the mighty and ever-blessed God. Every man feels it has a message for him, because in it the God and Father of us all speaks to us.

It is this which is special to the death of Christ, and which separates it from all other deaths and heroic sacrifices. *It has a universal bearing*; a bearing upon every man because it is a Divine act, the act of that One who is the God and Father of all men. In the same century as our Lord many men died in a manner which strongly excites our admiration. Nothing could be more noble, nothing more pathetic, than the fearless and loving spirit in which Roman after Roman met his death. But beyond respectful admiration, these heroic deeds win from us no further sentiment. They are the deeds of men who have no connection with us. The well-worn words, "What's Hecuba to me, or I to Hecuba?" rise to our lips when we try to fancy any deep connection. But the death of Christ concerns all men, without exception, because it is the greatest declarative act of the God of all men. It is the manifesto all men are concerned to read. It is the act of One with whom all men are already connected in the closest way. And the result of our contemplation of it is not that we admire, but that we are drawn—are attracted into new relations with Him whom that death reveals. This death moves and draws us as no other can, because here we get to the very heart of that which most deeply concerns us. Here we learn what our God is, and where we stand eternally. He who is nearest us of all, and in whom our life is bound up, reveals Himself, and seeing Him here full of ungrudging and most reliable love, of tenderest and utterly self-sacrificing devotedness to us, we cannot but give way to this central attraction, and with all other willing creatures be drawn into fullest intimacy and firmest relations to the God of all.

THE PROMISE OF VICTORY

The death of Christ, then, draws men chiefly because God here shows men His sympathy, His love, His trustworthiness. What the sun is in the solar system, Christ's death is in the moral world. The sun by its physical attraction binds the several planets together, and holds them within range of its light and heat. God, the central intelligence and original moral Being, draws to Himself and holds within reach of His life-giving radiance all who are susceptible of moral influences ; and He does so through the death of Christ. This is His supreme revelation. Here, if we may say so with reverence, God is seen at His best—not that at any time or in any action He is different, but here He is *seen* to be the God of love He ever is. Nothing is better than self-sacrifice ; that is the highest point a moral nature can touch. And God, by the sacrifice which is rendered visible on the Cross, gives to the moral world a real, actual, immovable centre round which moral natures will more and more gather, and which will hold them together in self-effacing unity.

The application of this theme to missionary effort is too obvious to need remark. Let me close by giving expression to two thoughts regarding missions in general, and your missions in particular—thoughts which seem to require the most careful consideration by all who are interested in the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

I say nothing to urge the supreme importance of missionary enterprise. You have shown your sense of its importance in ways too significant to be mistaken. And I should feel it an impertinence to labour to increase a zeal which already is exemplary. But every one who takes a practical interest in missions is profoundly conscious that the zeal is not everything, and that there are many problems regarding our warfare against heathenism which, so far from being solved, are just coming within sight. The slow progress we make may be explained on such principles as I have stated and on other principles ; but yet the question remains, and it is a very serious question, whether we make the most of

the means at our disposal. Are our methods the wisest? Are we sure that we have ascertained the most fruitful methods, or do we never launch out into this scheme or that somewhat at haphazard? No doubt anything doctrinaire is more out of place in mission work than in almost any field of practical toil. But principles there must be, and it is doubtful if the Christian Church is alive to them. It is certain the Christian Church is not agreed about them. And while it is true that men on the spot are the best authorities, it is also true that observers may on some points be better judges than the agents; and the Church at home has responsibilities of the gravest kind in spending the lives and the means which are committed to her administration. To take but one point. Are we sure that we have ascertained what races are at the same time most accessible and likely to be themselves influential? Paul created missionaries as he went. Is it not a significant fact that so few missionary races have been brought within the Christian Church in these latter days; that the work of extending Christ's kingdom is still left to the races which have been Christian for a thousand years?

From the point of view of economy of life and means it is with a feeling of the greatest relief that the public will learn from your present report that the Congo Mission is in so promising a condition. For with all that the Baptist Missionary Society has done and is doing in various parts of the world, it is by this mission it stands or falls in the public estimation. To this part of your report those interested in your work will most eagerly turn; and it will be with devout thankfulness they learn that the terrible sacrifice of heroic lives is at an end.

The second thought is the common one, that Christians are themselves the great obstacle to Christian missions. We cannot wonder that when heathen races come to know the actual practices and manner of life of Christian nations, they lose all desire to become like us. If drunkenness, selfish trading, immorality of every kind, be the fruit of Christianity, where is its attraction?

THE PROMISE OF VICTORY

We are told on unquestionable authority that the increase of Christian converts during this century does not nearly equal the increase of population among the heathen—in other words, that there are more heathen in the world to-day than there were a century ago. Can we wonder the growth of Christendom is so slow? It is more to be wondered at that we make converts at all. The best help we can give to our overtaxed missionaries is to cleanse our own lives, and seek, by every means in our power, to make Christ's rule actual in the persons and places around us. Naturally Christianity should extend evenly and uniformly from the centre to the circumference, not by sporadic efforts made here and there in this place or that. It should work as a leaven; the Church should be on all sides taking in what lies next to it. It would do so were the Church true to her calling, and were all her members truly Christian. Until our trade and commerce are Christianised, until our army and navy are Christianised, until our legislation and literature are Christianised, our missions are fighting at terrible odds against treachery within, as well as against the foe without. Well might our missionaries despair, and well might the Church at home despair, were they and we not sure that Christ is King, and shall possess the world—were we not sure that, being lifted up, He will draw all men unto Him.

JAMES DENNEY, D.D.

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE

BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL, LONDON,

APRIL 26TH, 1911.

“ He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.”—1 John ii. 2.



[Annan & Sons, Glasgow.]

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE



WITHIN recent days foreign missions have been more talked about in the Church than at any time I can remember. The appeals made in connection with them have been frequent and importunate. The cause has been pleaded with every kind of argument. The actual condition of the non-Christian world has been presented to us with a fulness and distinctness once impossible ; we have been shown in all its aspects what the life is which is waiting for the Gospel. In many parts of the globe the critical nature of the situation has been emphasised. Opportunities, we have been told, are passing—will within five years or ten years have passed—never to return. In the Far East, where great nations are awaking and coming to the consciousness of their powers, it is now or never, for the Gospel. It is now or never in Africa, where every Moslem is a missionary and where Islam is advancing with giant strides. Missions have had much to do with the new movements in India and China, but what a frightful prospect it would open up if the vast populations of Asia should master the resources of Christian civilisation and be left with none but pagan impulses to direct them.

The urgency of the need and the vastness of the opportunity have alike been pressed on the Church, and we have not wanted those who, in view of both, have talked to us of missions as a "business proposition," and have told us how, as men of business, we must address ourselves to the organising and financing of the business if it is to be made a business success. And what is the result of this unexampled activity in pleading the mission cause? So far as I can see, it is neither here nor there. An immense proportion of the people in our Churches care nothing about the matter. There is no sensible increase, either of contributions or of gifted men. There are no signs of expansion, elasticity or fresh ardour.

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE

Now, why should this be? Some appeals, I can hardly doubt, are wrecked on the sober, not to say the sceptical, common sense of those who hear them. Many people cannot help distrusting the diagnoses of vast situations like those presented in India and China. They do not believe that anyone can read them with authority, and when they are told of the consequences that will inevitably follow if something is not done within five years or ten years they are not much impressed. They have a latent consciousness that all human affairs are in the hands of God, and that though He honours us to be His fellow-workers, it is a mistake to suppose that the vast movement depends upon us in the way implied.

Many people also have something in their minds which reacts against the idea that we can plan, organise and carry out the evangelisation of the world. They do not really believe that the thing is to be done in that way. They grow tired of military metaphors—about sending reinforcements here and occupying strategic points there. They cannot help remembering words of Jesus about the Kingdom of God—words in which it is compared to a seed growing secretly, or to leaven hid in three measures of meal till the whole is leavened—and they cannot get over the feeling that these words must apply (in a way which many appeals overlook) to the coming of the Kingdom of God even in India and China. Further, there is a sense of proportion in the human mind which is apt to protest even when a great cause is put out of focus. There are many people in our Churches whose minds and hands are pretty full. They are in a situation which taxes all their faculties. Their families, their business, their rents and taxes, their duties, religious and political, to the society in which they live are real, insistent and absorbing; and, while they would not disclaim responsibility for foreign missions, they are impatient when their other responsibilities seem to be minimised in pleading the mission cause. They can make missions to the heathen a real but not a preponderating cause. To ask

them to make missions their primary care seems to them almost as unreal as to ask them to learn Hindustani or Chinese. It is impossible, not because they care nothing for the Chinese or the Hindus, but because the bulk of their intellectual and moral energies is pre-engaged, and pre-engaged in what they consider imperative and entirely right ways.

I have said these things, which to some may appear chilling or out of place, only because I do not wish to be thought oblivious of them. But when all such allowances have been made, there ought to be more missionary interest in our Churches than is actually found, and the fault lies in the last resort, not in the nature of the appeals which are made for missions, but in the minds to which they are addressed. "Some people," I once heard a distinguished missionary say, "do not believe in missions. They have no right to believe in missions: they do not believe in Christ." This goes to the root of the matter. It is not interest in missions that we want in our Churches at this moment, but interest in the Gospel. Apart from a new interest in the Gospel, a revival of evangelical faith in Christ as the Redeemer, I believe we shall look in vain for a response to missionary appeals. But there is something in the Gospel itself, something especially in that presentation of it which we have in the text, which has no proper correlative but the universe. Again and again we have it echoed in St. John: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of *the world*." "Thou hast slain, and redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of *every kindred and tongue and people and nation*." "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the *whole world*." It is as though one might conceive Christ in a character or aspect which limited His significance, but once He is seen in the character of a propitiation, as a Lamb bearing and bearing away sin, all limitations are removed. The only correlative of such a Christ is the whole world, and nothing gives us such a wonderful impression of what

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE

Christ was to His immediate followers as that they actually saw in Him as He died upon the Cross a goodness that outweighed not only their sin but all sin, and could say God was in Christ reconciling the *world* to Himself. This is the consciousness out of which the missionary impulse springs. This was what made Paul cry, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise." If there is little missionary interest in the Churches, depend upon it the reason is that there is little evangelic interest.

I

THE REDEEMING REVELATION

The wonder of that redeeming revelation that made the first disciples apostles has faded away, and we must revive it by standing where the apostles stood, and seeing Christ in the awful and glorious light in which they saw Him, if new life is to enter into missionary work.

We are all familiar with the aversion to the ideas of sin and propitiation. In a sense, they stand and fall together. If there is no sin, there can be no propitiation. One is just as real as the other. I am not going to speak to those who question the reality of sin—who explain and extenuate what was once so called, who resolve it into the inevitable result of heredity and environment, for whom individual is lost in corporate responsibility, and who have never had the experience of a living soul standing with a bad conscience in the Presence of the living God. The whole Gospel is meant for sinners—not for men as such, but for sinful men; an elementary truth too often overlooked. It is meant for people to whom the bad conscience is a responsibility they cannot escape, a chain they cannot break, a doom—and what doom could be heavier—never to be anything else than what they are. It is to men who in one degree or other know what sin is that the Gospel is addressed. It is to them Christ comes from God,

and He comes in the character of a Redeemer. He does not regard sin or treat it as unreal. On the contrary, it is more real to Him than it is to us. He enters more deeply than we can into all it means, both for us and for God—He, Jesus Christ the righteous. And because He does so, He is the propitiation for our sins.

When we think of the forgiveness of sins, there are only three things we can say. *One is, that it is impossible.* Things are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be ; not even God can reverse them. As the late Mr. Rathbone Greg put it : “ God is the only Being who cannot forgive.” A man who is more or less indifferent to moral interests may be indulgent to his neighbour, who is no better than himself ; but how can indulgence be looked for from One who is the inflexible Guardian of right ? I am not going to argue against this. I believe it contains a recognition of the vital truth that God never condones sin. He never treats it as anything less or anything else than it is. If there should turn out, after all, to be such a thing as a Divine forgiveness of sins, we may be sure it will be such a forgiveness as carries the Divine condemnation and destruction of sin in the heart of it.

Another thing that may be said is, *that forgiveness can be taken for granted.* Of course God forgives. That is what God is for. His name was proclaimed to Moses, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. We can all presume upon that. I am not going to argue against this either. I believe it is an important and, in the last resort, an impious way of recognising the truth that salvation is of the Lord. “ ’Tis from the mercy of our God that all our hopes begin,” and they do begin. The initiative in Salvation must lie with God, and He actually takes the initiative. We can and do *depend* upon that. But we must not presume upon it. Often we are referred to the Old Testament for illustrations of the

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE

experience of forgiveness which are not (it is said) conditioned by anything in the nature of propitiation, yet for depth and height and gladness have never been surpassed. It may not be possible for us to tell through what experiences God mediated to Psalmists and prophets in ancient times the assurance of His pardoning love to Israel, but one thing is certain, none of them ever took it for granted. To all of them it came as a wonder of wonders, the unsurpassable, all but incredible revelation of the goodness of God. Listen to Moses: "Oh! this people have sinned a great sin and have made them gods of gold; yet now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy Book which Thou has written." Is that the voice of a man who thinks that of course God must forgive? Or listen to the great prophet of the Exile. He has caught the voice of God: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee"; and how does he respond? "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel." I say again, is that the voice of a man who thinks forgiveness may be assumed? Take one example more, from Micah. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage?" Does he take forgiveness for granted, or does not the amazing revelation and experience of it lift his God above all gods? No! whatever the way in which their experience of forgiveness came to Old Testament men it came as a marvel in which God was incomparably revealed, as an inspiration to passionate praise, not as a commonplace which called for no comment.

We might say, antecedently to experience, either of these things—forgiveness is impossible, or forgiveness may be taken for granted—and we have allowed for the truth and

falsehood of both ; but what the New Testament says is that God Himself loved us, and sent His Son a propitiation for sins, and that in Him we have our redemption, through His blood, even the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. There is something in this which we could never have anticipated. *Forgiveness is not impossible, nor is it a matter of course ; it is a miracle.* As the New Testament holds it out to sinful men, it is the supreme achievement of God in Christ ; His costliest, His unspeakable gift. To receive it is an experience as wonderful in its kind as to achieve it or to bestow it ; there is a passion in being pardoned corresponding to the passion of Jesus when He gave His life a ransom for men. This is what is fundamental in the Christian religion, and it is this we must recover in it if we would revive its original expansive power.

II

THE DIVINE PROPITIATION

Many people speak of the forgiveness of sins who have no idea of what forgiveness means in the New Testament, and no idea, either, of the ways in which the reality of sin is demonstrated there. The one condition of forgiveness which they understand is repentance on the part of the sinner—as though the reality of sin were exhausted in what it is to him. But its reality is not exhausted so, even if we assume, what is never the case, that the repentance is adequate to the offence. It is real in the universe, beyond the sinner's control. It is real to God ; and before it can be forgiven by Him—or rather in the very act in which it is forgiven, as part of the very process of forgiving—*His* sense of its reality must be declared. This is what is done in the propitiation, and it is in proportion as we appreciate this that the Divine forgiveness appears an unspeakable gift. I believe the reason why we sometimes

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE

have difficulty with this connection of ideas is that *we are too familiar with forgiving ourselves, and too apt to assume that this is the same as being forgiven.*

Often in hearing or reading arguments against propitiation—especially those based on human analogies—I have wondered whether those who used them had ever had the experience of being truly forgiven for a real wrong by a fellow creature. Take the case of that relation in which human love is most intense, and at the same time most ethical—most remote from the elemental instinct with which even the dumb creatures cling to their young—the relation of husband and wife. A man may sin in this relation—I do not mean at all in the gross way of violating his marriage laws—but in a way that wounds his wife's love. He may do something by which he falls in her opinion, compels her to be ashamed of him instead of proud of him; he may forfeit the confidence she once had in him, and in proportion to the fineness and nobility of her nature hurt her more than he can comprehend. And what then? Possibly what happens in such a case is that there is no reconciliation, but after a while the offender begins to forgive himself. He has been mortified, ashamed, and humiliated as well as his wife, and it is mainly of himself that he thinks. He sees no advantage to be gained by indulging such feelings longer. He assumes that his wife, as a reasonable being, will at last let bygones be bygones; and in consideration of the fact that he admits he has behaved badly, he expects her to be willing to begin again, and to go on as if nothing had happened. This is what often takes place in human relations, and unhappily it is often the only analogy which experience supplies for interpreting our relation to God. But sometimes what takes place is quite different, far more wonderful, far more Divine. There is such an experience as a real reconciliation, in which the offender does not forgive himself, but is forgiven. And what is the peculiarity of this experience, by which it is differentiated from the other? It is this: the centre

of moral interest is transferred at once from the offender to the offended. The centre of the passion by which sin is overcome is not in the sinner, however deep and pure his repentance may be ; it is in the purer and diviner spirit which has borne his sin, and is forgiving it.

If this is a true analogy, can anyone think that forgiveness is easy, a thing that needs no explanation, to which the idea of propitiation is irrelevant, or even abhorrent ? I can believe that it is possible for love to forgive everything—for the love of a wife to pardon things in her husband that broke her pride, her hope and her trust in him ; but I can believe also, or rather I cannot but believe, that just in proportion to the purity and divineness of her nature must that forgiveness come out of an agony in which it would not be amazing if she suddenly fell down dead. There is all this difference between forgiving oneself, which is so easy, so common, and so degrading, and being forgiven by a love which has borne our sins, which is so tragic, so subduing, so regenerating. Real forgiveness, forgiveness by another whom we have wronged, and in whom there is a love, which forgiveness reveals, able at once to bear the wrong, and to inspire the penitence through which we can rise above it, is always tragic ; and it is tragic on both sides—to him who has borne the sin which he forgives, and to him who stoops with a penitent heart to be forgiven. What the propitiation stands for is the Divine side of this tragedy. It is tragic for God to forgive—a solemn and awful experience, if we may put it so, for Him ; just as to be forgiven is tragic—a solemn and awful experience for us. This is the truth—and of its truth I have no more doubt than I have of my own existence—which underlies all the New Testament teaching about propitiation. To evade it, or to let it fall into the background, is not to drop a Jewish misconception which the Christian spirit has outgrown. It is to pluck the heart out of the Christian religion. It is to stifle praise in the birth, and cut devotion at the root.

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE

The great distinction between the Old Testament and the New, in what they reveal about forgiveness, lies just here ; the New Testament has a perception, which was as yet impossible to the Old, of *the cost at which forgiveness comes to men*. The Old Testament felt that it was wonderful, but the New Testament can say that it is as wonderful as the passion of Jesus. He died for our sins. In Him we have our redemption through His blood. We are justified freely by God's grace—the Old Testament knew that ; but in the New Testament they can add, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God sets forth as a propitiation, through faith in His blood. That is the ultimate difference of the dispensations, the last and highest stage of revelation in the New. But on this ultimate difference others are dependent ; and among these the conspicuous difference with which we are concerned to-day, that while the Old Testament religion was that of a nation, the New Testament religion is destined for the human race. Get to the heart of it, and its universal scope cannot be missed. The propitiation is so absolute, so divine, that it draws everything within its range. If we feel what it is, we feel that it is not for our sins only but also for the whole world.

III

THE IMPELLING MOTIVE

The motives to mission work—in other words, to preaching the Gospel—can never be found in a command as such. We read the command of Jesus in the Gospel : “ Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature,” and we know by experience that for multitudes it does not constitute a motive at all. They are quite well aware of it, but they quite easily ignore it. It only acts as a motive in those who have themselves been won by Christ, who realise what an unspeakable gift God has given us in His Son, and who feel spontaneously the impulse to impart it. There may be degrees in this realisation, but it is most

keen and vital—it operates most potently as a motive for preaching the Gospel in those who have apprehended Christ in His character as a propitiation. In comparison with the Christianity which has this grasp on the heart of the New Testament revelation every other is anæmic; it is the passion of Jesus the Redeemer which alone evokes a responsive passion in sinful hearts. It is this which opens men's mouths in testimony meetings; it is this which raises up evangelists; it is this and nothing else which will send them for the name of Jesus to the uttermost parts of the earth.

And if even the command of Jesus, simply as a command, is ineffective, much more so are what may be called the secondary motives to missions. Our science, our civilisation, our administration of justice, our industry—all these may be valuable enough, and it might be very advantageous to introduce them into countries we could name; but the Christian Church does not exist to be the agent or the forerunner of external fashions of life which it has seen come into being, and which it will probably see pass away. It lives for and by things which are spiritual and eternal. In Jesus Christ, the righteous, the propitiation for sins, it is the possessor of something inexpressibly good, something so good, and for which it feels so deeply indebted and so boundlessly grateful to God, that it cannot keep silence or withhold it from any man. There are gospels with which one would not go very far. They are so poor that we should hardly like to expose them to anyone, let alone to all the world. But if Christ the Propitiation has been revealed to us as the power of God to save, then we have something in our hearts that lifts us above the need of commands and makes secondary motives unreal. The only motives worth considering in this region are the irresistible motives. We get nothing until we get men who say: "We cannot but speak. Necessity is laid upon us. We are debtors. Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for our cause; for

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE

the love of Christ constraineth us. Having, therefore, obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great."

I repeat, what we want is not missionaries, in the narrow sense, not evangelists—not a new interest in the non-Christian world, but a new interest in the Gospel; not men who want to preach to the heathen, but men who cannot but preach where they are. That is the stock from which alone the missionary force can be recruited—the men and women in whom all emotions and motives are swallowed up in the sense of what they owe to the Redeemer. Let us pray and preach for the multiplication of such men if we would help the mission cause. *Redeemed and devoted lives will solve all our problems, and nothing less will touch them.* The appeals which have been made so long in vain will not be in vain when the old doxology breaks again irresistibly and spontaneously from the Church's lips: "Unto Him that loved us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood, be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever." That is the praise which knows instinctively that Christ is the Heir of the world. It is of Him and of His Church that it thinks when it sings the ancient psalm of the Kingdom and its King; "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed."

R. C. GILLIE, M.A., D.C.L.

THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF
MISSIONS

BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL, LONDON,
APRIL 30TH, 1913.

“ And when they were come, and had gathered the Church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. And there they abode long time with the disciples.”—Acts xiv. 27, 28.

“ And being brought on their way by the Church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles : and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.”—Acts xv. 3.

“ Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God : but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.”—Acts xv. 19, 20.



[Elliott & Fry.]

THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS



WHEN these two travel-stained voyagers, Paul and Barnabas, landed at the quay of Seleucia to make the brief homeward journey to Antioch, we may be sure they did not need a porter to carry their baggage. Wandering merchants they were, but the precious things in which they trafficked were contained in little space, and what they had won in return was hidden from the eye. To all appearance, empty-handed they had gone forth and empty-handed they had returned.

We know it was far otherwise. They had gone forth on the first of these journeys to the West and to the North carrying the pearl of great price, the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone, which was to transmute the nations, changing the variable Greek into stability, endowing the iron-hearted Roman with what in its most outward form we still call Latin grace, and enriching the rude Teutonic races with all these qualities we sum up in the word "inwardness." Truly they carried forth a great treasure.

And they brought something back—seeds—which would profoundly affect both the climate and the harvest of the Primitive Church, the plot of ground in which they were to be planted. The seeds were not all visible. Some clung to their garments or were hidden in the folds of their MSS., and did not fall to the soil at once. In this form came a certain reflex influence which in more than one way affected the original Church profoundly.

It was not at once apparent. When Paul and Barnabas had gathered together the Antioch Christians and told the victories and shown the trophies God had given them, we are not told so much as that the Church was even elated and thankful. Everything flowed on as before. "And there

THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS

they abode long time with the disciples " are the simple words summing up the quiet months after their return. It almost seems as if this special missionary journey was a mere episode not to be repeated. One expects pioneers after prospecting to call up reinforcements. Not so in Antioch. " As they were " seemed to sum up the situation.

As is so often the case, it required the touch of opposition to reveal the new influence. A sudden storm lodged the seeds in the soil and wakened them to life. Men came from Antioch declaring that the only satisfactory way to become a Christian was to become a Jew first. Paul and Barnabas vehemently dissented. How could they otherwise? They had seen men who knew nothing of Judaism pass into the gladness and growth of the Christian life through direct submission to Jesus Christ. True to the logic of facts, the missionaries were adamant. The whole case had to be referred to head-quarters, to the apostles at Jerusalem.

As the two comrades journeyed through Phœnecia and Samaria, another token of reflex influence appeared. We read: " They declared the conversion of the Gentiles and they caused great joy to the brethren." Evidently these little Christian communities needed the good news more than the already powerful Church of Antioch. To them, such widespread victories were an immense reinforcement of faith.

When Paul and Barnabas reached Jerusalem and had told their story once again, they carried the government with them, to use parliamentary language. There was a unanimous decision to readjust the early doctrine of the faith, or at least to state explicitly what had only been realised by a few implicitly. To put it briefly. No longer was Judaism to be the gateway to Christianity. With a very few restrictions the Gentile Christian was left to be as un-Judaic as he chose. Thus the notable fruits of the first missionary journey so profoundly affected the Jerusalem Church that for the sake of unity it gave up its cherished national pride and racial exclusiveness. It may be gravely

doubted if anything would have moved the Church at the fountain-head to such a fundamental change save the clear proof on a wide scale that the blessings of Jesus were not restricted to the circumcised. It may almost be said that Paul accomplished as much by what he brought back as by what he took forth.

Even this did not exhaust the reflex influence of that first journey. A bacillus of dissension seems to have affected the Antioch Church at this time, for Paul and Barnabas fall a-quarrelling concerning Mark, and the quarrel could not be healed. But in the face of a world unevangelised, they agreed to apportion out the lands to be visited. With sore hearts they parted, but they parted to go to the work—Barnabas to Cyprus, Paul back to Asia Minor. There was no split in the Antioch congregation between the two leaders. They kept its unity by separating for fresh foreign missionary work. Truly, the returning tide of influence from the first effort to evangelise the world beat high on the shores of the Primitive Church.

The Missions of our modern day are very different from that first victorious journey of St. Paul, but there is this resemblance: The reflex influence from the Regions Beyond is a reality for us, too. What is more, it is only now beginning to tell.

I

There have been three stages in the Protestant missionary work which began in the main a century and a quarter ago.

There has been *The Stage of Sterility*.

Much seed-sowing, no harvest, or so little harvest that it quite failed to convince the public mind of ultimate success. That was the stage when men of culture sneered at missionaries as fanatics or fools. There are a few belated survivals from that period, like Sir Hiram Maxim, as strangely out of date as a muzzle-loading cannon beside modern machine guns, to use an appropriate simile.

THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS

Then came *The Stage of Harvest*.

We have lived in that period for some time. The membership of native Protestant Churches must now be numbered by millions, few millions but still millions. Some of the smaller countries, like Uganda and Korea, may be called predominantly Christian ; converts have been won from the most varied districts and races ; highly cultivated Chinese, Japanese, and Hindus have become Christians as undeniably as unlettered Esquimaux, Hottentots, and Afghans. Under my own roof during the past eighteen months I have seen a Persian Christian and a Japanese, a negro Christian and a Bulgarian. They were all Christians one could be proud to know.

The harvest time has come. Whether it is as large as it should be, whether the reapers are still few is another matter. Now we have come clearly to the third period.

Finally there is *The Stage of Reflex Influence*.

Wandering breaths came to us first, chiefly from the East ; then, occasional thin and temporary streams heartening or questioning us ; now, a pretty steady tide of inquiry and appeal, and approval and criticism, too. This influence will be cumulative. We are bound to be affected more and more by it. Are we aware of it ? How far do we recognise it ?

Let us test ourselves by a concrete case. A young Japanese layman, a convert to Christianity, came to my Church recently, and gathered with my young people in our Church Guest Room on the Sunday evening. We met him with the greatest pleasure. Any of us would have been glad to have him for a friend. Sincerity looked out of his eyes. Joy and steadfastness were part of his being. He was obviously as practical as he was devout. I asked myself : What does he think of us, and of our Church, and of our city, and of our slums ? How do we strike him ? And I was haunted by the fear : Has he found us out, found our words better than our deeds, our activities more eager than our prayers ?

A young Hindu gentleman in London was asked to come to a certain Church, and answered he would, willingly. He had been in several dead Churches. He would like to see a living one! Ah, these keen young Eastern eyes! What did they detect? Was this fifth Church on his list a dead one, too? That would be terrible. Did he find London, as a whole, a denial of Christianity? That, too, would be terrible. Did he feel our divisions and distinctions a little absurd when he remembered millions of an alien faith? That would be bad enough. Did he feel us strangely unprayerful? That would be heavy enough condemnation.

Well, these are the questions that storm and sap my soul when I see personified in one individual the tide of reflex influence flowing into us and over us, consciously or unconsciously, without ceasing.

II

Let us look at some of the elements of this influence.

Following the hint of our text there is, of course, *An Immense Reinforcement to our Faith*.

Take the one fact in all our minds: China asking for Christian prayers. It is possible to build too much on it. There may be a political purpose in it. It may be simply a device of high statesmanship. But such a judgment is too subtle, especially when we remember that Chinese soldiers by the thousand have been marched, again and again, to parade services conducted by Christian ministers. No, we may see at least this significance. The best minds of China are coming to recognise what some of the Ministers of State in Japan have groped to, that you cannot have a virile morality without a religious basis; and, further, what Japan has perhaps not yet seen, that an amalgam of religions is an impossibility, and Christianity is the essentially ethical faith. Many of us did not believe to see such a day. The ancient words of thanksgiving, with their haunting melody, come to our minds: "When the Lord

THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS

turned again the captivity of Zion we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongues with singing ; then said they among the heathen : ' The Lord hath done great things for them.' The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Perhaps we needed this good cheer. For the last half-century we have been discussing and rediscussing our Christ and our Bible and our divisions, while enemies have been swarming up the battlements of the faith, and, driven back, have rallied for another attack. And all the time, on the outposts of the far-flung battle-line—north, south, east and west—Christianity has been revealing itself more and more as a vital force. The fact that the faith of Christ after nearly nineteen centuries of conflict and mistake, decay and re-formation is the one religion that maintains an unceasing propaganda among every type of nation and wins converts in all, is endlessly significant.

The well-worn story goes that when Napoleon asked for a proof of Christianity, one of his generals answered : " The Jews, Your Majesty." It was a good answer, but now we know a better—" the converts of Missions." The success of the missionary enterprise, halting and imperfect though it be, is the greatest Christian apologetic of the present hour. For religions, like everything else, to-day are tested by their force. Truth is expressed in terms of power, and here we have the clearest proof of power.

Still following the fingerpost of our text, we see that the reflex influence from abroad makes for *Readjustment of Doctrine*.

I do not suggest, neither do I believe, that there is any pressure to eliminate or to truncate any central doctrines. Rather the reverse. I have been impressed by a paper in the present number of *The International Review of Missions*, which many of you may have seen. I refer to the article by Professor Siraj ud Din, a convert from Islam in Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. Let me quote a sentence from it : " Divine nature soars upward, human nature sinks

downwards, hence perfect human nature must stand midway between the two—in one word, the Perfect Man must be the God-man." Who wrote that? A learned Punjabi Mohammedan, in 1900, in the course of an abstract of a book, entitled "The Perfect Man," by a great Mohammedan divine of the eighth century of the Mohammedan era.

Such sentences from an undisputed source remind us of the importance of seeking points of contact with alien faiths, but also they point to the eternal truth of central Christian convictions. And this from Mohammedanism, presented by a convert! I am not, then, thinking of any upheaval of Christian doctrine, but rather of a lightening of the load and a redistribution of the cargo. That has been going on quietly in the foreign field.

But there are no watertight compartments in Christianity to-day. We at home must in due course be affected. Are we prepared for concentration of conviction, to believe fewer things, and to believe them more intensely, to possess a more portable theology and to carry it everywhere? That is the question which is being addressed to us. Are the dead twigs to go, that the old tree may grow new branches? And does not the same influence bid us readjust our moral ideas?

Again I say, we shall not be called to weaken our fundamental convictions, not even on the vexed question of marriage. One of the most learned Mohammedan leaders puts on the title-page of a most pathetic story on polygamy these words: "Listen to me if your ears are not deaf: on no account whatever marry two wives," for "a man has not got two hearts in his breast."

No, we are not asked to cast overboard our central moral certainties, but we are asked to distinguish more clearly between laws and bye-laws of the moral kingdom; it may be we are asked to be sure of less, but to be very sure of it. Is all our morality derived from Christ, and is all Christ's morality included in ours? That is the question the East is asking us.

THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS

And, still following the hint of our opening passage, this third element of influence appears: *The Pressure Towards Unity*.

More clearly than ever before we know how vast is our task. We see the questioning eyes of Christian converts asking, Why these distinctions? We see a closing up of the ranks on the mission field. The same must come at home. You remember with what words Nelson healed the quarrel between Admiral Collingwood and his captain on the morning of Trafalgar? This is Southey's version: "Admiral Collingwood with some of the captains having gone on board the *Victory* to receive instructions, Nelson inquired of him where his captain was, and was told in reply they were not on good terms with each other. 'Terms,' said Nelson, 'good terms with each other.' Immediately he sent a boat for Captain Rotherham, led him, as soon as he arrived, to Collingwood, and saying: 'Look, yonder are the enemy!' bade them shake hands like Englishmen." "Look, yonder are the enemy"; "Look, yonder is the opportunity"; "Look, yonder may be the victory of the centuries"—we ought to be able to draw nearer to one another. Dare we still plant new Churches side by side in a limited population? Dare we? I believe we dare not. Dare we maintain our Churches side by side in a district with a dwindling population? We dare because we feel we must. Will it always be so? I trow not. The pressure from heathendom will forbid it. The problem before us is to develop the great Church-idea and to limit wholesomely the purely denominational ideal.

More emphasis on Church membership we need, and on its responsibilities, but with this a more catholic view of the Church, in leaders and rank and file alike. Is it not possible? It has been wittily said of a great ecclesiastic that his dislikes are stronger than his likes. And with equal truth, of many still it may be said, their differences from other Christians are dearer than their agreements. But that mood cannot

continue; it must not continue when the great door of opportunity stands unbarred as never before.

Some of the granite buildings in this city are not built of completely squared blocks. Where the masses meet they are perfectly smoothed on top and base and sides, but towards the air they are only rough-hewn, each block differs from its neighbour. In the great Church to be made of many Churches the same plan will be used. The Churches will be joined because where they face each other they agree. Their differences will not be denied, but they will not front each other, making junction impossible. Their differences will be found on the free side, standing forth clearly to the outward air, to the eyes of God, who loves variety in unity as much as unity in variety.

Our text leads us no farther. But I have one other suggestion to make to you. The reflex influence of the mission field searches us concerning *The Depth and the Degree of our Sacrifice*.

In more than one way, our social fabric is under examination. Listen to these words—I quote again from Professor Siraj ud Din's article—words of a great Hindu speaker in Calcutta in connection with the recent Balkan war: "In his opinion the so-called Democracy in Europe existed only in name. Caste in India, however bad and much maligned it might be, was a thousand times better than the invidious distinction observed between the rich and poor. Real democracy lay in the teachings and the lofty religion of the Prophet of Arabia. He had been to Lucknow, where he visited a building which, he was told, used to serve as a common place of worship during the Mohammedan rule. While going round the edifice, he asked his guide, 'What portion used to be the place for the Nawab and his family during divine service?' This query irritated the gentleman, who said rather excitedly, 'What? Place for the Nawab in the house of God? The Nawab stood by the common street beggar.'" "Real democracy lay in the teachings and the lofty religion of the Prophet of Arabia." It sounds like

THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF MISSIONS

a bad joke in our ears. And yet—and yet. Is there equality of opportunity among us for health, for home, for education, for fulness of life ?

Oh, this is a shrewd wind which blows from the East. It searches us. And if we answer: "In our Nonconforming Churches and at our Communion table there is no such distinction. Rich and poor meet together before Him who is no respecter of persons."—it is an honest answer, true to fact. But still that relentless wind searches us. What of our sacrifices for the Kingdom? The poor Korean Christians, we are assured, if their Churches remain in debt after all their efforts to pay for building, will mortgage their farms that God's house may be paid for. Would we? Yes, I know conditions are different, and there are many things to be thought of and we must save something. I assent. I am not asserting. I am only baring my breast to the questioning East. Do you the same. What if the questioning be Christ's, sent by this far journey because He could not make us hear when He came down the soul's own secret stair? I wonder, are we right? I wonder which is best? We used to think we Westerners had the monopoly of the virtues and always showed the way—yes, even in sacrifice. Can it be that the Christ will find a more congenial home in these far-off, new-born Christian lands? It cannot be. It cannot be. It must not be.

J. G. GREENHOUGH, M.A.

THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION.

BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL, LONDON,

APRIL 29TH, 1896.

" Freely ye have received, freely give."—Matt. x. 8.



THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION.



UNEARNED, unbought, undeserved had been God's gift to them, and in the same spirit of grace and ungrudging service were they to give to others; that no doubt is the simple meaning, though the words may be pardonably read with a somewhat larger meaning. They were spoken to the first company of missionaries as part of their marching orders. But they were intended for the guidance of all who should hereafter go out at the King's command; they were golden words to be stored up for future use, and meant for the disciples and Church of every age. In fact, their full import could not be comprehended by the twelve at that stage of their training.

They did not know then how freely they had received; they were more disposed to magnify the sacrifice which they had made for Him than to acknowledge with humble gratitude the splendour of the inheritance which He had brought to them; more prompt to speak of those ships and nets and occupations which they had abandoned than to glory in the exalted service to which His grace had called them; there had been as yet no Gethsemane and Calvary. Redeeming pity had not yet revealed itself in blood drops and tears, and though the shadow of the Cross was over Him they saw it not. It was only when all was finished, when the veil had been rent which hid from them His full Divinity, when they had stood aghast at His humiliation, when His agony and shame had shown them the greatness of His love and the cost of their redemption, when their whole nature had been transformed, illumined and inspired, and their lives filled to overflowing by His risen and sanctifying power; only then did they understand the magnitude of their debt, and the deep significance of the words, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Then knew it then, perhaps, as well as any human nature can ever know it on this side the grave, for the ripest saint

THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION.

only sees it through a glass darkly, until he walks in the light in which is no darkness at all. But they knew enough of it to make their lives one long sweet sacrifice of service ; and possibly the one who understood it best was that one who did not hear the words from the Master's lips, the Apostle born out of due season who called himself the least of all the saints, yet was perhaps the greatest, and who suffered the loss of all things for Christ, as Christ had given His very self to him.

Now, let us take the words and pray that we also may understand them, not as sentences are understood in schools, but as the heights and depths of love are comprehended by those who love most. A text of this kind saves us the trouble of dividing, and almost of thinking ; the Master has done that for us, leaving us the lighter labour of emphasising and applying. We find here expressed with exceeding brevity the great condition and the great obligation of service.

I

THE CONDITION, THE SOURCE, THE INSPIRATION OF SERVICE

"Freely ye have received," and here I cannot, dare not, attempt to speak about the greatness of the giving. He who told us most about it called it unspeakable ; the riches of the grace are unsearchable, the love beyond all faith's measurements ; we can only kneel before it and adore.

But about our receiving we may speak, for that, alas, is too often a measurable quantity, and yet upon that depends all the power and willingness of service. It is not the magnitude of the grace, but the proportion of its inflow that determines all the issues of the Christian life ; the sun rays are poured as plentifully upon the barren rock as upon the vine which creeps around it ; but it is the measure of reception that makes the difference between the dead, profitless stone and the living tree that quivers into fruit-bearing. Glad giving comes out of full receiving.

Loving God is letting God love us ; the outgoings of our love are just the overflow of the Divine love for us. The Apostles tell us often in glowing, rapturous words of God's wonderful gifts to them, but they tell us quite as frequently of their own receiving. It was that which had made the miracle of their lives : " Out of His fulness we all received, and grace upon grace." To as many as received Him He gave power to become sons of God. We received the Spirit of adoption whereby we say, " Abba, Father." We have received the spirit of love and power and of a sound mind. They had laid themselves open to the whole Incarnation glory, to the sweetness of atonement, to the indwelling of the Christ ; they felt it, they overflowed with it, all their heartbeats sang of it. It had changed the wilderness of their lives into a garden, and the thirsty places into perennial springs ; it had swept old things for ever away ; there was a new heaven above their heads and a new earth beneath their feet, and the very faces of their fellow men were transfigured in the light of the one Divine face. It had glorified suffering and abolished death, and suffused their world with a sort of golden radiance, and filled their whole being with unimagined joy.

They had never imagined how much the heart could hold and the whole nature be expanded until they had been brought into receptive union with Him who is the fulness of God that filleth all in all. That was why the Word of Life burned in them for utterance. They had freely received, they could not restrain themselves from giving. So it will be ever with those who have had a profound experience of the recreative forces of Christ, and know, indeed, that the gift of God has been to them another heart, another life, a sweetness most ineffable, and thought too deep for tears. Our urgency to give it forth will be exactly measured by the extent to which its healing has spread over our nature and the volume of joy which it has created. There are people who murmur in their hearts, if they hardly dare say with their lips, that their religion is

THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION

very costly ; they pay for it more than it is worth. And I am not disposed to question that, especially if they pay very little, it is little that they have received. People who merely move among the crowd about Christ, who stop short of touching the hem of His garment, who perhaps see only His shadow as it passes by, who hardly open the narrowest chink of their being to the healing of His power, cannot be expected to lavish costly ointment at His feet. Only those give Him of their best, and give it with raptures of gratitude, who have been much healed and much forgiven ; then they lay at His feet their ointment, or their tears, or their very blood drops, if He asks, and think it all too small. If we measure with sparing, reluctant hands every coin that we drop into His treasury, every hour that we give to His worship and work, every meagre self-denial which His service imposes, there needs no further proof of the feeble hold which He has upon us and our scant reception of His grace. Do you feel that you are paying dearly for what you have ? Ah, then ! that does not show that you are giving much, but that, little as it is, it is somewhat more than you have received ; it means that He has been no more to you than one who " stands at the door and knocks." It means that the Christian forces have but played upon the surface of your lives, they have not filled the dry places of the heart with measureless wells of joy.

In vain do we press the claims of Jesus on those who are not conscious of their debt ; the most impassioned eloquence falls cold and dead when the love of Jesus has not kindled a fire of love, and made every chord vibrate with the music of gladness and gratitude. What does a man care about having the Gospel preached either to the heathen abroad or the ignorant and degraded at home, if the Gospel has not been to him the very soul-renewing power of God ? If there is any touch of compassion in his heart, he will perhaps help you to distribute material charities, and lighten the burdens of poverty ; but to bring

men to the Cross, and release them from the bondage of sin, and let the light of Heaven fall upon their darkened minds, will seem to him a boon so shadowy and unsubstantial that it is hardly worth the least sacrifice of energy and pleasure.

The Judas heart, hard and unreceptive, as of old is for ever asking, "To what end this waste?" when it sees love and fervour and heroic devotion pouring out their choicest gifts and their blood at the Saviour's feet. So much gold squandered, so much young life sent to loneliness, and fever, and death. What end does it all serve? No end, indeed, which these questioners can understand. Men must have proved in themselves that Jesus makes life infinitely worth living before they will be anxious to give Him to the dying and the half-alive. They must see all things glorified in the light of His face before they will wish to spread His glory.

If, like three-fourths of the missionary critics, they have but a scientific or literary interest in the Gospel, or have no more experience of it than such as produces a lukewarm respect for its precepts, and a passionless admiration for Him who gave them; or if they look upon it, as some do now, as a slightly superior form of religion among many others, a somewhat less crude guess at the great unknown, a step or two higher on the staircase which slopes through darkness up to God—if that is all, you will as easily draw tears from stones as responses to your appeals from them. How can we answer those who ask us with a half scornful surprise, "What is thy Beloved more than another's beloved?" We cannot tell them if they do not feel it. "The love of Jesus, what it is, none but His loved ones know." Only our hearts can tell it as we walk songfully every day. Nor shall we ever ask them to join hands with us in our great work. No! But if Christ has really entered a man's life, if the gift of God has become his heart's chief treasure, and His name is sweeter than all earthly music, how swiftly will the feet leap along the way of service,

THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION

how blessed will it be to give! If I could make you feel this, which one felt and wrote not long ago:—

“ O Jesus, Jesus, dearest Lord,
Forgive me if I say
For very love Thy sacred name
A thousand times a day.

“ I love Thee so, I know not how
My transports to control;
Thy love is like a burning fire
Within my very soul.

“ For Thou to me art all in all,
My honour and my wealth,
My heart's desire, my body's strength,
My soul's eternal health.

“ O light in darkness, joy in grief,
O Heaven begun on earth,
Jesus my Love, my Brother, who
Can tell what Thou art worth.”

If I could make the young people here feel that, there would be twenty or fifty coming missionaries in this congregation to-day. And what do all our congregations need at this time and all times, but more receptive power. We are not straitened in Him and in His gifts, but in ourselves. Behind every new missionary effort there is somewhere a new Pentecost—a grand reception hour when Heaven opens to send down a fuller measure of grace, and the heart of the Church is wonderfully enlarged to take it in. Behind Carey there are Wesleys and Whitefields and the Evangelical revival. Behind the Moravian missions there was that wonderful opening of the heart to the Holy Ghost known as German pietism. Behind even the Jesuit missions there was a strange new revelation given to a few men like Xavier and Loyola of the entrancing beauty of Jesus. Behind every forward movement there is an inrush of Cross power and of the Holy Ghost; immense gladness, a Church thrilling, throbbing, excited, and burning with the consciousness of its privileges and the sweets of Jesus' love. Then from a hundred lips the cry comes “Send me,” and from lips innumerable the song:—

“ O that the world might taste and see
The riches of His grace,
The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace.”

Do you pray that Christ's people may give more? No, ask first that God's gift may come more abundantly into them. The best missionary prayer is that which the old Psalmist taught us. "Cause Thy face to shine upon us." Why upon us? Is that a prayer for the world? Yes. "Cause Thy face to shine upon us that Thy way may be known among men, Thy saving health among all people." If freely you have received, freely will you give.

II

THE OBLIGATION OF SERVICE

Our receipts make our debt. The Lord tells us here, and His words are echoed in all the confessions of His disciples, that we have received for the very purpose of giving. The Gospel has been committed to us in trust. We are not absolute owners, we are responsible trustees. "As every man hath received the gift so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." The men who had learned directly of Christ never regarded their spiritual endowments save in this aspect. They never once supposed that the Heavenly light had been kindled in them solely for their own glory, that the Divine treasure had been bestowed upon them simply for their own enrichments, and that for their own sakes alone they had been singled out for a benefit so vast, a mercy so wonderful, a salvation so grand and complete. How could they suppose that, unless Calvary had developed in them the Pharisee's pride or the miser's greed? How could they entertain that thought, unless they had been plunged in a blinding maelstrom of intolerable self-conceit? What had they done to deserve this signal grace and the promotion from rude fishermen to companionship with the King of Kings? No, they knew that the Divine love which had fixed itself on them was felt as fully and as freely towards the whole human race, and that the light had shone on their hearts first that through them the illumination might spread everywhere. It was not their own. It was the

THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION

most sacred and responsible of trusts. It belonged to all men. To withhold it would be to rob men of what God had made their right. Nay, it would be to deny and forfeit their own calling. "Woe is me if I preach not this Gospel." And everyone feels this who has truly understood and rejoiced in God's great gift. If it has not yet penetrated and suffused the hearts of all Christians, it is because the selfish human elements have counteracted the workings of the Divine, and because man's littleness has brought God's great thought down to the measure of the market and the shop.

It *must* be felt by those whom Christ has lifted above the commercial atmosphere. For why were we made to hear His voice? Why was this treasury of joy and promise laid open for us? Was there something exceptionally attractive in us that drew down the love of God while it passed by coarser material? How can we suppose, unless we are infatuated with vanity, or unless we attribute to God an utterly unreasonable favouritism, that this grace was bestowed upon us simply that we might hug it in our self-congratulatory breasts? It is either from blindness or the poverty of imagination which belittles all great things to fancy we were so peculiarly dear to God that He gave His Divine treasure to us without a larger thought for others; gave it to be wrapped up like a jewel in a casket, to be gloated over in secret; gave it as a light by which we could behold our new faces in a glass, and be filled with pride in our own beauty.

Ah! no! When He came to us and renewed and sweetened our nature by His wonderful revelation, it was not because He loved us and not His other children, but that by means of us those other children might learn of His compassion and forgiveness. We have no absolute right to any Christian privilege and joy, there is no private property in God's household. It is all a solemn and beautiful trusteeship; we are not our own, our truths and beliefs, our beautiful hopes and golden store of promises are not

our own, they were given to us for a larger use. There is not a man, woman or child in the whole dark, guilty world who might not truthfully say as he or she looked on our Gospel light and blessings: "They are mine—God gave them to you that you might give them to me. You are doing wrong to me, and you are robbing God if you do not try to give them." Yes, we owe to our fellow men the inheritance which we enjoy. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

Pardon me, if for a moment I extend this thought of obligation to a wider field. It touches the nation. Nay, it should press upon the nation. The very reason that makes us thankful and proud to bear the British name should beget in us a deep, solemn, prayerful sense of responsibility and debt towards the less privileged races of the world. Freely have ye received, indeed! There is nothing more wonderful in the story of empires and nations, and nothing more unaccountable by ordinary causes, than the growth in power, wealth, and influence of our own people and of the people who share our language and religion. What vanity would have dared to project the dream which our eyes see realised. Who would have believed it possible that the kingdom of Elizabeth would expand into the empire of Victoria; that the dear, dear land whose praises Shakespeare sang would strengthen its stakes and enlarge the places of its tent until its sons ruled over one-third of the human race?

Imagine some prophet writing in those days when this little island was overshadowed by France, dreading conquest by Spain, soon to be outstripped in commercial power by Holland. Imagine him borrowing the words of Scripture and saying: "Thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left, and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate places to be inhabited. The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee, and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and kings shall minister unto

THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION

thee." What laughter would have attended his foolish arrogance and insolent misappropriation of Divine words. Who would have believed that in this short time the words would come true—that the feeble, sea-girt people would become the mother of empires, would carry their flag to all parts of the habitable globe, would give their speech to some two hundred millions of lips, and bring far more than that number of people under their authority? Think of our enormous wealth, the bankers and capitalists of the world, lending to all and borrowing from none, with an annual income at least a thousand times as much as our whole expenditure on foreign missions; think how the purity of Evangelic truth has been preserved through all manner of revolution and upheavals; how the Bible, which in other even nominally Christian lands is a closed or neglected book, is among us the book loved best, the well-nigh universal household treasure; and think how, while in nearly all Protestant lands save where our language is spoken religion is feeble or apathetic, and in Catholic lands given up by nearly all the men of culture and leading, it is here full of life, power and earnestness. Think of it all. It is the one great modern miracle.

And what is the meaning of it? Do we interpret it with the boastful Jingoism of the music-hall, or with the humbler patriotism of the sanctuary? Have we got all this glory by our own might and power, or is it because He has "beset us behind and before, and laid His hand upon us"? Can you suppose that all this wealth and influence and privilege have been conferred upon the nation for its own immediate and exclusive enjoyment, and for no wider and higher purpose. Was it that, like Babylon of old, "we should be given to pleasure, and dwell carelessly, and say in our hearts: 'I am, and there is none besides me, and I shall be a lady for ever'"? Surely we have not been endowed by God in this way that we might grow fat and luxurious, or use our power over millions of subject children for our own aggrandisement, and to puff ourselves out with pride.

Was it not especially with this intent—that we should be more than all others God's messengers of light and truth to the nations that sit in darkness? In all this God's voice has been calling us. God's consecrating hands have been laid upon our heads. Thus saith the Lord: "In the shadow of My hand have I hid thee, and made thee a polished shaft, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee, that thou mayest say to the prisoners: 'Go forth'; to them that are in darkness, show yourselves."

We are elect by all signs and proofs to be the great missionary nation. And, alas! if we deny this high duty, or neglect it for meaner, baser, or more selfish aims; if we worship not God, but gold; if we think only of empires and ambition, and not at all of this sacred trust and obligation, our privileges will be taken from us in spite of all our ships and money and men; our wealth will decay when it has done its work of morally corrupting us; our very religion will perish, for Christ will remove the light from the candlestick which has burned only for itself. "For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness; thou hast said none seeth me; thy wisdom and thy knowledge it hath perverted thee; therefore shall evil come upon thee, thou shalt not know from whence, and mischief shall fall upon thee, thou shalt not be able to put it off; and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know."

Be sure of this, my brethren, that by our faithfulness to the mission and work whereunto God has plainly appointed us shall we be judged and dealt with. From them to whom much is given is much required. It is possible, indeed, that in the counsels of God, yes, I say it, though it may be ridiculed in some quarters, every new missionary we send out is doing more than every new ironclad we build to maintain and perpetuate the greatness of the empire. For the ultimate arbiter in these things is not battalions and ships, but He who uses nations as His instruments and rejects them when they have ceased to do His work.

THE MISSIONARY OBLIGATION

You cannot, you dare not, say : “ We will have no part in this mission work ; it is no interest of ours.” You dare not say it as Englishmen, still less can you say it as Christians. For not to give forth what God has given you is to annul the condition on which He gives everything. Ever does He recall these gifts from those who use them not for His glory. The light in your own hearts will go out unless it shines for others. Think again of all that Christ means to you, of all that He has been to you and us. Try to measure the gift of God, measure it before the Cross, measure the fulness of life which flows from it ; then think of our own poor gifts and be ashamed of them. Pray for a new sense of obligation, pray for a new baptism of love and gratitude ; and pray that these words, in all their beautiful and searching meaning, may lay hold of every emotion and energy : “ Freely ye have received, freely give.”

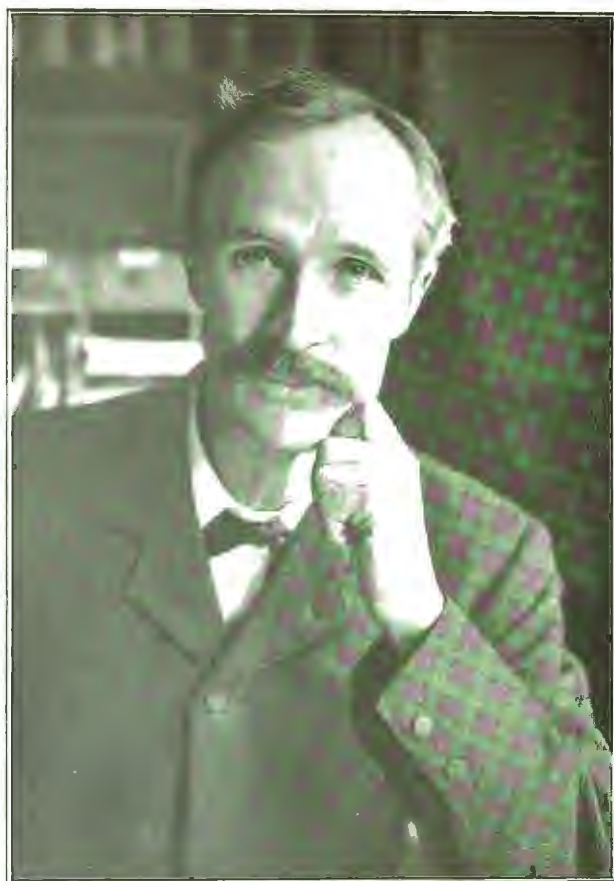
CHARLES BROWN, D.D.

THE VISION OF ALL THE FACTS

BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL, LONDON,

APRIL 24TH, 1907.

“ The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord.”—Ezekiel xxxvii. 1.



[*Reginald Haines.*

THE VISION OF ALL THE FACTS



THIS is the best known, probably, of all the visions recorded in this little-read book, and the clearest as to its meaning. All that is told us in the chapter is represented as taking place in a vision; in one of those illuminating trances into which the prophets of old time fell at the touch of God's hand, and during which there were committed to them rich treasures of truth and instruction, both for their own and for all succeeding times. The story of the vision is well known; you have often heard sermons on it or references to it, and there is no need to detain you with descriptions or word pictures. The saddening and offensive spectacle of a valley covered with the bones of a perished host was that which greeted the mental eye of the prophet. In the midst of them he is set down in his vision. Round about them he is bidden to walk. Nothing in all the melancholy picture is to escape his observation, and it is a picture of complete and absolute and dishonoured death.

There is no uncertainty about its meaning. No room is left for fanciful conjecture or interpretation. "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel." There was an accurate and grim representation of the condition of Israel, politically, morally, spiritually.

Probably it was worse, more hopeless than Ezekiel had conceived, and that is saying a great deal.

Anyhow, my text records the first act in the great drama of this chapter. The hand of the Lord carries this man away, and the Spirit of the Lord reveals to him the worst and most depressing facts concerning his exiled and demoralised countrymen. And it is at this first act that I pause to declare to you my belief that we have guidance and instruction here of an important character—a principle of general application. I believe, my brethren, that if the hand of the Lord were laid upon us this morning (and why

THE VISION OF ALL THE FACTS

should it not be ?), and we were carried away in the Spirit, something of the same kind might happen to us. I mean, and this is my first point :

I

THAT WE SHOULD BE SHOWN, AND THAT WE NEED TO BE
MADE WILLING TO SEE, THE FACTS,

the worst and most distressing facts, in the light of reality. I mean, that if there is a valley of dry bones anywhere at home or abroad, we should be set down in the midst of it and be made to walk round about it. Nothing is more needed in the matter of Foreign Missions than light, illumination, the light of truth and of fact. Foreign Missions are not a sentiment, but a science, and I venture to assert that nothing is so necessary as knowledge—as facing the facts ; that we should cease to live in a world of make-believe, and leave off the unhealthy habit of glossing over facts and keeping up appearances, and come into the world of reality.

(I) *Begin with the conditions in which we have to labour.* If you are to repair the ravages, you must know the extent of the mischief. While some modern philosophers from comfortable armchairs or elaborate pulpits are dogmatically asserting the divinity of man, and assuring us that sin is only a shadow, and that everybody is on the quest for God, and that therefore all is well with everybody except the believing multitude that compose the Church, let us ask if the facts of life square with the theories ? If there is nothing considerable to be done, if the worst depravities are solely the responsibility of God, and in some way an expression of Him or of desire after Him, it were well to know it. But if not, if this be a vast delusion cutting the nerve of Christian enthusiasm, as we believe it is, then let that be known also, and let the specious fallacy be exposed. If it be true, true in the light of God's ultimate purposes for humanity, that

one religion is best suited for one race and another for another, one for the East and another for the West ; if the sacred books of the East are almost equal in authority with the Bible, and there is but a step between Buddhism or Mohammedanism and Christianity—why, then, let us know it at once, and cease the strain and labour and anxiety of carrying on this vast enterprise.

But if the facts are otherwise, let us know that, too. If Israel has only gone to Babylon on a holiday picnic, and is free to come back when she likes, then let Ezekiel take his ease and enjoyment ; but if she is a helpless captive and exile—hopeless, degraded, miserable—then let that be known. And we must listen to the man on whom the hand of the Lord is, and who is carried away by His Spirit ; we want to ask in forming our conclusions, whether we are listening to the voice of our own indolence and selfishness or to the voice of the Spirit of God.

I am saying that nothing is so necessary as knowledge, accurate and complete knowledge. Let us know all that is to be known about the Congo. Let our people be willing to know ; why should anything be hushed up ? Let the heart of modern civilisation—if it be made of penetrable stuff—be wrung with the lurid stories of fiendish cruelty practised on helpless natives for the sake of gain. Let the tale be told and retold in every religious newspaper throughout the Kingdom, until at least the heart of the Church is alive with indignation against the evil-doer, and with pity for the sad victims of this hideous wrong. Let the bleeding heart of Africa be laid bare. Let not the speculator and trader tell us, but the man on whom the hand of the Lord is. Let us be willing to know the exact condition of the lands in which the Christian missionary works. Let Turkey and Morocco teach us the kind of civilisation that Mohammedanism produces, and what are its chief fruits.

Let us look at things, not in the coloured limelight provided by the carnal man, the man who wants dividends on

THE VISION OF ALL THE FACTS

the one hand, or the man who discovers splendid moral courage in a Spanish bull-fight and is much impressed with the picturesqueness of a procession of Juggenath or a heathen festival on the other, but in the light provided by the man on whom the hand of the Lord is, and who sees humanity in the light of the purposes of God and the cross of Calvary. Do not let the Chaldean conqueror tell us what he thinks about the condition of Israel in her captivity. Let us see Israel in the light of God's purposes.

For example, let us know the truth about India, and let us be willing to know it. Not only how many millions of its people have no idea that such a person as Jesus Christ ever lived, but the real condition of the masses of the people. Let us take in its appalling facts concerning child marriages and widowhood, its caste, its degrading and polluting religious rites, its stupid superstitions, the hopelessness and cruelty of its religions. I do not know of anything that would be more truly stimulative to wider and larger giving than that we should labour to acquaint ourselves intelligently with the precise conditions, the exceedingly varied conditions amid which our brothers and sisters work. We refrain from giving because we are ignorant, or we give formally and half-grudgingly because we have no conception or true conception of the work our friends are doing. We lump Foreign Missions all together, and many of us have no notion of where our brethren are or what are their difficulties and what an infinitely diversified work they are doing. We are too busy, or too impatient, or too indolent, or too self-absorbed to inquire, and to exercise our imagination. So while our intention may be good, it is unillumined and unintelligent, and our interest is fitful and lagging. We do not see the valley of dry bones as it is, and there is perhaps nothing more needed, and nothing the missionary would welcome so much, as a willingness on our part and a deep desire to know the facts about heathen India.

(2) My second point under this heading is that *we should face the facts concerning the methods and results of our work.* If there is any valley of dry bones in missionary methods or affairs, if there is even a single skeleton, let us not be afraid to see it. No high purpose is ever served by living in a fool's paradise and pursuing a policy of pretence. If we are not succeeding in any country, do not let us pretend that we are. It may be in the light of God's will that we have no business there. "We were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia." Or it may be the methods of our fathers are outworn and spent; that their brazen serpent needs to be smashed. If in any land we cannot persuade people to listen to the Gospel without some sort of bribe, if all that they will take is education or healing, then let us sorrowfully admit it and inquire into the cause. But do not let us be satisfied with it. If the vast and inert mass of heathenism and Mohammedanism is not in the slightest way being undermined by the influence of the Gospel, as some allege, but which I do not for a moment believe—then let our workers tell us. God forbid that we should be blind to the hopeful signs that gladden us; we should despair if we were. My plea is that we should be blind to nothing. That if we are failing anywhere, in the developing of self-supporting Churches, and the production of native Christians of worthy and noble character, in the devotion and heroism of our mission band, we should be willing to know and to acknowledge it. That the search light of God's will and God's purpose should be allowed to fall upon our methods, and that we may be delivered from an unworthy self-complacency and stubbornness concerning our work.

(3) Then I come away from the foreign field to that which I know better, and plead with you that *in the homeland we should be willing to realise the truth about ourselves.* I would remind you that it is not only the missionary who goes abroad to-day, but the traveller and the trader, the soldier and the civil servant; and that these are,

THE VISION OF ALL THE FACTS

sometimes at least, the perplexity and the hindrance to your missionary work ; coming from the same land, supposed to hold the same faith, yet often upholding what the missionary is seeking to destroy, and destroying what he seeks to build up ; people with pagan spirit and habits, needing themselves to be evangelised and even civilised, impressing you with the fact that a vast amount of work requires to be done at home if our Christian witness abroad is not to be marred.

But I come from this kind of men to our Churches themselves, and I ask myself what would be the deepest impressions made on the mind of a missionary who had lived abroad for the last thirty years by his renewed contact with life at home ? Would he not first of all be impressed with the great advance in material comfort on the part of our people ? He would see that we had more elaborately furnished homes, better appointed sanctuaries, that we were far better off materially than when he left us. Would he not find a new atmosphere if he got into our homes, a newer and a lower ? that life was less simple and less devout ; that restfulness, and love of home had lessened ; that family worship had gone ; that love of pleasure and amusement had taken the place of the quiet hour for reading, prayer, and self-improvement ; that the talk was now on dress and sports and amusements ; that there was a love of display to which our fathers were strangers ; that self-denial in a real sense had gone out of fashion ; and that the old idea of separation between the Church and the world was practically dead ? I have an impression that the difference on many points is so great as to be startling, and that there has been a tremendous drift away from seriousness and high Christian living. If we were willing to know all the truth we might find that the sense of sin, the authority of the Bible, of the need of the heathen, of the sufficiency of the Gospel, of the reality of spiritual joys, of the value of the Lord's Day had all seriously declined. We should find any number of professing

Christians who spend far more on games, and on tobacco and cigars, than they spend on the winning of the world to Christ, and not a few in comfortable circumstances who spend more even on newspapers ; who do not really care whether the world sinks or swims, lives or dies, is saved or lost. That they imagine is God's business ; their own is to enjoy themselves.

Might it not be possible that, if the hand of the Lord were upon us and the illumination of His Spirit were with us, we might find the valley of dry bones here, and discover that our own hearts are the sepulchres where lie perished hopes and dead enthusiasms and holy passions, and fervour and wonder, and adoration and love, which live and move no more. May not the decline of enthusiasm and of interest in Foreign Missions, of which scarcely any candid observer can be in doubt, be traceable to a decline in spiritual life and fervour in our own souls ? May it not be that our faith is as little to us, that we are so little conscious of its precious value and even of its simplest content, that it is hardly worth while practising any self-denial or making any great effort to share it with others ? You will think, my brethren, that I have drawn the picture of a gloomy and dreary possibility, and you will account me a melancholy prophet when I declare my personal conviction that a good deal of what I have said is not possibility, but fact, that the outlook for the Church of Christ at home and the cause of Christ abroad is sufficiently grave to cause great anxiety and keen searchings of heart. The appalling magnitude of the heathen world, the condition of things that obtains in it, the amazing indifference of more than half the Church at home, the lack of conspicuous success, the spiritual deadness and carelessness, are realities that oppress me and make me feel that the times are intensely critical for the whole Church of Christ and for nothing more than Foreign Missions.

THE VISION OF ALL THE FACTS

II

Secondly, observe—

THAT IT IS IN THIS VERY CONDITION THAT EZEKIEL IS
BIDDEN TO EXERCISE HIS MINISTRY.

Note the fact carefully, and all its implications.

(1) *The condition is not hopeless*, that is the first point. And if that condition is not hopeless, no condition is. I want to say to you, brethren and to my own depressed and unbelieving heart, that God is never hopeless about humanity, that we should see all and trust God. Let the worst pessimist tell his gloomiest tale and wail out his most mournful prophecy as to the ultimate destiny of mankind and the progress of the kingdom of Christ, the Bible has an answer for him. We grow hopeless because we are often as blind to the resources of God as we are to the needs of men. I want to realise that all the darkness and the deadness, all the cruelty and wickedness of the world are infinitely more real to God than they are to me, and are a greater burden on His heart than on the heart of any of us. And they are not incurable. There is nothing broken that cannot be mended, nor captive that cannot be loosed, nor corrupted and defiled that cannot be made clean, nor lost that cannot be restored, nor dead that cannot be made to live. The hand of the Lord is laid on the prophet, not that he may gaze on death and break his heart, but that he may see resurrection and be filled with wonder. There is the first thing about it.

(2) And the second thing is, and it is always profoundly true, that *the prophet is called to assist in the resurrection*. This is the place and the time to insist upon it that God will not save a world, dead in trespasses and sins, nor revive a dead Church, nor deliver an oppressed people, nor uproot and destroy a cruel custom without the help of man. He never has done it and He never will. Men are generally called upon to try to mend the evils that they see and feel, and

not to spend their time in weeping over them. Thomas Carlyle complains that "God does nothing." Perhaps He is waiting for Thomas Carlyle and calling him to some self-sacrificing act on the part of his fellows. Ezekiel is not taken out to be a passive spectator in a moving drama, but to be an important and prominent actor in it, and this part of the vision is illustrative of God's invariable methods with men. He will speak His life-giving Word to the dead, but it will be through the lips of a man. He will summon the breath of life from the four winds by the voice and call of a man. Over the world's sufferings and darkness, corruption and death, the voice of the Lord God may be heard, crying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" It is *your* money, your interest, your enthusiasm, your power of persuasive speech that God is waiting for, and that He would fain enlist.

(3) And the third thing is that *the prophet is bidden to do an apparently absurd and useless thing*—to prophesy to dead and scattered bones, to call the life-giving breath from the four winds into dead bodies. And again the vision is true to history and to life. The servants of God have ever been bidden to attempt the task that seemed useless and impossible. No more absurd direction—from the worldly and common-sense point of view—was ever given to men than the direction given to a handful of obscure people who had never been outside their own little country to "go and make disciples of all the nations." There was no more absurd person in the eye of the Jew and the Roman than the apostle Paul in his day. A man who knew all the blackness of the pagan world, the contempt of both Jew and Gentile for the crucified Christ whom he preached, and yet who believed with an immovable conviction, that this same despised Galilean would conquer the whole world and subdue it unto Himself. In the eye of the shrewd and practical man of the world, for whom spiritual things do not exist, there is no person more preposterous than the Christian missionary who, of course, is assaying an absolutely

THE VISION OF ALL THE FACTS

impossible task, or if there is any person more wondrously foolish, it is the man who gives lavishly of his wealth for the missionary's support. My brethren, the man who will serve God in the highest and greatest way will be called upon to make himself ridiculous sometimes in the eyes of the world. He must not listen to its opinion. Often he must not listen to his own judgment. He must walk on the water, and go across the sea at the bidding of a vision. He must fling away chances, and health and name and life, hoping for no reward but the "Well done" of the unseen Christ. He must attempt the useless and the impossible and the absurd, as the rustic shepherd Moses did, confronting, with nothing but his shepherd's rod, the might of the most powerful king of his time, and demanding the release of a tribe of useful serfs in the name of a God in whom the king did not believe.

We need not be greatly disturbed or surprised when enthusiasm for Foreign Missions is sneered at by Society people. Precisely the same people would have scoffed at the Galilean carpenter as a wild dreamer, and have sneered at the itinerant tent-maker as eccentric and mad. The question for you and me is not what they say, but what is the will of God. For, mark you, every eccentric and absurd and useless and impossible thing such as I have mentioned must be undertaken, not at the bidding of any man's erratic fancy or caprice, but at the bidding of the Spirit of God. Here is the pattern—"The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord."

You have a man here who acts simply and absolutely under the direction of the Spirit of God and in co-operation with Him, and the question for us here this morning, representatives of the Church of Christ from city, town and village and distant land, is, What is the mind of the Spirit on this great missionary enterprise? What is the eternal purpose of God revealed to mankind in Jesus Christ? Was Jesus Christ, whom we call Master and Lord, was He what

He believed Himself to be ? Or was He simply one of us with a little more of God in Him ? Was He the eternal Son of God who became man that He might reveal God to men as the bearer of the world's sorrows and sufferings and sins ? Did He go to the mysterious darkness and the unutterable agony of the cross that He might make propitiation for the sins of the whole world ? Did He, after His death and resurrection, claim that all authority had been given to Him in heaven and on earth, and command His disciples to bear witness to Him in every land ? Are these facts, or are they pious fancies ?

Was St. Paul under the hand and Spirit of the Lord when he wrote, "In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow," or was he just expressing his own opinion, which is of no more value than the opinion of any other man who chooses to express himself ? Has the New Testament still supreme authority for us ? My brethren, we know how to answer these questions. We declare to-day our unabated belief in Jesus Christ as God the Son, our Divine Lord and Saviour, and in His cross as the atonement for the sin of the world. We are perfectly prepared here in this place to reaffirm our unshaken belief that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Then we must be prepared to carry out our belief, and to place ourselves at the disposal of our Master and Lord for the carrying out of His purposes and the doing of His will. There is no appeal for us from His authority. It is not a question of expediency, but of duty. And, stupendous as the task is, appalling in its magnitude, absurd and ridiculous as it is to think of dislodging hoary faiths and dethroning reigning deities and uprooting age-long superstitions, we are bound to attempt it if He commands.

(4) Only observe, finally, that *it is not the prophet who brings the dead to life*. He is simply the agent and instrument of the Divine power. He prophesies, you will mark the term, not as he wishes, but as he is commanded—and the power of God does all the rest. And you realise as you

THE VISION OF ALL THE FACTS

read the story that no one could be more surprised than the prophet at the result. My brethren, it is an oft-repeated story in the history of the ages that the man who accepts and obeys the call of God, who places himself absolutely and without reservation at the disposal of God, becomes irresistible, and does the thing that seems to be impossible, and that surprises himself.

It is the one thing needful to-day. It is not you and I, or the whole Church of Christ put together, that is going to convert the world. Who are we that we should change the faith of hundreds of millions of men? It is not our medical skill, or our linguistic gifts, or our accurate scholarship, or our knowledge of heathen and Mohammedan systems of religion that is going to do it. The heathen world will neither be purchased by money, nor subdued by cleverness, nor conquered by learning, though we need them all.

I am free to confess that measuring the forces that are arrayed against us, and the puny force that we can send into the field, taking into account only the things that are seen, I am filled with despair. If *we* have to do it, then indeed it is impossible, and it were folly to make the attempt. But there is a Power not ourselves waiting to claim and fill us. We do not say, "The universe is with us." What we may say is, the supreme Power of the universe, the Power by whom and for whom all things were made, is with and in every surrendered and obedient heart. My brethren, whatever else you believe about the immanence of God, believe in the word of the Master concerning the Holy Ghost and the disciples. "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." It is the one thing we need, the thing that will solve all our problems, cure all our worldliness, melt the grudging and selfish spirit within us, and clothe us with irresistible might. It is not the preaching of the Gospel merely that is needed, but the preaching of the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven—the preaching and living of the Gospel by consecrated men.

DR. CHARLES BROWN

My brethren, if the hand of the Lord were upon us to-day, if we went from this place and from these great gatherings in the Spirit of the Lord, it would be not to gaze on death, but on resurrection. The thing that Ezekiel saw illustrated and foretold was done. The dead nation was made to live. Mainly under the inspiration of two men, both of whom significantly spoke of the good hand of God that was upon them, the ransomed of the Lord returned and came to Zion with singing and what seemed like everlasting joy, and you remember the song: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them." The might that brought Israel from death to life, from captivity into liberty, is the might that never decays—the might of the hand of the Lord and of His Spirit. It is in this direction that we must look, and for this that we must fervently and incessantly pray. O hand of the Lord, O Spirit of the Lord, be upon us this day; move our sluggish hearts, illumine our dark minds, kindle again our languishing love, and send us forth to be the channels of Thy saving grace and power.

T. REAVELEY GLOVER, M.A., D.D., LL.D.

LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP

BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL, LONDON,

APRIL 25TH, 1918.

Launch out into the deep."—Luke v. 4.



[Russell & Sons.

LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP



THE historian of Alexander the Great sums up his hero in a striking phrase: "Even if he had conquered the whole of India, still he would have been reaching out beyond into the unknown." In the great minds and spirits of our race we see what is instinctive with us all, but more clearly—the passion to reach out into the unknown; the sense that there is more beyond; that we were born for greater things than we have realised or than we know; that out beyond us lies more and more of God's wonderful and unsearchable world. This strange world, in which we are living, grows more strange and more wonderful as we know it better. We are "moving about," as Wordsworth said, "in worlds not realised," and there is the instinct to reach out, to make more and more of our environment our own.

When we look at the story of mankind, the great forward movements have always come when men have trusted themselves to the unknown and launched out into the deep, explored it, and let down their nets for a draught. All the pioneers, all who have led us, all who have taught us, have been of this build. Think of the awful launching into the deep that Luther made, trusting to God, and getting outside all the known world of religious experience in the faith of what he found Jesus Christ doing there and then for his soul. A new world opens up when we trust God and sail out past the old landmarks.

I suggest that we might take this as a kind of watchword: "Launch out into the deep." As I look around to-day, what impresses me about all of us (and if I lapse into saying "you" sometimes, please understand that what I have to say is confession, with shame, and it points with hesitation to autobiography) is our inshore thinking. There is a kind of safe inshore thinking, a spiritual living from hand to mouth—a matter of small profits, of safety, of spiritual

LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP

comfort—living in the obvious gifts of God, in the obvious work of Christ, taking the first things He gives and being content with them. Men form for themselves a shallow view of Jesus Christ. A true view? Yes. A view that works out, I know, in spiritual power, but an incomplete view. It is not the whole great Christ. It is safe; it is convenient; it is helpful; but is it all that He has to give? Is it enough for the spirit that He touches and has set on fire? I do not think so. I feel there is a shallowness about our thinking, a shallowness about our orthodoxy, a shallowness about our heterodoxy. We are not launching out into the deep. We are too content with our swift thinking and easy views. Surely the Church of God is called to be the great explorer of God. That exploration is one of the great Christian passions and one of the great Christian duties, surely. Can you think of Jesus Christ? can you see Him? can you catch an authentic tone of His voice and *not* feel the challenge to launch out, to go further, to explore? That passion shines through all His teaching; you find it in all His great sermons—that sense of the Gospel Beyond. I want to speak about this on the intellectual side and then on the practical.

I

First of all, I would suggest that we launch out into the deep, where our Lord Jesus Christ is concerned. I think one of the greatest texts that is an everlasting stand-by to the Church was written to the Hebrews: "Jesus Christ, yesterday and to-day the same, and for ever." But I cannot help thinking that, if it had been Paul who was writing he might have added: "Jesus Christ, yesterday and to-day *different*, and for ever." It is written all over his Epistles in one form or another. Is He—is the Christ in whom you and I believe to-day—the same Christ in whom we believed in this place a year ago? Why, yes; but He ought not to be! He ought not to be—for look

at your friends round about you ; are they the same friends with whom you walked and spoke a year ago ? Oh, no ! Such a thing has happened—joy, bereavement, a deeper knowledge of one another—the man is altogether different now from what he was a year ago. “ Like ; but oh, how different ! ” And so, I feel, it ought to be with Jesus Christ. If the view that we had of Him when we first knew Him is the view we have to-day, we have not gone very far with Him. We have to “ launch out into the deep ; ” we have to know Him better year by year ; to explore Him ; to capture His personality.

Again and again it comes over me how little we know Him, how much of Him there is that surprises and startles when we think about it, how much we take for granted, how little we *know*. I ask you, Do we know the historical Jesus ? From time to time, as I read the Gospels, a verse will stand out in a new way, and I ask myself : “ What did He mean ? ” And I do not know. Here is a phrase that He drops, and I do not see why. I realise again and again that He goes out beyond me in a single phrase. When we think of the spirit that stirred in the strange figure as He grew in favour with God and man, as He entered into the lives of men and women, do we understand Him ? “ Yes, ” says someone, “ yes, we do. ”

Do you remember, in the “ Life of Macaulay, ” that Sir George Trevelyan tells us how he and his sisters discovered their uncle ? He was the kindest, delightfullest, and jolliest of men ; he had the best stories for little children ; he made up the best poetry for them ; invented the best riddles for them ; he was the children’s man. And then, when they grew up, they found that they had been playing and romping and guessing riddles with a man who stood in a place by himself in the whole country, whom they had never known. They knew him as their uncle ; but they did not know the great man that England knew. That is how I feel about ourselves and Jesus Christ. We know Him ; oh, yes, we know Him—but we do not know

LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP

Him ! I ask myself why He chose the Cross, and I throw out reason and reason, and I do not know. Why ? Because He is greater than I am ; He thinks deeper ; He feels deeper ; He has voyaged through deeps of God that I have never dreamed are there ; He goes out beyond me. Men and women, if that is your experience (and I expect it is), He must say to us to-day : " Launch out into the deep." It is the very depths of Christ that we want. Life has seemed so easy till these last four years. It never *was* easy ; it is less easy now. And now is the time to take the great venture and sail out into the unexplored seas of the personality of Jesus Christ.

Yesterday some of us had the word " Incarnation " on our lips. How the word warms our hearts when we associate some meaning with it ! But I ask you, Do we understand it ? I confess that I do not. You and I (if I may confess for you as well as for myself) have a great many preconceived ideas of God, and it is to them that we go when we speak of Incarnation. A child once said : " What is the good of going to Church when we know about God already ? " We talk about these great things as if we knew about God. We do not know about God until we have voyaged with Jesus Christ—the historical Jesus.

For, of course, these things are greater than our mortal minds, or what is eternity for ? And the wonder and the mystery of them are a call to us. I ask you, as I ask myself, are we thinking about them ? If I sum the thing up in conventional language, it is true of most of us that we have no theology and no Christology. We are living in the shallows. We see this, we see that, and we talk about so many other things ; but we do not see them to know them. One thing for which I think Cambridge men are most grateful to their University is that our Alma Mater teaches us the difference between knowing and not knowing ; she teaches us to recognise when we do not know things. I realise, and you realise, that out beyond us lie the unexplored seas of God, and of God's relation with Jesus Christ.

I have no formula in which to sum it up. Jesus Christ beggars all formulæ, and goes out beyond anything that our words will help us to put. Once we begin to get just a little glimpse of what Jesus feels about God, we have to re-think all that we have ever thought about God before.

I feel that, in all this that I have been trying to say about the mind of Jesus, and about Jesus in His relation to God, the key has been given me by Wordsworth. Wordsworth taught me long ago that the poet hardly dares frame schemes of nature, because he knows so little about nature. He knows the celandine, he knows the daffodil, he knows the green linnet, but what millions of other wonders the world has! And one day he sees the daffodil again; and it appears that he never knew it before. There is more beyond—even in the simple flower. Christ is the same. You see, and you know. And the next day you see Him again, and He smiles; and you realise how little you do know, how little you have thought, how little you have cared, and how wonderful our Saviour is! "Launch out into the deep."

I want to speak of another thing here. The work of Christ, we say, was our redemption. I ask you, as I ask myself, What do you make of sin? Are you thinking about sin? What *is* sin? Is it something that is natural? Is it an experience that is valuable? That idea is thrown out. Is it something that is natural, but regrettable? Or is it, speaking the language of the common man and not theology, is it just hell? I am speaking to ministers and to Christian people. Are we thinking about sin in any real kind of way? Do we know what it means? Do we realise how much it matters? Whether it matters? Is our religion one that deals with sin easily? Deals easily with sin, and our Lord got crucified about it! What does it mean? It gives us a glimpse of the greatness of the question and its profundity when we see Him crucified because of it. Does it matter? You say, People will not listen to you when you talk about sin. Won't they? They will not

LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP

listen to your terminology, but they know the thing all right ; as Cromwell said : " Speak *things*." I ask, What is our philosophy of sin ? And because it bears on all that we are thinking about, what is our philosophy of redemption ? I am using old-fashioned language. I remember how people used to leave tracts for my father (and I as a child rescued them from the waste-paper basket) about the Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation and things of that sort. I plead for philosophy, for theology, knowing how hard it is to reach along the line of experience, and how slowly we shall really get anything that we can hold together, that will hold together of itself.

What do we mean by redemption ? What is forgiveness ? I came on a great phrase of Luther a little while ago that has haunted me. Luther had a classical education, and he adapts a phrase from Horace : " Forgiveness is a knot that calls for God's aid to unravel." Quite apart from the problem of patching up, and the more awful problem of renewing a wasted life, the whole question of sin, redemption, and forgiveness, as you come to think it out, is a difficult one. *Are* we thinking about these things ? Do you remember Heine, the flippant Heine, on the bed in which he died, said : " Yes ; God will forgive me. It is His *métier* !" It is more difficult than that. I do not want to suggest a return to theory in our preaching ; but I do wish that we might all launch out into the deep, and get our experience of these things, and, on the basis of great and deep experience, think out all these wonders. Are we not called to do that ?

To turn once more to friendship, here is your friend wrestling with a problem in physics, in manufacture, in politics ; and you say : " My dear fellow, I will play billiards with you, but don't talk to me about that. I don't want to know what you are thinking about." Your friendship does not go very far, if it is not a friendship in the depths of the man's intellectual and spiritual nature. Our Lord Jesus Christ, our great Friend, is involved in these things. We

talk about "What a Friend we have in Jesus," and we do not think about the things that meant, and mean, most to Him. I like that happy touch of someone who spoke of "the heresy of practical as opposed to spiritual Christianity." We must launch out and understand this question of sin, redemption, and forgiveness if we are to help our country in the years which are opening up before us. It is urgent for men and women to understand Christ in His fulness and simplicity. Our confession must be like King Lear's on the heath: "Oh, I have ta'en too little heed of this." We hold so much of Christ, of course; we held just as much twenty years ago. You treat the War Loan better! Jesus Christ—all to be explored and understood! "Launch out into the deep."

II

Now I want to turn to the practical side of it and to speak of Prayer. I have confessed my ignorance in what I have been saying already; and whenever I have thought of what I had to say to-day I have always felt that at this point I was worse equipped still. What do we mean by prayer, and how far do we go? Is it asking? Jesus said, "Ask"; and He also said, "Seek"; and He also said, "Knock." Asking? Yes. Seeking? Yes. Wrestling with problems? Yes, *and listening*. "I will hear what the Lord God will speak." That is prayer. Our ideas of prayer are at once, I think, too formal and too shallow.

One of the great things I remember hearing about prayer came from a student at Newnham, who told a friend of mine—confessed it one day, never dreaming it would be mentioned here—that she prayed between the serves at tennis. You would never have guessed it, perhaps, but one has a feeling that she served better. Why not? That is prayer. Can you talk about your most trivial things with Jesus Christ? Yes; but sometimes I think it is only the most trivial things that we do talk about. Dr. Meyer

LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP

once gave us a lead on this at Bristol. He said we should not merely pray to God to bless A, B, C, and D—a sort of shorthand prayer—but should think out the blessing which we want for this one and that one. Are we doing it? Are we living a great, large prayer-life? I cannot say “Yes.” I think prayer very often is just thinking over people and things with Christ; but are we praying great prayers? Are we praying the prayers He asked us to pray? People pray that a door may be opened in this or that mission field. Do not pray that any more! It is all wrong. It is not real. The door is standing open as wide as it can in India, and it is mocking God to ask that the door may be set open. What Jesus asked us was: “Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth labourers into His harvest”; not to pray that the harvest might ripen. Are we praying right prayers, and praying large ones? You see, I am giving other people’s teaching on prayer. I remember Mr. Forbes, of Glasgow, preaching on prayer. “You must,” he said, “stop praying or disobeying.” The prayer that is real is a surrender through all the intricacy and depths of our nature. I wonder, is our prayer-life large? I like the old hymn:

“Come, my soul, thy suit prepare,
Jesus loves to answer prayer;
Thou art coming to a King;
Large petitions with thee bring.”

How large?

One of my earliest memories of this Society is the way in which Alfred Henry Baynes always headed a section of the old *Herald* that we remember, “Africa for Christ.” That is a large prayer. I cannot help thinking that “India for Christ” is a larger. Are we praying such prayers? Do you know, one feels that to pray a prayer like that makes one’s prayers look silly, because they are not practical enough. There is not enough element of co-operation with Jesus Christ, as things are, in prayers of that sort. And yet,

when that ideal of prayer is held up to you and me, we cannot back down from it. We *have* to pray that kind of prayer ; we have to pray enormous prayers ; to pray for the conversion of men and women. The more I have to do with human character, the bigger and more awful it becomes—the difficulty of getting any human heart in tune with Jesus Christ ! The prayer for a single human soul is a terrific prayer when you realise with what you are faced. You are talking to *Him* and about *him*. Launch out into the deep, and think of the masses in India, China, and Africa.

One of the most outstanding of young Indian Christians has said that he was struck with the fact that in England no one prayed for the native Indian Church. Why ? Simply because we don't know it. Our prayers are beggared by the want of our imagination, and Christ is the great Master of the imagination. We must know more of Him, and explore Him, and get Him to touch our imaginations if our prayer is to be any good.

I think of a great palmy plain of India, and of the forlorn village to which we were driving, Periyakulam, and of the great splendid American Christian who beat against heathenism there for years on end ! What a task it is, and yet the best I can do, so far, is to think of certain people and certain names in India, and linger over them in my prayers. I try to see the street in which this man's college is ; to see and to smell the street where the other lives ; I can think of the college, the town, and the swarming people. Do you know what it means ? I got a glimpse of it—and I should like another—the heat, the fatigue, travel and lecture, train and stranger ; and how I walked about the streets thronging and swarming with those dark figures, coolies and low-caste people, dirty little children with bright eyes and engaging ways, and the heat and smell ; and how often one never realised what one saw ; fatigue and heat had set the temper wrong. But Jesus Christ had died on the Cross for every coolie that scrambled for

LAUNCHING OUT INTO THE DEEP

the baggage when one arrived there, for every woman carrying a jar on her head, for the little bright-eyed boys chasing one another—and one was not interested! It brought a sense of shame. “Launch out into the deep.”

III

My last point is this: Are we working on a great scale? Are we surrendered on a great scale? Is He Master on a great scale, or is He just “Rabbi, Rabbi”? Of course, we do not treat Him seriously. If we begin to realise Him, we realise we are face to face with a Friend, a Saviour, and a Master, and that the limit of the tasks He assigns to us is set by the limit of the task that He took upon Himself, is set when He says: “Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect,” when He says: “Ye are the light of the world,” when He says that we have to take up the Cross and follow Him. We cannot think of some of these phrases, honestly and really think, without shame. It is a hard and dangerous life to which He calls us—“Launch out into the deep.” If you launch out into the deep in thinking, you may think wrongly, and be shipwrecked. If we pray—if we work—but what I find about work is that everything you do shows more undone, and everything that you have done looks nothing. “Launch out into the deep.” There are new tasks, new seas to sail, new men to catch; we shall never do it unless we know Him. Prayer is impossible unless He is there, because, if we think about it, we have not the heart and voice to pray without Him. He must be with us in the ship.

One thing has come to our Society lately. That door in India is open as it never was, but the English Army has taken all our younger men. But we have seen a man come forward from the ministry for mission service in China. Have I the right to say to some younger ministers here: “Launch out into the deep.” You are in a village? Charles Brown told me there were five ministers for 1,700

people in the village where he started preaching. If you go to India, there are whole tribes—no difficulty about having a congregation!—who will come over now. Their motives are very mixed, but they will come, if you will teach them. They are waiting for you. Their little boys and girls cannot read. They are waiting for a woman here to go and teach them to read—a woman who says she cannot preach in public (perhaps she is right—it is a poor thing to do); but she has the power to capture little boys and girls. That door is open; there lies the deep: “Launch out into the deep.” What a thing it is to have a Captain to sail with you! It will be dark; it will be difficult; it will be dangerous. I know, thank God, a little of the joy—when one realised that for a little space one was going to be in it in India. The dimness, the dullness, the sense of futility that follows; yes, I know them too.

With a parable let me close. One summer day I was on a tramp steamer coasting the southern shore of Spain. We were to sail out that night. As the twilight came we reached Gibraltar, and for the first time saw the open sea beyond. Away on the right were the lights of Gibraltar. We moved on and on, alone, outward; and then, all the lights went out suddenly. We were in fog and darkness. The fog-horn started its note, and we heard another ship approaching—darkness, fog, and danger! But there was a captain on board who had been there before. Of course, there was darkness and fog. The warm air from the Mediterranean met the cold air from the Atlantic, and there was mist for about half an hour. But we were out on a deeper and a larger sea. The fog cleared and we sailed onward and northward. The day came soon, when a gale blew us up the Channel. Out from Folkestone came the pilot and linked us to our country, to the life of the world, to the great community of men.

Men and women, the deep is out beyond us—and the fog and the darkness! But our Captain calls and He is to be with us all the days, even to the end of the world.

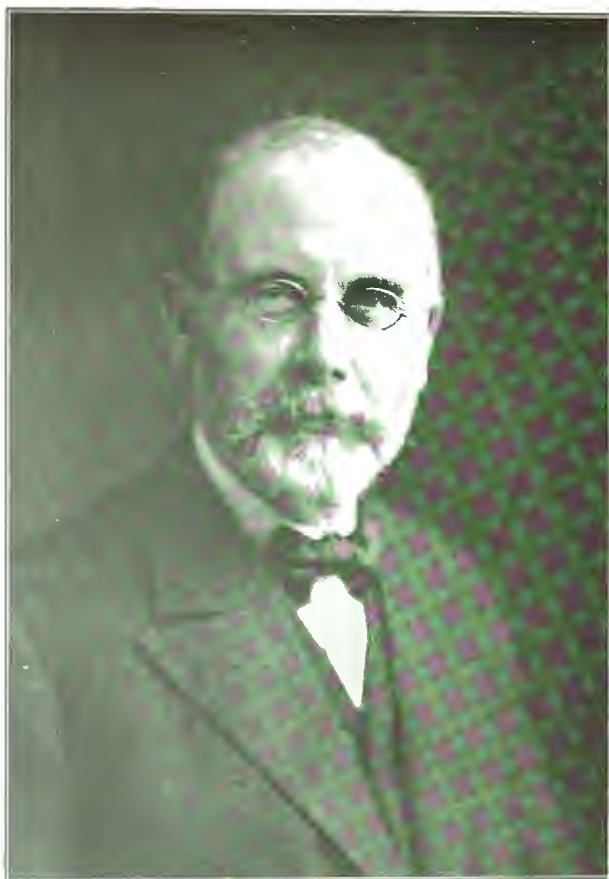
W. Y. FULLERTON

THE GOD OF THE HEATHEN ALSO

BLOOMSBURY CHAPEL, LONDON,

APRIL 28TH, 1909.

“ Is God the God of the Jews only ? Is He not also the God of the heathen ? Yes, of the heathen also.”—Romans iii. 29.



[*Reginald Haines.*

THE GOD OF THE HEATHEN ALSO



WITHOUT the least hesitation I substitute the word "heathen" for the word "Gentiles." The change but makes vivid the startling contrast in the utterance of the apostle, and does no violence to his thought. Presented in this form the question ceases to be a theological speculation, and becomes of the most practical moment and urgency. The apostle of the heathen asks us whether God is only the God of those who have privilege? Whether He is not also the God of those beyond the pale? Then with magnificent assurance he supplies the answer. There is but one God, and He is the God of all; in Him all men live and move and have their being. God is the God of the heathen also.

This is quite an elementary question; but in these days it is the elementary things that are questioned, and this is vital as well as elementary. We are not to suppose that Paul was striving to prove that there is but one God, the Creator and Preserver of men—as a Jew, he took that for granted. When he thought of God, the vision that arrested him on the Damascus road was present to his mind. The God whom he declares to be both the God of Jew and heathen is the God who hath set forth Jesus Christ as the great propitiation, who justifies men, not according to their works, but by faith in Jesus Christ. Is this God the God of the heathen? Yes. He justifies the Jew only by faith, and He justifies the heathen no other way.

I

THIS TWIN QUESTION NEEDS CONSTANTLY TO BE ASKED.

I would ask it to-day of those who applaud missions, of those who oppose missions, and of those who only tolerate missions and look upon them as the well-intentioned but somewhat misdirected efforts of sanguine souls. Let us all

THE GOD OF THE HEATHEN ALSO

get back to the foundation of things. Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the heathen?

*When we selfishly plume ourselves upon our privileges,
this question should probe our hearts.*

When Paul looked out on the world in his day it was evident that God was the God of the Jew, "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." God was the Hebrew's God. The tragedy of the time was that the Jews understood neither their relation, nor God's relation, to the nations round about them. They did not realise that as they were the people of Christ they were to be the Christed people. The first great struggle in the Church was as to whether the God of the Jews was the God of the Jews only; and it is with an accent of astonishment as well as of praise that they report their discovery. "God to the heathen hath granted repentance unto life; God hath opened the door of faith unto the heathen; God hath visited the heathen to take out of them a people for His name." But when once they learned the lesson there was no stay in their progress. On and on they carried the glad Evangel of Christ, who had broken down the walls of partition; on to the utmost confines of empire the triumphs of the Gospel were known; and up to the very palace of Cæsar, and even to the Vestal Temple the new faith penetrated. It was held a sacred trust for the world. The God of the Jews was the God of the heathen also.

As we look out on the world in our time, we see plainly enough that it is the Christians, and the lands where the Christian's faith has most power, that occupy the position of privilege. He who gave so much to the Jew and did so much for them, has led us on and lifted us up, until the subtle temptation is to imagine that our privilege is our right. Who has not known the swagger of the Briton

abroad? Who has not understood something of the arrogance of the Englishman in the East? Who has not felt the complacency of the Christian who sings of electing grace as if the thoughts of God were bounded by his own little company? God is our God. But is He not the God of the heathen also? Is it not true that God does with us as men with torches do—not light them for themselves?

*When we cease to realise the greatness of our experience,
these words should thunder in our ears.*

Both are grievously wrong; but I think I had rather be the believer that hugs his treasure to his heart, counting it too great a thing to be shared, than the Christian who holds his faith with an airy lightness, as if it were nothing particular; who has no sympathy with missions because he scarcely thinks his religion worth passing on; who asserts that Christianity is good for us, but other religions are good for other people. I do not want to be either of these men; but I do want to realise the uniqueness of the Gospel of Christ. Like Joseph Parker, "I believe in comparative religions; but Christianity is not one of them." God has not left the heathen without a witness; but He has given to us a revelation, and when we realise its greatness we cannot be content that it should be unknown to them. Ours is not the best guess among the guesses of the world. If it were, we might leave the heathen to guess again. We have found the Messiah, and we cannot rest until every member of the world's family find Him too. The man who says it does not matter only proclaims the inadequacy of his own conception of Christ. In ancient Rome, Gibbon tells us that "to the common people all religions were equally true, to the philosopher equally false, and to the magistrate equally useful." In China again and again the governor or magistrate, after listening to our appeal for the Christian faith, would say: "Ah! well, we are all doing the same thing—trying to make people better." I doubt whether even as much as that is true; but I am sure that the despair expressed in the formula—for it is despair of

THE GOD OF THE HEATHEN ALSO

all, not faith in all, that prompts it—accounts not only for the rejection of Christ oftentimes amongst the heathen, but for the lack of interest in sending the Gospel to them amongst the Churches at home. When our own hearts thrill with the experience of Christ's life, we shall be eager to proclaim the God of the Christian as the God of the heathen also; and men and money will be poured out, because we shall feel intensely that there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we can be saved than the name of Jesus.

When we fail to remember the claim of God as God on man as man, this enquiry may quicken us.

It is a universal claim. The glory of Christianity as contrasted with Judaism is that no longer from one nation, but from all nations and tongues and peoples and tribes, God calls His redeemed people. This is the very essence of our faith. It is lack of understanding of this that makes Dr. Alfred Wallace say (and I would speak of Dr. Wallace with the greatest respect, if only for the sake of his book, "Man and His Place in the Universe."): that "while our Governments permit trade in rum and firearms, and every kind of robbery and persecution of the natives, the attempt to teach Christianity becomes a hideous hypocrisy." When will wise men cease from folly? Because there are Governments who do not acknowledge God's claim, the claim of God is not to be heard by the heathen! If it were the oppressors who preached the Gospel there would be sense in the argument; but shall God's people cease to proclaim His love because worldly people do not know it? Shall the Church wait until men's Governments are reformed before she preaches the Gospel that can save men's souls? Is it hideous hypocrisy that has abolished cannibalism in the South Seas, that has built a Church on the site of the Slave Market at Zanzibar, that cares for orphans and widows in India, that has faced and conquered in our own time the martyr's sword in China? Hideous hypocrisy! Say, rather, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace,

that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth."

For this is the truth that we are so apt to forget. Unaided reason cannot discover it, and unspiritual minds cannot realise it. True, there is natural religion everywhere; there may, perhaps, be a land without a god, but there is none without a ghost. But natural religion leaves the greatest problem unsolved. Even in our land, the man whose genius might well entitle him to be Poet Laureate sadly sings :

" On from room to room I stray,
Yet my host can ne'er espy,
And I know not till this day
Whether guest or captive I."

That is the plaint of the whole heathen world. God is unknown, and man is not sure of his place in God's universe. Yet everywhere men are God's guests and not God's captives—God's guests who by faith in Jesus Christ may become God's sons, and God's claim on them is for faith. "But how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard?"

We need to keep constantly on God's side if our hearts are to be alive to this problem. The ignorance and misery of the heathen will not be motive strong enough to keep us going. We shall need to love men in the tender heart of Jesus Christ. I have mingled with the heathen only for a few months, and I went with my spirit already stirred within me. If you ask me what was my chief impression, I answer, that I was so little impressed. At first the horror of the thought that these people were without God and without hope in the world was almost too much for me, but in a little while my horror was that I did not seem very much to care. There is not enough in the people to make you care. You will only feel as you ought to feel when you are in sympathy with God, and that is as easy in England as in China—perhaps easier.

But it is not only for a great nation like China that God

THE GOD OF THE HEATHEN ALSO

cares. There is no people so sunken, so inconsiderable, but the love of God goes out to them. The smallest people in the world is, perhaps, the little band on the extreme north of Greenland, possibly derelict Chinese of a former age, though now they are known as the Smith Sound Eskimos. There they are, 234 of them, shut in on three sides by ice, and on the fourth by water, half the year in darkness, without laws or government, writing or recognised religion, without wood, vegetable, salt or money, and Commander Peary, who is the only man who has ever visited them, says: "Fortunately for them, with no possessions to excite cupidity, with a land in which no one but themselves could conquer a living, they are likely to be left in peace, to live out the part appointed to them by the Creator, undisturbed by efforts to understand the white man's ideas of God, of right, of morality, and uncontaminated by his vices or diseases, till the 'Great Night' ends for ever, and the 'Great Ice' dissolves in the convulsions of the last day." Commander Peary but utters the thought that stirs in many another heart about many another people. It were well if they were left alone. Is that God's thought? Ten thousand times, No. Is God the God of Canada only? Is He not the God of the Smith Sound Eskimos also? I can imagine no more heroic service for Christ than to go to those 234 people to tell them the glad news which has changed the world for us, and which would make their barren, frozen land into a very garden of the Lord. I know all the arguments about strategic centres and dying races, but I remember One who came to seek the lowest and the lost, and if I knew a man whose heart went out to forgotten races of the earth, who said, Is God the God of the American States only? Is He not the God of the American Indians also? I should honour that man because I know his Master will one day thrill his heart by saying to him: "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

II

THERE IS ONLY ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION,
BUT IT HAS MANY IMPLICATIONS.

Once it might have been possible, in direct contradiction of the apostle's argument, to have answered in the negative, and to have boldly declared that God is only the God of the Jews, or that He is the God of the Christian only, but unless we are prepared to deny that it is the same God who will save the Jews by faith, and the Gentiles through faith, we must go all the way with Paul, and say, not grudgingly, but with triumph akin to his: "Yes, God is the God of the heathen also." It is impossible to believe that God who has made all men has ever forgotten any of the works of His hands; if He elected one nation, and set the bounds of the others according to the tribes of the children of Israel, it was surely in order that in the very centre of the earth He might reveal Himself so clearly that the light should shine to its utmost bound. Somewhat recently a distinguished man, once a Romish priest, has, with his wife, who recounts the story, made an extended journey, seeking to unite all those who believe in one God—Jew, Christian, and Mohammedan, in a league to bear testimony of their faith to the heathen. It is not in that sense that the heathen need to know God. What better would they be unless the revelation of God in Jesus Christ were given to them? It is He who is the God of the heathen also.

God, Who is the God of All, is the Judge of All.

And the Judge of the whole earth will do right. Is God the God of the Jews? He will judge them. "You specially have I known of all the nations of the earth," He says, "therefore I will punish you for your iniquities." It is not the Gentiles, but the favoured people, whom He warns of judgment, yet, strange to say, we are always inclined to believe that God will deal more gently with us than with the heathen. Is God the God of the heathen

THE GOD OF THE HEATHEN ALSO

also? Then they, too, shall be judged, and judged by the deeds done in the body, else God would cease to be God. On the open page of my Bible, where I find the text, it is also written, "For as many as have sinned without law shall perish without law, and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law."

Do not think that the judgment of God slumbereth. From speculations about the future, turn and face the facts of to-day. Dr. Griffith John, who knows Chinese life intimately, says that he does not know where the Chinese are going, but he is quite sure they are not fit for heaven, and if they were to go there as they are, then we should not want to go, except, perhaps, we went as missionaries. Do you say that you could not be content in heaven if others are in hell, that your bliss would be so bitter with the thought that you could not endure it? Others have thought with you.

" There came a soul to the gate of Heaven
 Gliding slow—
A soul that was ransomed and forgiven,
 And white as snow.
And the angels all were silent.
' I come,' she said, ' to the pearly door,
 To see the throne
Where sits the Lamb on the sapphire floor,
 With God alone.'
And the angels all were silent.
' I come where there is no night,' she said,
 ' To go away,
And help, if I yet may help, the dead
 That have no day.'
And the angels all were silent.
The Lord said, ' Now will I go with you,
 Dear child of love,
I am weary of all this glory too,
 In heaven above.'
And the angels all were silent.
' We will go to seek, and save the lost,
 If they will hear,
They who are worst but need Me most,
 And all are dear.'
And the angels all were silent."

Does your heart respond to that? Do you answer quickly, that is what I would do? *Then why not do it*

now? Why not go in company with the Master who does not wait for future ages, but all the days of this age is with those who venture forth in His name to seek the lost? If you let men perish to-day without seeking to save them, the angels will all be silent for very shame at your hypocrisy when you suggest that you will seek them by-and-by. Are there no Infernos at home where you may go now? Are there no Gehennas in India, and Tophets in China where you may go? Does not the smoke of their torment ascend night and day from the dusky sons of Africa, and from the islands of the sea can you not hear the surge of the sorrow of those at whose heart gnaws the worm that dieth not. Why not go to them now?

Oh, men, is God the God of Europe only? Is He not also the God of the Congo? Has he not seen the woe of those who like dumb cattle are driven to their doom? Yes, God is the God of the Congo also, and tyrants and oppressors God will judge. Is God the God of the West only? Is He not also the God of the East? And shall He not judge between the opium-stricken people and the men that have grown rich on the iniquity? On whom, think you, will the judgment fall? Is God the God of Britain only? Is He not also the God of India?—India, that land of wonder where there are more gods than people? Yes, of India also, and of Britain God will take account of that Empire.

God, Who is the Judge of All, desires to be the Saviour of All.

They sang in the olden time, "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, He will save us." The Judge is the Saviour, and to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent, is life eternal. How, then, shall the heathen be saved but by knowing God, and how can they know God unless we take the knowledge to them? Do you say that He will reveal Himself to them? He cannot. Deliberately, I say, He cannot. For

THE GOD OF THE HEATHEN ALSO

God has spoken His last word in Jesus Christ, God has given the final proof of His love in the cross. He cannot again be born a babe in some foreign land. He cannot die again. He who lived that stainless life in Palestine, and died the death for sin there, was not born a second time in England for us, nor did He die in London for our iniquities. If we knew the power of that death it is because those who knew the story of His incarnation and atonement came to us and told us, and God waits until we, who know it, go and tell it to others.

Wesley occasionally in his sermons bid his hearers imagine that one of the other worlds floating in space had sinned and fallen, and that perhaps at the moment when he was speaking, the Son of God was being crucified in that other world for those other sins. But it was a vain imagining. Christ will never be crucified in any other world. If other beings sin, we who know the story of the Agony in this world will be sent to tell them of its boundless efficacy, enough for a million worlds. Certainly Christ will never suffer and die on earth again. He cannot, He must not. Yet all the people must know of that revelation of love, that satisfaction of justice, and God awaits until his Church shall carry the story to every creature under heaven. If you ask about the judgment of the heathen, and yet refuse the Gospel to them, you have already judged them, you have shut off from them the only light in which they can see God as He is ; and until God is known in Christ He cannot reconcile the world unto Himself.

Our God bids Us, Who Know Him as God, to go to the Heathen, because He is the God of the Heathen also.

To the Son He saith, " Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." The God of the heathen will yet give them to His King in Zion. Through the Jew His truth was proclaimed to the Gentiles ; through the Church it shall yet be proclaimed to all the world.

The rapidly increasing heathen at home must hear the glad sound, and the heathen abroad must hear it, too. If any man shall say that we must not go to the heathen in other lands until we have reached all the heathen in England, he is like the Chinese of the former time, who declared that they had not yet mastered all the learning of their own classics, and why, then, should they seek the learning of the West? The one is no more sensible than the other. When the Chinese shut out the knowledge of other countries than their own, they mourned arrested progress; the arrested progress of the Church will cease when she seeks the lost in other lands than her own.

I spent a Christmas Day in the little city of Chou p'ing in China. During the day our hearts were saddened by the story of the arrest of one of the Christian teachers, who was charged with breaking into the house of the lady missionaries. He had been in prison many days, and daily the missionaries had sent him food, though daily he had eaten less and less of it, stoutly asserting his innocence all the time. That evening the missionaries invited us to a Christmas gathering; for our sakes they sought to reproduce the festivities of home; for their sake we sought to enter into them. But breaking through all the joy, came the thought of the suffering prisoner, Liu ju Chang. Yet because he was a stranger to us, and because we failed to realise the fearful nature of his sufferings, the thought was easily dismissed, especially as we were very properly told that we could not justly interfere with the Chinese authorities.

When I was retiring for the night, our Chinese boy came to me, and tried to describe the state of the prisoner kneeling with chained ankles in view of the window of his cell, with wrists also chained to the prison bars. The Chinese heart that felt so much for his countryman in misery rebuked mine that had felt so little.

And now forgive me if I draw back the veil from a very hallowed experience. That room in Chou p'ing will ever

THE GOD OF THE HEATHEN ALSO

be sacred to me because of it. During the night I woke suddenly with the sense of another Presence in the room, a real Presence. I knew it was my Lord, and He spoke to me. You will not ask me to argue whether the voice was subjective or objective. He spoke to me out of the silence and the darkness, and said, "I was sick and in prison and ye visited me not." Thereafter I lay long awake with the bitter-sweet in my heart. It was sweet to think He was there; bitter that He has rebuked me. I knew I could do nothing, but I knew also that I had been content that nothing could be done, and He was sick and in prison all the time.

The next morning there came a deputation from the Church with the mother and son and blind brother of the prisoner. They kow-towed to the visitor, and besought him to rescue the prisoner ere he died. I could only bid them pray, and pray with them, but all the while I heard the sad emphasis of the voice the night before, "I was sick and in prison and ye visited me not."

Prayer was not unheard. That very afternoon Liu ju Chang was released and sent to his native village on bail, and afterwards we saw him in the hospital at Ch'ing Chu Fu, where his wounds had been dressed with loving skill. "I have been made to drink the bitter," he said, "and I do not know why. But nothing shall separate me from Jesus." As I looked at him, and remembered my vision, I thought, too, that nothing would separate the Lord Jesus from him.

In the watches of the night those words come to me still, "I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." It is as if my Lord identifies Himself with the whole heathen world, and rebukes His Church in its idle enjoyments while His heathen are in bondage and in pain. Oh, that we might visit our sick Lord in prison! He is our God, and He is the God of the heathen also.

THOMAS PHILLIPS, B.A.

THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED
MISSIONARY

CARDIFF,
MAY 8TH, 1924

“ The word of God is not bound.”—2 Tim. ii. 9.



THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY



THE old missionary was in prison. That is where he spent all his furloughs, and even there he did deputation work. In the past he had done much service while in gaol, his bonds had fallen out for the furtherance of the Gospel. But this time it is different. It is no longer his own rented house, but a deep, dreary dungeon underneath the emperor's palace, so secluded that it was with difficulty that Onesiphorus found its whereabouts. Nero is growing more irresponsible and bloodthirsty every day. Near by is the judge who is sure to condemn him, near by the sword that is soon to be stained with his blood. There is no rift in the cloud, no glimmer of light, no chance of escape. His life is over and his death imminent.

So he sits down to write his last letter. The chain makes writing difficult. The gloom makes the letters indistinct. But neither the chain nor the gloom can dim the splendour of his dauntless soul. There is not a shadow or a quaver in the Epistle from beginning to end. If anything, a richer humanity manifests itself. He forgets his tragic doom, but he does not forget his friends. He names fifteen or sixteen of them, and goes over them fondly or else sorrowfully one by one. In his other Epistles his salutation is grace and peace, but in this it is grace, compassion and peace. A great pity has possessed his soul. All bitterness is gone, and the mid-day glory is melting into sunset tenderness. The nearer God he approaches the more human he becomes. "Bring the cloak," he writes. The dungeon is damp, winter is coming on, and the days are growing cold. Bring the cloak—the cloak that had been rent in many a ruthless riot, the cloak that had been drenched with the spray of the

THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY

Mediterranean storms. Bring the cloak. And the parchments. There is a little leisure for study at last ; let me spend my few remaining days with the parchments. And above all bring yourself. He wanted to have one last look at his favourite convert, his devoted disciple, his dearest friend left on earth. But if Timothy had gone to see him it would not be Timothy encouraging Paul, but Paul encouraging Timothy. From the Epistle it looks as if Timothy was in prison and Paul was on the wing. His career is at an end, but not his faith. His days are ebbing, but his courage is rising. His chain rattles, but his soul is free. The limbs that had tramped the highways of the ancient world are in fetters, but the angel with the everlasting gospel is beating his pinions over all the orient lands. It is the dungeon for Paul, but it is the world for Christ. " I am bound, but the word of God is not bound."

Our subject is

THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY.

I should like to have a talk with the Apostle and to know exactly what he means by " the word." If we could only discover that it would help us all to preach better, and incidentally it would deliver the Baptist Missionary Society from all its troubles. I think it is obvious from this Epistle that it is not of the Scriptures. Like a loyal Jew, he revered the Old Testament, and in the third chapter he tells us that all Scriptures were given by the inspiration of God and were profitable for doctrine, reproof, and discipline. But the *logos*, the Word, stands out distinctly from the *graphe*, the writing. The word was the power that arrested and redeemed many a heathen convert who hardly knew that the Old Testament existed. What was the Gospel that Paul preached ? When this travelling tent-maker, with his cloak and parchments and kit-bag, came footworn and dust-sprinkled to Corinth or Ephesus, and stood alone or accompanied by a friend or two on the market-place, what did he say ? But, unfortunately, he has left us very few of his

sermons. True, there is the sermon at Athens, but no man can preach his best to a congregation of Stoics and Epicureans. They shunted him off the main line. All he has left us is epistles to saints, and not sermons to sinners, and the only grudge I have against him is that he does not tell us explicitly how to convert sinners, and that he has not left us a few sample sermons.

One thing is certain : in preaching to the Gentiles he did not give them Old Testament history. In preaching to his fellow-countrymen he did so. Just as Matthew in writing his Gospel to the Jews links up almost every incident with some Old Testament quotation, while Mark writing to the Romans hardly refers to the Old Testament at all. Dr. Pierson tells us of an American missionary on the Congo who commenced his evangelical campaign by expounding the book of Genesis. That series of expositions is still unfinished. Mr. Paget Wilkes tells us of a distinguished English divine who paid a visit to Japan and commenced his sermon by saying, " My beloved brethren, you remember how the children of Israel came out of Egypt," when the interpreter interposed. " Hold on," he said, " it will take half an hour to explain who the children of Israel were, another to relate how they ever came to Egypt, and another to point out how the exodus had anything to do with Japan. Hold on ; come to the point." There is a place in the Providence of God for such an interpreter, even in our home churches. Come to the point ; find out what is the redeeming message, and leave Egypt and a lot of other things alone.

There was what I might call a little Gospel which Paul and his fellow-missionaries preached to the Gentile congregations. It is found in some significant sentence in almost all of this man's Epistles. In Romans, " I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto Salvation," and in his Epistle of Timothy, " Faithful is the word (trustworthy is the logos), and worthy of all acceptation. Christ Jesus came into the world to save

THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY

sinner, of whom I am chief." There is the little Gospel—the truth which Paul flung into the midst of paganism, the pertinent message, the one thing that mattered, the power that transfigured men and changed the world.

"Oft when the world is on me to deliver,
Lifts the illusion, and the truth lies bare,
Desert or throng, the city or the river
Melts in a lucid paradise of air.

Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be kings,
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented with a show of things."

Nay, we could formulate the little Gospel in this missionary service. Gather together all the missionaries from all the colleges, and all the fields, and all the departments of the fields—men of different views and different temperaments and different outlooks—and ask them: "Honoured workers for God. You have had the joy of seeing lives transformed under your ministry. Your methods have varied, but tell us what was the something that did the work. Write it down in a sentence." I have no doubt about the answer. It would be "The redeeming grace of God in Jesus Christ our Lord." That is the Word.

And yet no formula can adequately express the Word. The Word of God is more than a number of syllables, more than a system of doctrines, more even than an inspired book. It is God Himself speaking.

To us, accustomed to print, a word is so many letters. To the early Christians, more accustomed to speech than to writing, a word was a living breath. In John the Word takes flesh and dwells amongst men full of grace and truth. In Hebrews the Word is living and energising, flashing as a drawn sword, and keen-edged as a sacrificial knife; and all throughout the New Testament the Word is not separated and isolated from the speaker. "God was in Christ,

reconciling the world to Himself." Paul felt what all ministers and missionaries have felt—that ultimately the only thing he had to give his hearers was God, to open their ears to the divine voice. He would compose a sermon or adapt an Old Testament story, but that was no more than laying down the wire for God's electric power to circulate. Frankly, I am not prepared to criticise anybody's installation so long as he can produce the electricity. Formulas are of no good except as they evoke the energising force of the living spirit. Theology never saved anybody. A creed never saved anybody. A sermon never saved anybody. A sacrament never saved anybody. The Bible never saved anybody. It is only Jesus who saves—God through Jesus—touching man, challenging man, convicting man, changing man, healing man, flinging man to the ground, and setting him on his feet again, and sermons and formulas are only valuable as they help the Lord to do this. Anyone who has tried to preach on the Atonement to a modern congregation must have discovered this. You tell the people that the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself for them ; but twenty centuries yawn between them and Calvary.

"Dim tracts of time divide
 Those golden days from me ;
 Thy voice comes strange o'er years of change :
 How can I welcome Thee ?"

It is impossible to connect the forgiveness of the sins of yesterday with what occurred two thousand years ago unless the God of Calvary and the Cross is actually present, redeeming and forgiving at a great cost. That is the Word—God speaking redemption through the life and death of Jesus Christ. Now you cannot put a Word like that in chains. You cannot put the redeeming God in prison. You can bind the influences of the Pleiades and rivet the bands of Orion before you can hinder the urge of divine love or defeat the process of divine grace.

THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY

I

THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BOUND BY OUR IMPERFECT INTERPRETATIONS.

We must stammer God's Word after Him, and it is well to remember it is a stutter at its best. A Salvation Army officer at a street corner has made me shudder at his interpretation of the Word, but if an angel of light were to hear me preach he would perhaps shudder even more. It is well to remember that even the most infallible of us is only an infant trying to manipulate the light. The best of us bungle sadly at our tasks, but the lamp shines in spite of all our mishandling, and if I could only reproduce the Word in the fullness of its meaning, and show the love of God as it actually is, I could win all men to faith and obedience. But I cannot. I can only stammer ; but I am stammering the Word of God, and the Word tells.

The Word of God is not bound by our exegesis. Myriads of men have been converted by a misunderstood text. Mr. Spurgeon's loveliest sermon, "Supposing Him to be the gardener," has not an exegetical leg to stand on, but it has conveyed the healing Word to thousands. If a man sees Jesus, if his heart is warmed by His love, if his ears are haunted by His voice, he will find an echo of the Word in every text whether he scientifically understands it or not. You need not be a meticulously perfect scholar in order to be an effective missionary.

The Word of God is not bound by our theology. If it was anybody else's word it would have been securely fastened long ago, so heavy are the prison doors, so ponderous are the prison bars, so rusty and inexorable are the prison clamps. But the Word of God has made itself audible through every theology. There is not much in common between Francis of Assisi and Christmas Evans. Their theology was different, their Church polity was different, and it is enough to make Christmas turn in his grave to have his Baptist name linked with such a heretic. But

Francis among the Umbrian hills and valleys saw the same miracles of divine grace as the Welsh evangelist amongst the mountains and hills of Wales. It was the same thing in the one as the other—something bigger than their creeds or prejudices, something bigger than their Protestantism and Catholicism—the love of God in Christ Jesus their Lord. Thanks to divine mercy, although theology is a cage, the white bird from the open hand of God is in the cage, and when the theology becomes practical and missionary, the bird escapes. The Word of God is not bound.

Then the Word of God is not fettered by criticism. You cannot criticise the Word more than you can criticise the sun or the breeze. It is simply God at work, healing as the light and bracing as the breeze. You can reject, but you cannot criticise. You can only criticise the outward form. Nobody wants to criticise the letters of God. All the criticism is about the envelopes, whether they are the buff of business or the fancy envelopes of parables. All the trouble is about the indistinct names and dates of the post-mark. Never mind the envelopes, read the letter. There is the envelope of the early chapter of Genesis. Some say it is the blue envelope of scientific fact. Others say it is the rose-coloured envelope of picture and parable. Put the envelope on one side for a moment and look at the spiritual contents—a miracle of psychology and grace, a passage of unmistakable inspiration, a description of sin unequalled except by the seventh and eighth of Romans. Take Balaam's inspired utterance, unmatched except by Isaiah and Job. Why be so concerned about the figure of the ass on the postage stamp; why not concentrate on the divine word that streams through Balaam in spite of himself? Or take Jonah. The whale is but the envelope. What you have is the Word of divine grace refusing to be bound by the barriers of a nation's pride or a prophet's prejudice and reaching out to the bounds of humanity and even to the beasts of the field. The three passages about which there is so much controversy are by

THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY

the mercy of God among the most unmistakably inspired passages in the Old Testament. God keeps the springs fresh and clear in spite of all the mud we fling in. The envelopes are there to be torn open in order that the grace may be revealed. "Defend the Bible," says Spurgeon, "I would as soon defend a lion. Let it loose, and it will defend itself."

We have got something for the world which criticism cannot touch. I remember that at the commencement of my ministry there was a spate of New Testament criticism. I made up my mind to preach the truths which criticism could not touch, and there has always been meal in the barrel and oil in the cruse. The truths that save are not the truths that we are quarrelling about. There is something beyond criticism, as there is something beyond theology, and that something is the reconciling Word. Sadhu Sundar Singh is, in the opinion of some, an obscurantist. He dreads the higher criticism, as he dreads the influenza, but he brings the joy of God into the hearts of countless thousands. Albert Schweitzer is, in the opinion of some, a heretic. But in his book on "The Verge of the Great Forest" he tells us that the Gospel brings to the African the experience described in Paul Gerhardt's hymn:

"I lay in cruel bondage,
Thou cam'st and mak'st me free."

Set Sundar Singh and Albert Schweitzer face to face with heathenism and they are forced to agree. There is only one thing for it. The emancipating Word. When you come to missionary grips, the obscurantist and the critic are at one, and they always are when they have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. When God speaks the saving Word, criticism falls into its subordinate place. All missionary societies are just now experiencing choppy weather, but if we can take a big view of things, be big-minded and big-hearted and big-souled, the vessel is heading for the sunny seas. Listen to the parable of the bud in

the London park. The other day there was a Denominational split. One part of the bud declared that the opposite part was too critical and analytical and was making for disintegration and ruin. That part retorted and said the opposing fibres were too clinging and conservative and stifling the uprising life. But God's sap was at work, and a lovely bloom appeared, and the splitting fragments became its supporting sepals. There are opposing elements in the Baptist Denomination. Be patient. God's Word is at work. In ten or twenty years a new spiritual blossom will appear; one party will come to see that the true purpose of criticism is to force us from the outward to the inward, from the accidental to the essential, and the other will re-discover the sovereignty of God even in inspiration and his right to inspire men in the way He Himself deems best, and they will become the supporting sepals of a revived missionary enterprise. I read all the critics I can find, and am helped by some of them, but I know the redeeming Word of God is beyond their reach. It cannot be bound.

II

THE WORD OF GOD IS NOT BOUND BY ADVERSE
CIRCUMSTANCES.

The Apostle is at bay. On his wrists a felon's chain; around his forlorn figure the thick walls of a dismal dungeon; beyond, the whole might of the Roman Empire; above, Nero, the anti-Christ, on the throne. It is all up with Paul, but it is all right with the Gospel. Paul is undaunted because the Word of God is unfettered. We often complain that circumstances are against us. There is one comfort—they always have been. Almost every prophet in the Old Testament and every Apostle in the New were within the walls of a prison, or something like it, and the wonder is that so many of us are out. It is well to realise that Christianity is a never-ceasing struggle, a seeming defeat, a victory hardly won and long deferred, the inpouring of light into

THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY

the shade and the gloom until the denizens of darkness wriggle and squirm and hiss. "Have you found peace?" said an old-fashioned Christian to Frederick Maurice. "No," he replied, "I have found war."

Take the life of the Apostle. The Jerusalem Jews would not have him at any cost, and so he was pushed out into the larger world. No home Church would look at him, so he had to become a foreign missionary. And then he did not stay long in any town. Blows and stones and hisses moved him on. He kindled the fire and then had to seek change of pastorates. His way was blocked in Asia, and there was nothing to do but to head for Europe. It was sheer difficulty that stretched his soul, widened his horizon, and enriched his activities. Now suppose this to be the law of the kingdom, as I believe it is, then we know why the Church fails to expand. We do not face the hard things, we dodge the big jobs. Instead of spurring our horses to face the five-barred gates we ride by the side of the hedge until we find a soft spot to go through. Whenever there is a difficulty there is a possible victory and a certain blessedness. So I would say to my younger brethren—avoid cushy jobs as you avoid the devil, live dangerously, breast the tempest, keep the spray wet on your faces.

There are numberless illustrations to confirm this in missionary literature, but God has given to this society its own Acts of the Apostles. Carey's plans were frustrated that the Word of God might have wider scope. The Cameroons had to be closed down that the Congo might be opened up. The Boxer movement in China tried to mangle the Word, but it only gave it a mightier pinion and a wider range. God's arm is not shortened, and God's ear is not deafened, and God's Word is not stifled. He is still moving on in His unchangeable stride.

The great European War was enough to kill not only every missionary society, but Christianity itself. I remember the sting of the saying of a Russian lady at Bloomsbury: "Ugh, where is your Pope and Bishop and God

now?" Congo Christians came to our missionaries in bewilderment and said, "You white men came out to tell us fighting is wrong, and now white men fight themselves." Hindoos nurtured on the passivity and peace and compassion of Buddha recoiled from it as from a lower heathenism, while Chinese coolies were trooped in thousands to the shambles of France to witness experimental Christianity, and, mark you, these men were not cultured enough to understand the specious arguments with which Christian Europe doped its intellect and conscience. Believe me, the greatest casualty of the war was religion. It ought to have settled the missionary society. Instead of that it has made us. It has internationalised Christianity. It has proved that goodness can only survive on missionary wings. It is dangerous to cultivate peace ourselves unless we cultivate peace in others. Peace to prevail must be missionary. It has proved that all nations either sink or swim together. It has killed the bogey of insular reform, and changed three acres and a cow into the League of Nations. It has almost made missionaries of Robert Cecil and Gilbert Murray. It has given the world a wider horizon and the missionary society a better atmosphere. The war has been a long, dark tunnel. The rocks encroached, and the darkness and the rattle came. But we are out, and as the smoke clears away we see that God has set us in a large place in a land of fair horizons.

III

THE WORD IS NOT BOUND BY THE DURATION OF THE MISSIONARY'S LIFE.

Paul had come to an end of his ministry, but Christianity was not going to end because his life was ending. Mind you, he had the right to say what many a smaller man has said since: "I don't know how the world is going to get on without me." But he had given up depending on Paul thirty years before. "It is not I, but Christ, that liveth

THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY

in me," and the old warrior, wounded and helpless on the field, shouts : " Forward ; never mind me ; we are only just starting ; the Word is not bound."

It is good to remember that the cause is greater than the workers. Paul is, after all, only a ripple on the surface of the eternal current. The ripples rise and twinkle and dissolve, but the Gulf Stream of grace goes rolling on. Workers come and go, but the Word moves on. In this respect I am an impenitent Calvinist. Christianity is not a gamble or lottery ; the future of the Kingdom is a dead certainty. It is only twelve years ago that we met at Cardiff, and many of the old familiar faces are amongst us no more. But Christ is here, and with His presence abundant proofs of His undefeated Word. The princely presence of Richard Glover does not grace our assembly, but his son occupies the chair of the Union. There is something bigger than ourselves in this business. It is not often one meets God on committees. Sometimes you do, and that unmistakably. In recent missionary committees I have been rebuked and awed by the presence of the Shekinah. Like the rest of you, I have wondered whether the war would stop the supply of candidates for foreign service. But they have come, men and women of the choicest calibre, from our colleges, universities, and medical schools. I cannot account for the flow. There is no revival to sweep them in, and the spiritual life of many of our Churches is not rich enough to produce them. It is an age of transition and doubt and unrest. There is only one way to account for them. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and His touch has still its ancient power. His Word is not bound, and in His own sovereign way He has reached the hearts of these men and women.

Two years ago I took a long journey of close upon a thousand miles to see Sir Henry Jones, my old tutor, dying in the North of Scotland. He had undergone a terrible operation, and when the surgeons sought to hide the dread instruments, which they had accidentally disclosed, the old

man of seventy said : " Don't do that. I am not afraid of death. I know how to greet the Unseen with a cheer." He did not tell me that, but he told me that his sustaining thought in the face of death was that his lads were carrying on in every part of the globe. Paul is dying, but what of that ? Timothy is carrying on. When we next meet at Cardiff many of us won't be here, but what of that ? Our lads and lassies will be carrying on. One generation cometh and one generation passeth away, but the Word of the Lord abideth for ever.

Paul was undefeated. He did not dodge the facts. He knew enough of man to be a pessimist ; but he knew enough of God to be an incorrigible optimist. But an optimist does not blink and disparage facts. Paul did not try to persuade himself that he was not in prison. The tug of his chain would soon pull him back to grim actuality. He could not explain Nero away ; but then Nero could not explain God away. Paul saw the facts, but he saw the light of God behind the facts, while a pessimist puts out the light and then complains that he is in the dark. Every fact was to Paul a divine possibility. Stephanas was only an ordinary church member. No one saw much in him. But Paul says, " Salute Stephanas, the first fruits of Achaia." Paul saw a province in a man. Epænetus was a lovely man, but he did nothing extraordinary. But Paul called him the first fruits of Asia. He saw a continent in a convert. But then he had taken his cue from the Saviour, who had seen the world in a few Greeks. " And I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all men to myself." That is the optimism of the undefeated saints—to see God behind the tangles ; to see a continent in a convert ; to see paradise in a thief ; or to see the world in an inquirer.

" O for faith that turns the failure
 Into victory's ringing cheer,
 O for faith that sees the triumph
 When defeat is strangely near,
 Faith triumphant,
 Knowing not defeat nor fear."

THE FAITH OF AN UNDEFEATED MISSIONARY

That is our need—faith triumphant, that knows not when it is defeated. Not long ago Mr. Herbert Anderson was explaining to a few of us how the Indian Christians were clamouring for self-government. We all saw the possibilities of strange developments, and I asked him “What would you do?” and he replied, “Risk it,” and I said, “That is magnificent.” That is Christianity with sixteen ounces to the pound. Fill men to the brim with the love of God and let them do what they like. When further asked about his guarantees he practically answered: “Lo, I am with you unto the end of the world.” In spite of Indian blunders and British flutters the presence of Jesus is guarantee enough. And then he quoted Tagore:

“ He comes, comes, ever comes,
Every moment, and every age,
Every day, and every night,
 He comes, comes, ever comes,
In the fragrant days of sunny April
 He comes, comes, ever comes.
In the rainy gloom of July nights
 He comes, comes, ever comes.”

Yes, in spite of set-backs and disasters, He comes, comes, ever comes—comes in His spiritual personality and presence, as real as if we saw Him on the clouds of heaven with eyes of flesh; as real as if the trump of the archangel pealed on our ear; as real as if He ascended His visible throne in the city of David. He comes, comes, ever comes. The Word is not bound. His presence is not withheld, and that is why Paul and every other missionary are for ever undefeated.