WITH THE C.M.S. IN WEST AFRICA

A STUDY IN PARTNERSHIP

BY

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Author of
"School Paths in Africa," "Pioneers of the Kingdom," "The Goodly Fellowship," "The Advancing Company," etc.

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FOREWORD

HAVE we the imagination to grasp the big thing that the C.M.S. has done in West Africa? If so this book will grip us from start to finish. Here is the account of a mission field less than a century old which has given from its African people no less than six bishops to the Church. Here slavery once flourished and an African had but a slave-market value, while to-day we think in terms of trusteeship, partnership, and educational developments. The Dark Continent has become a land of promise and its people once fettered are free. The share the C.M.S. has had in this transformation is set before us vividly in this book and it has been no small share.

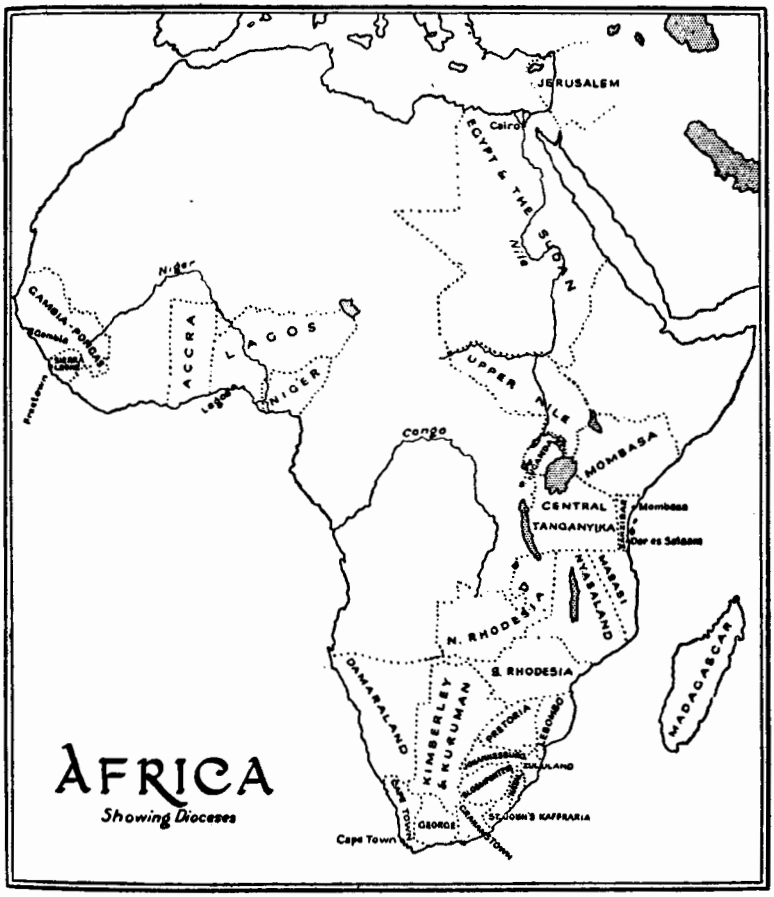
West Africa was the first Mission of the Society. For a long period the C.M.S. was the only Anglican society on the west coast. To-day, when others are taking their share in West African evangelization, it is still true to say that by far the larger proportion of the Church's work is carried by the C.M.S. A mixed community of slaves has become a Church, a people who once were cannibals are leading the way in African evangelism. To-day Sierra Leone and Nigeria have a self-supporting and self-governing Church which raises annually for church purposes some £73,000. Facts like these speak for themselves and the C.M.S. is proud of its partnership with its African brothers in the unfinished task in Africa.

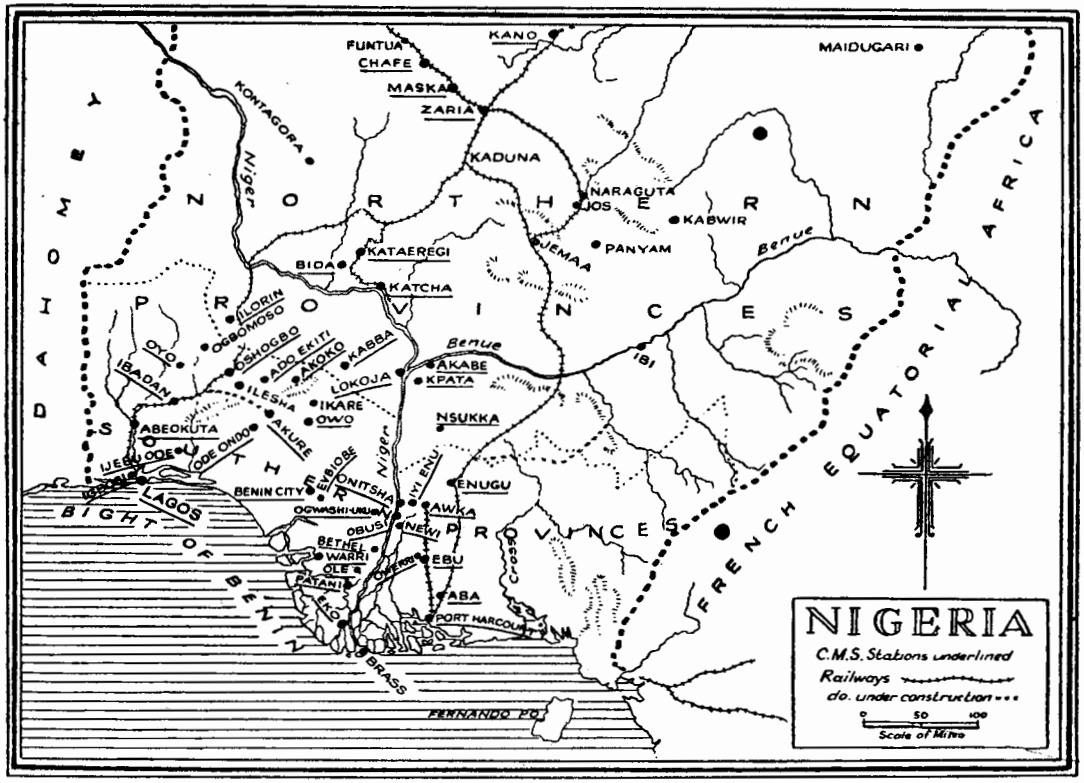
W. WILSON CASH

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS


JERUSALEM
Cairo
EGYPT & THE SUDAN
Nile
Niger
GAMBIA-PORTUGUESE
Gambia
Portuguese Guinea
ACCRA
LAGOS
NIGER
Lagos
UPPER NILE
Congo
MOMBASA
CENTRAL TANGANYIKA
Mombasa
Dar es Salaam
NYASALAND
N. RHODESIA
S. RHODESIA
MADAGASCAR
OMARALAND
KIMBERLEY & KURUMAN
PRETORIA
ZULULAND
GEORGE
ST. JOHN'S KAFFRARIA
Cape Town
AFRICA
Showing Dioceses


FUNTUA
CHAFE
MASKA
ZARIA
KANO
MAIDUGARI
KONTAGORA
Niger
KADUNA
NARAGUTA
JOS
KABWIR
PANYAM
JEMAA
Benue
BIDA
KATAEREGI
KATCHA
ILORIN
OSOMOSO
OSHOGBO
ADO EKITI
AKOKO
KABBA
OYO
IBADAN
ILESHA
IKARE
LOKOJA
AKABE
KPATA
ABEOKUTA
AKURE
OWO
NSUKKA
IJEBU ODE
IJEBU ONDO
EMBIOSE
ONITSHA
IVI BENU
ENUGU
BENIN CITY
AWKA
LAGOS
OGWASHI-UKU
OBUSI
NEWI
BIGHT OF BENIN
BETHEL
WARRI
EBU
OLE
PATANI
ABA
PORT HARCOURT
CALABAR
BRASS
FERNANDO PO
181
DAHOMEY
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
NORTHERN PROVINCES
SOUTHERN PROVINCES
NIGERIA
C.M.S. Stations underlined
Railways
do. under construction
0 50 100
Scale of Miles

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST FURROW

" One watches and listens in the tawny furrowlands for the tread of the myriads whose lives have gone to the making of them."
—*Mary Webb*

THE West Africa history of the C.M.S. is an epic of partnership. It is the story of African and European missionaries, men and women in the C.M.S. ranks on the field and at home with a great capacity for self-giving; pioneers and road makers, who built out of most unlikely circumstances and environment a highway for our God into the life of the people of West Africa.

Crowther, the slave boy who became a bishop—this is the dominant figure in the epic. In him we see an African hero of the Faith; a slave who came out of bondage into the glorious liberty of Christ's free men, who shared the joyous freedom of his new life with his own countrymen, and showed a world that had grown used to slavery the power of Christ to set free the African to be his best and truest self. From bondage to Christian leadership: here was the fulfilment of the deep longing expressed by the slave in one of his plantation songs:—

> One of these days I shall be free,
> Christ the Lord will set me free.

In the life and character of Crowther we trace the spirit and purpose of C.M.S. adventure in West Africa. Its missionaries brought to the slave the Gospel of Christ with its promise of a new and fuller life, and of the power by which it could be realized.

Where and when the apostle went forth

In order to picture a series of scenes in the life of this central figure we must first consider when and where the stage is set.

The setting is a wide area beginning with the Slave Coast and Sierra Leone, and extending throughout Nigeria —to the Yoruba country, then up the great River Niger, to the very gate of the Moslem north. The time, being the span of Crowther's long life, extends from early till late in the nineteenth century.

The story opens at a time when the west coast of Africa was practically unexplored; its people were living in the darkness of isolation and tribal warfare, a darkness deepened by the nightmare of slavery. Forces of great import for the future of Africa were beginning to take shape in Europe and America. England with her maritime supremacy occupied a leading position as a European power; the destiny of the African was largely in her hands. It was well for the future of West Africa that at this very moment the conscience of England was being aroused on the question of slavery, and that the Evangelical Revival had led to the awakening of a new missionary impulse and the growth of missionary societies, including the C.M.S. Other new forces, destined to affect West Africa at a later stage, were also being let loose in England during the boyhood of Crowther. Inventive minds were experimenting with steam, forging weapons of power. The Industrial Revolution was ushering in a new civilization, revolutionizing economic conditions and gradually creating a new demand for the raw materials of commerce which the Africa of the future was to take her share in providing.

From slavery to freedom

Crowther stands against that nineteenth-century background. In the opening scene he figures as a slave boy. Captured by Moslem slave raiders and torn from his

Yoruba home away in the Lagos hinterland, young Adjai is one of a cargo of nearly 200 slaves huddled on the deck of a Portuguese slave ship whose white sails are trimmed for a far-off destiny—the ports of Spanish America. Already Adjai has passed through the hands of several masters, bartered for tobacco, rum, and other articles; "a veteran in slavery" with no hope of ever seeing his country again.

But daybreak sees the dawn of his freedom. The slaver is captured by two British men-of-war cruising the shores of the Gulf of Guinea on the look out for slave ships. And on this spring morning of 1822 Adjai stands on the deck of the British ship in Lagos lagoon, no longer slave but free.

It is the tale of two ships—a slaver and a British man-of-war. The Portuguese slave ship pictures the greed and selfishness of European nations (Britain not excepted) who for the past two centuries had exploited the west coast of Africa in their search first for slaves to sell in foreign markets, and later for cheap labour to meet the demand of the colonies. Throughout the eighteenth century British interest in the African had centred in the slave-carrying trade. In 1771, 192 ships cleared from Liverpool, London, Bristol, and Lancaster to carry a total of 47,146 slaves.

What then of the British ship which set free Crowther and the rest of the cargo of slaves shipped from Lagos by the Portuguese slave dealers? That British man-of-war patrolling the shores of the Slave Coast symbolizes the force at work making for emancipation. After a long and arduous struggle Wilberforce had captured English public opinion, and when his Abolition Act of 1807 became law the British Navy was charged with the task of enforcing it. Sierra Leone was chosen as the base of operations. As a result of British vigilance in African waters, captured slave ships were brought in custody to Sierra Leone at the rate of one a fortnight, and every year some 2000 slaves in a pitiful condition were landed, like Crowther, at Freetown. That experimental colony of freed slaves was born of the vision

and enthusiasm of Christian emancipators, who declared: "While we breathe we will never abandon the cause, till that thing, that chattel, is reinstated in all the privileges of man."

Learning to use his freedom

The next two scenes in Crowther's life show him learning to use his new found freedom. Watch him running down the streets of the little town of Bathurst, a few miles from Freetown, begging a halfpenny from a fellow African and returning in triumph with an alphabet card of his very own to his new home with the C.M.S. schoolmaster and his wife. Within six months of his landing as a liberated slave, Crowther is able to read his New Testament.

A few years later he is a student in training for the ministry at Fourah Bay College. He is writing his first letter to the C.M.S. Secretaries at Salisbury Square, to thank the Society for its generous care of him during the early days of his career. It is a letter full of vision and the spirit of service. "I am desiring to be instructed by God's Holy Spirit," he writes, "that I may soon rise up and become a teacher to the others. I have hope that Africa will soon stretch forth her hands unto God, and that joy and gladness shall be found in her. . . . My kind respects to all who care for the Africans. And I would comfort them that they need not be in despair that Africa shall not return."

That letter was received at Salisbury Square with great joy and thanksgiving. A freed slave writing with burning zeal as an African apostle of Jesus Christ: here was living proof that God was vindicating the daring faith of the C.M.S. founders whose earliest project had been a ministry to the freed slaves. And as they gave thanks for Crowther, the C.M.S. Committee would go back in thought and remembrance to the Instructions delivered to the first two C.M.S. missionaries sent out to the West Coast in 1804:

" We desire to make Western Africa the best remuneration in our power for its manifold wrongs." The way that the founders had sought to make reparation for the slave trade was by sharing with the African their experience of the love of Christ and the wonder of His Gospel.

Think what that ministry to liberated slaves " of flotsam and jetsam extraction " involved. " If ever I have seen wretchedness," wrote one of the early pioneers on arriving in Sierra Leone, " it has been here to-day; these poor depraved people are indeed the offscouring of Africa. And who knows whether the Lord will not make His converting power known among them? With Him nothing is impossible."

And now, the C.M.S. Committee went on to reflect, the liberated African community of Sierra Leone was quite transformed. Here was able and adventurous young Crowther conceiving a mission to his own people. They shared his conviction that Africa would be won by the service of her own sons, and the appalling death rate among the Society's missionaries in Sierra Leone[1] strengthened their certainty of the importance of a native ministry. Hence they had established Fourah Bay College (on the site of an old disused slave house) as a training ground for African evangelists and catechists. Its first product, in the person of Crowther, must have done much to reassure those who were inclined to distrust the African's capacity for responsible leadership.

The schoolmaster turns explorer

The next picture shows Crowther free of a wider world, the schoolmaster become explorer. He is on board the *Albert*, a British steamship, sailing into the heart of the great unknown, beyond and behind the coast. Through the C.M.S. there has come to him the honour of accompanying the government expedition up the newly-discovered

[1] Fifty-three missionaries died in the first twenty years.

Niger. Its object is to open up the Niger district to commerce and Christian civilization with a view to checking the traffic in slaves in which the up-country kings and chiefs still indulged.

Watch this young African explorer making jottings in his diary as the ship steams up the lordly Niger, hemmed in by thick mangrove swamps or forests of palm and bamboo; then recall those untravelled days when as a boy, torn away from his home and carried into slavery, he had come to the bank of a large river. "It terrified me exceedingly," he had written then, "for I had never seen anything like it in my life. . . . Nothing terrified me more than the river and the thought of going into another world." Now, as the *Albert* sails past native plantations and primitive little villages, Crowther has a foot in two worlds. He knows, as no other member of the expedition, the darkness of his own people, their haunts of cruelty, of human sacrifice and inter-tribal warfare. But he also knows the enlightenment and spiritual freedom which Christ gives. In him there is being set free the treasure of a people for whom the Kingdom waits.

African clergyman and pioneer missionary

That was the certainty of many Christian folk in England for whom Crowther's ordination in 1843 was one of the great events of the year. There being no bishop in West Africa, Crowther had to come to England to take Holy Orders. The first African in modern times to receive ordination—here was a notable event indeed in the C.M.S. epic.

The next scene opens with the arrival back in Freetown of "the black man who has been crowned a minister"—as the phrase runs. A tremendous welcome awaits him from troops of friends who like himself had once been slaves but now are free. The joy of these African Christians is voiced by an aged catechist: "Truly may one say that

the Lord is now opening a way into the interior of Africa by choosing an African, the Rev. Samuel Crowther, to be a minister to bear His Name among his countrymen." The Rev. Samuel Adjai Crowther—a minister in the Church of Christ, bearing a new name given to him in baptism, the name of one of the early members of the C.M.S. Committee, and in the very centre of the title, Adjai, the African name to which he always remained true.

Before long Crowther was to begin his first missionary tour. News had reached the liberated Africans in Sierra Leone belonging to the Egba tribe of the Yoruba race (Crowther's own tribe) that their scattered fellow-countrymen had found a secure dwelling-place under an enlightened chief in a new settlement called Abeokuta. A wholesale exodus of the Egba people then took place, and the C.M.S. decided to establish a mission at Abeokuta.

We next see Crowther, together with Henry Townsend, a young C.M.S. missionary, standing before the Egba king, Sagbua, in the public council room at Abeokuta. As an Egba, Crowther is the spokesman; he explains to this excited company of chiefs and people the purpose for which he and Henry Townsend have come. The ex-slave has become a Christian missionary to his own people. This council meeting holds the promise of the future Yoruba Church.

A highway for the Gospel

Throughout the years Crowther shapes as an African St. Paul. Instead of the Roman road, the great waterway of the Niger fills his vision as a highway for the Gospel. In 1854 a second expedition for the purpose of introducing trade and Christian civilization to the riverside tribes was planned by the Scottish merchant prince, Macgregor Laird, who asked the C.M.S. to allow Crowther and an Ibo interpreter to join the party. And on that river journey of the *Pleiad* Crowther's sure touch with chiefs and people,

his solid grind at the preparatory work of reducing their languages to writing, his tactful and sympathetic approach to the Moslem, his quickness to see the possibilities in this and that district as a missionary centre, mark him out not only as a pioneer but as a master builder.

With the same eagerness that the Church in Antioch heard of Paul's first pioneer journey must the C.M.S. Secretaries at Salisbury Square have welcomed Crowther's report which urged the immediate undertaking of a river mission. "God has provided instruments to begin the work," he wrote, "in the liberated Africans of Sierra Leone who are natives on the bank of this river. If this time is allowed to pass away, the generation of liberated teachers who are immediately connected with the present generation of the natives of the interior will pass away with it."

The time was not allowed to pass, and in 1856 Crowther, with a band of African workers, was entrusted with the planting of the Niger Mission. The names of many a place, beginning with Onitsha, which Crowther and his fellow-workers touched during this pioneer adventure are well known to us to-day as centres of Christian influence.

Bishop Crowther—an African St. Paul

Pioneer and master builder: the qualities of both were combined in this "little man with nerves of steel, whom incessant work did not seem to wear, intellectually alert and vivid, always on the tiptoe of new achievements and full of hopeful faith." Before long the intrepid pioneer with his vision of the Niger as a highway for our God, was called to be the master builder of the diocese which his pioneer work had created.

The C.M.S. Committee knew how difficult it was for European missionaries to live on the Niger. In the mind of the great C.M.S. statesman, Henry Venn, this African Mission called for an African bishop, and he was convinced that the hour and the man had come together. Unbounded

interest was aroused throughout England by the announcement that the Queen's licence had been issued to the Primate, empowering him to consecrate "Our trusty and well-beloved Samuel Adjai Crowther, clerk in holy orders," to be a bishop of the Church of England in the Niger Territories.

On June 29, 1864, Crowther is the central figure in a great service. Thirteen hundred years ago that spot was the birthplace of one branch of English Christianity; this service was to mark it in a special sense as the cradle of African Christianity. In the presence of a vast congregation on this St. Peter's Day, Crowther, the one-time slave, is consecrated Bishop of the Niger Territories. On the rock of his sure faith and living experience of spiritual freedom was the Church of Christ to be built in Nigeria, and all the forces of heathenism could not prevail against it. Among his many friends present is the one who first set his feet in the path of freedom—the British admiral who forty-two years before had rescued him from the slave ship in Lagos lagoon.

Crowther returned to the Niger as head of a hard enterprise. As we trace the missionary journeys of this African St. Paul, his ceaseless travels through his great diocese by canoe, trading ship, or gunboat, confirming new disciples, making friends with troublesome chiefs, facing the dark and difficult problems thrown up by gross heathenism and by the moral weakness of the infant churches, we can almost hear him using Paul's own words to the Corinthian Christians: "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen. . . . Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." And just as Paul rejoiced to have as his companion his "son" Timothy, so Crowther had as constant companion on his missionary journeys his own son, Dandeson, now well known as the Archdeacon of the Niger Delta.

The call to partnership

In all his travels, toils, and sufferings, Crowther was inspired by one dominant purpose—the establishment of a native Church in West Africa with a native clergy, trained and equipped to minister to their own people. The early stage in the working out of that ideal had been accomplished by African enterprise and effort. Crowther had achieved what no European could ever have done. But the next stage, as Crowther himself realized, called for the partnership of African and European. The rapid and extensive growth of the work soon revealed the urgent need for constant supervision of these very young Christians, of the training and equipping of African catechists and teachers, of developing work among the women and girls. In the building up of the Christian life which had to be lived in the midst of heathenism, the gifts and experience of the European missionary were needed to reinforce the work of African Christians. Moreover, political events on the West Coast were beginning to affect the work of the Niger Mission and to create a new situation. By the 'eighties the Niger had become a highway for commerce. White men were stationed at the trading posts opened up by the Royal Niger Company, and the fact that European and African were thus being brought into contact through trade and commerce made it all the more necessary for Europeans to be added to the missionary staff.

It was a new partnership which the aged Bishop Crowther welcomed. Our closing scene in his life may well be the C.M.S. valedictory meeting in London in January, 1890, a year before his death. In response to the call from Africa a fit of "African fever" was passing over C.M.S. supporters, and for the first time the Society had ventured to engage Exeter Hall for a farewell gathering.

The large hall is crowded to overflowing. Sixty undergraduates have come up in a body from Cambridge. On the platform are seated the venerable African bishop and the young English recruits who are going forth together.

The meeting begins, and all eyes are turned expectantly towards Bishop Crowther as he rises to speak. He is acclaimed as the man who above all others shows in his own person what Africans may become. He speaks of the new plans for the future development of the work on the Niger, and after him the recruits speak in turn. The aged Bishop is not returning to his great diocese alone; there are to be new partners in the hard enterprise.

" In harness together "

From pioneering to partnership—Crowther's long life spanned the first and the beginning of the second stage in the history of C.M.S. work in West Africa. Partnership suggests a long process. It is not expressed in just the same way to-day as it was in the closing years of Crowther's life at the end of the nineteenth century, because growth and development widen and deepen its meaning. Here is a picture of partnership to-day.

When Crowther went back as bishop to the banks of the Niger, he drew all his clergy from Sierra Leone, and the Niger Delta Pastorate which was formed subsequently, continued to be staffed by Sierra Leoneans. In 1933, the year which celebrated the centenary of the Abolition of Slavery, Bishop John, a Sierra Leonean of the third generation, was consecrated Assistant Bishop on the Niger. He shares the responsibilities of the Delta districts with a European assistant bishop, Bishop Gelsthorpe, who speaks thus of their adventure in partnership: " Co-operation with Bishop John has been of the happiest. I hope and believe that the aim that we have, to reveal an example of close and happy co-operation of black and white, is being accomplished. We both keep in mind the Christmas card we received from the Rev. H. D. and Mrs. Hooper of two horses, a black and a white, in harness together, pulling a plough."

" In harness together, pulling a plough," preparing

together the African soil for the growth of the fruit of the Spirit. This kind of partnership between African and European is a fine, spiritual adventure. It is a living, growing relationship which is constantly making new demands and challenging fresh discoveries. Each stage of growth introduces fresh calls and claims upon the European for help.

As we look out on the four areas where the C.M.S. is at work in West Africa to-day, we shall see that its real adventure lies here. The boundaries of geography, the four walls of institutions, of school and college, hospital and welfare centre, may suggest a flat-surface kind of picture. But think of them in terms of this Christian adventure in partnership and they then become the setting of a new and splendid chapter not of dull prose but of the epic story which began with Crowther.

The C.M.S. adventure in partnership overseas calls for an adventure in understanding on the part of those at home. The purpose of this book is to give a broad-brush impression of the task which faces African Christian and C.M.S. missionary " in harness together, pulling a plough."

CHAPTER II

SIERRA LEONE: KEEPING STEP

"I stopped there in my field and looked up. . . . My dominant feeling, if I can at all express it, was of a strange new friendliness, a warmth as though these hills, this field about me, the woods, had suddenly spoken to me and caressed me. It was as though I had been accepted in membership, as though I was now recognized, after long trial, as belonging here."—*David Grayson*

THE little group of C.M.S. missionaries in Sierra Leone, looking out on the field with which the Society has been connected for 130 years, are conscious of just such a growing sense of fellowship as Grayson describes, between the educational institutions which they represent and the long-established Sierra Leone Church which they are seeking to serve.

Picture first the field of to-day's adventure in partnership in Sierra Leone. The diocese is immense in its range, having as its nucleus a colony the size of the Isle of Wight, but also including a protectorate the size of Scotland and a vast expanse of territory in north-west Africa as far as Morocco. What a task for the bishop in charge! He is the Rt. Rev. G. W. Wright, formerly a C.M.S. missionary in East Africa. Entrusted with one of the most difficult and exacting tasks of any Christian leader in Africa, the Bishop, since 1923, has continued to give a vigorous and inspiring lead in Sierra Leone. With unfailing hopefulness and enthusiasm he has initiated and encouraged new spiritual ventures for the strengthening and enriching of the Church's life. As chief pastor of this great territory he has been set free recently from the claims of one large area by the carving out of Gambia-Pongas (the middle portion of the original diocese) as a separate diocese.

For practical purposes the colony, that tiny though vastly-important fragment of this great diocese, can be visualized as Freetown with its population of 56,000, most of whom are the descendants of the freed slaves of Crowther's day. From earliest times Freetown, on account of its fine harbour, has been regarded as a splendid base of operations by European explorers, pirates, and traders. The town is built within the lovely frame of the low range of green hills sloping to the sea, their margin fretted by numerous creeks and bays. It is a town with one crowded century of history: Freetown, where one hundred years ago boat loads of released victims of the slave trade learned to cast aside their misery and their crudities, and being reinstated in the privileges of man began to show a dawning sense of enterprise; to-day a civilized district with fine public buildings, a wireless station, and macadamized streets, an up-to-date centre where progressive young men and women, eagerly seeking for fuller life, are face to face with the difficult social problems of a modern seaport town. It is in this town that we find the C.M.S. making its chief contribution to the life of the Sierra Leone Church. Its three advanced educational institutions in Freetown are always seeking to direct the thought and the influence of the Church in the colony outwards to its great mission field —the protectorate with its largely untouched pagan tribes. Fourah Bay College, the Annie Walsh School for girls, and the Grammar School (under an African principal) do not exist to be cramming shops for examination passes. Their aim is that the work of staff and students shall be governed by the thought of direct Christian service to the African communities within and beyond the boundaries of the colony.

"The house of one hundred windows"

In a magnificent position on the horn of a small bay stands a massive four-story building whose original structure is said to have been built from the timbers of the

slave ships which were broken up in the bay. To the Temnes of the protectorate this impressive building is known as the house of one hundred windows. To hundreds of past students who have carried its traditions far and wide into the service of church and school, legislative hall, social and civic life it is known as Alma Mater. And by its thirty present students who are drawn from all four British colonies on the West Coast, Fourah Bay College is regarded with no less pride and affection.

Through many vicissitudes and steep places, with failures to discourage and triumphs to cheer, Fourah Bay has been building up its Christian tradition for over a century. In the words of a former African tutor: "Oft times has she found herself in the fire of tribulation, but phœnix-like she has ever risen from the ashes to manifest in still greater splendour the living forces which lie within her."

In the Jubilee and Centenary volume of the college (published in 1930) there appears an impressive record headed: "Some distinguished and prominent Alumni of Fourah Bay College," together with a portrait gallery illustrating the many different types of service to which the college has sent out its men. The list includes four bishops, five archdeacons, seven colonial chaplains, four canons, some 300 clergy and catechists, seventy educationists, thirty-seven members of the legal profession, eighteen medicals, sixteen government officials, and no less than fifty-three who have distinguished themselves in post-graduate courses in Durham and other British universities. These men have gone forth from Fourah Bay to serve their country in widely-different and distant parts of West Africa.

In 1933 a notable event took place which carries us back in thought to Fourah Bay's first student—Bishop Crowther. Towards the end of the year Archdeacon Crowther (the son of the Bishop) visited Fourah Bay and generously presented to the college the robes, parchment, and seals

of his recently-conferred honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. Writing of this great occasion, the principal, Canon Horstead, said :—

His presence among us was a great inspiration, and few who were present are likely to forget the day in which he spoke to us from an agile mind and a humble heart. We are planning to place his gifts in one of the college rooms so that these presents may suggest to future generations the man to whom they were first given, and his noble work which occasioned the gifts; so may they inspire the men of to-morrow to give with heart, head, and hand, as this pillar of the Christian Church has done.

" An agile mind and a humble heart "—the qualities of a true leader. Fourah Bay College exists for the training of that kind of leadership. As another missionary has written :—

The learning of leadership by the African is conditioned by his learning the method of the Cross, as it is for us all. He has to learn that it is not by ruling but by serving that one gains the right or the power to lead. Undoubtedly the African has the mental ability, but he needs the moral power which can only be gained at the Cross of our Lord. If we can bring him there, surely we may safely leave him.

Where leaders are trained

Through Fourah Bay College, for which it supplies the principal, the C.M.S., working in co-operation with the Methodist Missionary Society, is training Christian leaders, clerical and lay, for a large part of West Africa. The college, which is affiliated to Durham University, is to-day the " top layer " of advanced education in West Africa. It is the chief means in Sierra Leone by which the Christian Church is taking its part in training African leaders, by giving to a body of young people the right kind of education which will fit them for citizenship in the New Africa. Its importance is recognized by the Government as well as

by the Church. Frequent requests come to the principal from different parts of the coast for students who can take up positions of responsibility and influence, and an ever-increasing number of trained Africans will be needed to fill the posts created by the growth and extension of the Church.

Among the rising number of students admitted in 1934 was the first woman undergraduate—a teacher from the Annie Walsh School, who having worked up to matriculation standard, entered for the University Arts course. Though at Fourah Bay the men have a lead over the women of 108 years, we may reflect that in the light of English history it is a comparatively short period, for Oxford and Cambridge (even if we only travel as far back in their long history as the Renaissance) have given a 500-year lead to the men!

The same year which saw the entry of the first woman student at Fourah Bay was also marked by the admission of three students in training for the ministry of the Sierra Leone Church. This is an important landmark. Though in the past Fourah Bay has trained many men for the ministry in West Africa, this little group represents the first to be trained for the local Church since 1908, when the C.M.S. scholarships for ministerial training were withdrawn from Fourah Bay. The only men to enter the ministry of the Sierra Leone Church during the long period since then were men on the staff of the C.M.S. Grammar School, or older catechists whose value had been proved by long service, and who at an advanced age were given some simple training. The releasing of a grant for the training of clergy has opened the way once more for Fourah Bay to strengthen the life of the Church through this most important channel of service. The Sierra Leone Church, having paid from its small resources for the training of three young men up to matriculation standard at the Grammar School, now has the joy of seeing the three in training for the ministry at Fourah Bay College.

Training women citizens

Though it was not until 1933 that the first woman undergraduate entered Fourah Bay, yet for nearly a century the C.M.S. has been the pioneer of women's education in Freetown. In 1845 a girls' boarding school was founded, later to be known by a title which did not sound strange in those days—the "Annie Walsh Female Institution." To-day the fine spirit of this Christian school is contributing something vital to the life of the Church and the community in the present complex conditions of modern town life.

Since the majority of the girls leave school to live at home the school seeks to provide them with knowledge and interests which will enlarge their daily life. The domestic science branch of the work is being developed, and the school now boasts a well-equipped room with the type of utensils and ovens in use in the average Freetown home. The great problem which the school has to face is the scarcity of employment for educated girls. Many long for a fuller life than their homes offer, but the financial depression has held up developments, particularly in the medical service, which might have given employment to some. Miss Pole, the principal of this large secondary school of over 200 pupils, pays a tribute to the loyalty and the Christian influence of the African teachers and the growing sense of responsibility among the senior girls, and then goes on to indicate the background against which progress must be set :—

Our difficulties are those common to all working in Freetown —the divorce between religious observances and morality ; the low standard of home life and therefore of ideals ; the suspicions and jealousies of little groups ; the criticism without true knowledge. It is the cleansing power of God's Holy Spirit to convict and cleanse and empower all who acknowledge His sway, that is the need of the Church and colony.

The windows open outward

"The house of one hundred windows"—it is a suggestive title when we think of those windows opening outwards, directing the thoughts of staff and students to the needs of their fellow-countrymen beyond the bounds of the colony.

Picture a group of C.M.S. members of staff from Fourah Bay College and the Annie Walsh School, together with a few of their African colleagues, journeying up country into the Church's mission field. Their visit has been planned to show that the colony really is interested in the protectorate and in the problems of the lonely up-country workers—those thirty-four African missionaries of the Sierra Leone Church who are struggling to carry on the work which is essential to the very life of the Mother Church if it is not to be swamped by the surrounding heathenism. They come to the end of a day's train journey at an important centre in the Mende country, and there they hold a vacation course for those lonely African workers, twenty Anglicans and five Methodists. For the first time those workers are brought together in fellowship for the sharing of their problems and for a few days' training.

That going forth in friendship to share with the protectorate some of the benefits which the colony enjoys, has led to a further step in understanding. Since all the educational work in Freetown is in English, C.M.S. missionaries have not been asked to learn a native language, but they are now coming to realize that there is little chance of inspiring the members of the Sierra Leone Church to evangelize the up-country tribes through their own vernacular if they themselves make no effort to acquire it. The fact that the first Temne student has entered Fourah Bay for training not only gives promise of a leader well equipped for service among his own people; it also gives the principal and his wife a splendid opportunity of learning the vernacular and of gaining

insight into the mind and outlook of the tribe which this Temne student represents.

Stirring the "home" Church

Because the windows of school and college open outwards to the protectorate, they also make for clearer vision of the needs of the Church in the colony. The sense of responsibility for the missionary work in the protectorate has to be shared with the whole Church in the colony, that increasingly its windows may open outwards from the kind of parochial contentment which many an English parish shares. In order to arouse interest and to obtain support it is necessary, just as here at home, to teach the Christian people in the colony at the coast about the needs of the up-country mission field. Very many of them have been brought up and have lived all their lives in the civilized and nominally Christian environment of Freetown, and have never been beyond the area of streets and shops and 'buses. Their own mission field, though not far distant, is to many of them a foreign land. It is interesting to note that recently a Sierra Leonean, in charge of a Freetown parish, came to England to study medicine in order that he might return as a missionary to the protectorate.

In 1932 the project was formed of holding a missionary exhibition in order to show church people in Freetown the nature and needs of their own mission field. The lead was taken by a C.M.S. educationist on the staff of Fourah Bay and an African, who worked together as co-secretaries with the hearty support of the various church committees. Groups of stewards were organized in each of the "home" parishes, and each parish was put in touch with a mission station up country. All sections of the Church were drawn into the common task, and the C.M.S. schools responded splendidly to the lead given in closer fellowship. The Annie Walsh School girls exhibited apparatus prepared for one of the mission schools; Grammar School boys staged

a missionary play; Fourah Bay College, with the help of other workers from the parishes, planned a pageant to illustrate the history of the Sierra Leone Church and its missionary work.

As a result of that exhibition the African missionaries went back to their lonely stations cheered and encouraged; many in the parishes who hitherto had taken little interest in missionary work were filled with new enthusiasm, and an increasing number of visits have been paid to the mission stations by church people from Freetown during the holidays.

The adventure of Bunumbu

In Sierra Leone the need has long been felt for the provision of the right kind of training for teachers and catechists at work in its up-country mission field. Look first through the eyes of one of our missionaries at the kind of material which is at hand, ready to be trained for the work—calling the C.M.S. to share in a new venture.

In an up-country district of the protectorate the missionary came to a chief's town and gave her message to the people in picture and song. As she spoke to the crowd of Mende folk gathered in the large courtyard she was struck by the fact that many times over the interpreter hesitated because he could find no Mende word to express the truth she would convey to the people.

The next evening she came upon a lively scene, not far distant. By the light of a full moon, in a setting of palm trees and brown huts, a number of boys were gathered in a night school, and an interested audience of men, women, and children looked on. The leader, a Mende lad, began singing Psalm cxxxvi in his own tongue: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. . . ." The light of the moon flooded the clearing as the chant continued: "To him that by wisdom made the heavens: . . . To him that made great lights: . . . The

sun to rule by day : . . . The moon and stars to rule by night : for his mercy endureth for ever." He broke away from the words of the psalm and began to praise God for all the things around him, and then for Jesus Christ. To the same rhythm he sang of the wonderful ways of his Lord's life. The spontaneous way in which he wove his own words into the rhythm, and the free movements of his hands and body as he sang, drew the others closer together in understanding as they joined in the refrain : " For his mercy endureth for ever."

With the thought of that young leader in mind the missionary goes on to reflect : " Surely that is how it must be. The African must evangelize the African. Our task is not to encourage him to imitate us in giving an identical witness ; it is to communicate to him a spirit which will make the best of his own heritage, because his qualities and endowments are coming under the influence of God's creative touch. God will use the best that we can give to produce the African's best."

That is the poetry which lies behind the prose-sounding calling of C.M.S. " institutional " work in divinity college or training school. So the opening of a training college for up-country teachers where such promising material as the Mende lad from the night school can develop powers of leadership and service is a really significant event. The Union College which was opened 200 miles inland at Bunumbu in 1933 marks the beginning of the training of men from the protectorate tribes for work among those tribes. Moreover, this union college in which three missions are co-operating (the C.M.S., the Methodist Church, and the United Brethren) is evidence of the growing spirit of mutual confidence and fellowship among the missions.

Bunumbu is a very young college with an uphill task before it, but it is a venture full of promise. Picture its first year students in training—nine boys representing three different missions and three tribes, though all able to speak

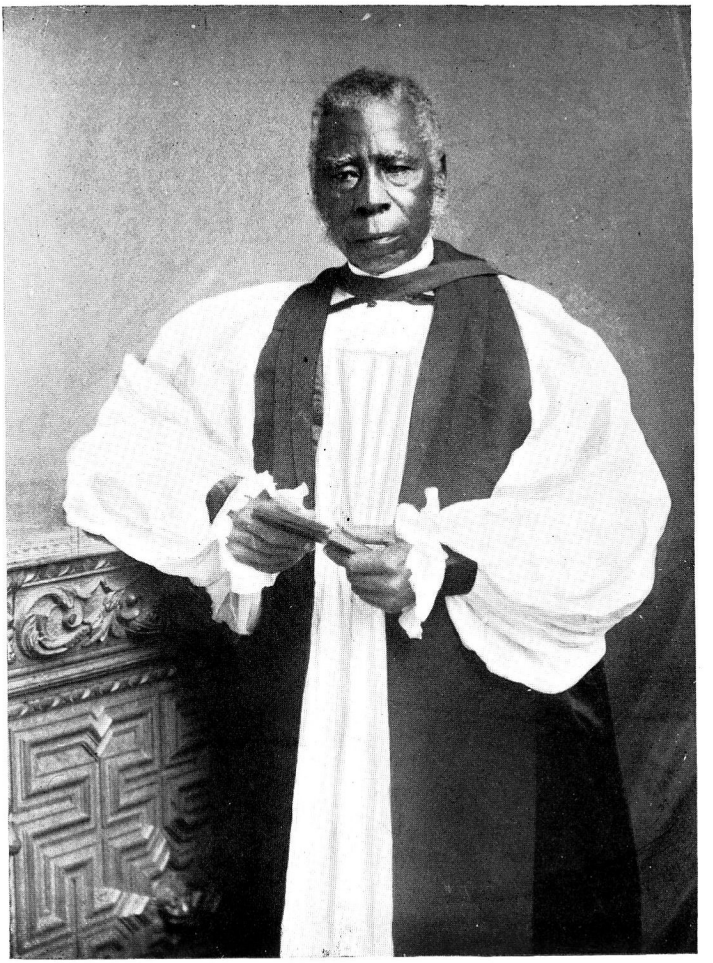
Mende. "There are 'Boanerges' among this little group of disciples, and it is no easier for Mendes, Temnes, and Vais to live in Christian brotherhood than it was for zealots and tax gatherers to join in one family." These boys are given a thorough course of Bible study, with training in worship and village evangelism, a simple and practical course in teaching methods in the vernacular, and a certain amount of training in agriculture and handicrafts.

On one occasion the boys had an unexpected day's holiday. The C.M.S. member of the staff met some of them returning from a walk. "Have you had a good time?" he asked. "Yes, a very good time," was the reply. "We found a village where they had never had a Christian service, so we preached the Gospel to them and had prayers, and they asked us to come again." Thus Bunumbu also has its windows opening outwards.

A growing partnership

We have seen some of the outstanding ways in which C.M.S. missionaries, under the inspiring leadership of the Bishop, are adventuring in friendship with the Sierra Leone Church, tackling the common task "in harness together."

"I stopped there in my field and looked up." So the little group of missionaries pause to take stock—to look out upon the Sierra Leone field and to mark whether the plough has driven a straight furrow and well-turned corners. They remember that they are the successors of those who in the early days gladly gave their lives to the making of these tawny furrowlands. They recall with pride and thanksgiving those 109 missionaries who, within the first twenty-five years of the Society's work in Sierra Leone, were courageously willing to lay down their lives that the West Coast of Africa, known to all the world as the White Man's Grave, might become the birthplace of the Church in Africa. "They can see ploughland red in the sunset, as though stained with the blood of generations."



The Rt. Rev. S. A. Crowther, D.D.

A raw material of commerce, palm oil

CHAPTER III

THE YORUBA COUNTRY: FRUIT OF THE FIELD

> "Slow up the hill the plough team plod,
> Old Callow at the task of God. . . .
> Turning a stubborn clay to fruit,
> His eyes for ever on some sign
> To help him plough a perfect line."
>
> —*John Masefield*

TO follow to-day in the footsteps of Crowther, from Sierra Leone to the Yoruba country and then up the River Niger is to see the then and now of the C.M.S. West Africa epic come alive in an amazing contrast. It is to see the team of African Christians and C.M.S. missionaries busy at the task of God, "turning a stubborn clay to fruit."

As we turn from the little colony of Sierra Leone to the mighty colony of Nigeria (separated from Freetown by 1200 miles of the Gulf of Guinea coast), we enter an immense field in which the C.M.S. is the only Anglican missionary society at work. Nigeria is the second greatest in population of all the colonies and dominions of the British Empire. It has three times as many people as the whole continent of Australia, and 250 languages are spoken within its borders. The two dioceses within it—the Lagos Diocese and the Niger Diocese—each has about twice as many churches as an average English diocese. The Bishop on the Niger views the task in these terms: "It is the biggest thing there is, to frame and fashion the life of a new Church, and thus the life of a new nation—for in Nigeria the Church stands right in the vanguard of progress." The African point of view is put by Bishop Howells, Assistant Bishop of Lagos :—

We have been made doubly free, both from physical and

spiritual slavery, through the laudable efforts of those who took part in suppressing the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the early missionaries who preached the gospel of redemption to our forefathers. It is not too much, nor an exaggeration, to say that we are to-day what, under God, the C.M.S. has made us.

The people of the southern part of the Lagos Diocese are predominantly Yorubas, with an advanced political organization, large towns, and a ready response to the influence of western education. On the east, up the Niger River, the Ibos are scattered throughout the forests and waterways of the first stretches of the river. When once the ravages of the slave trade ceased, the Ibos seized the opportunity of grouping themselves in villages, thus gradually regaining their identity. They are a people of great promise, and have shown an eager readiness to accept and benefit by Christian teaching.

To begin with the C.M.S. Yoruba Mission—the southern portion of the vast Lagos Diocese.[1]

Crowther's dream comes true

In 1846 the partnership of African Christian and C.M.S. missionary began in the Yoruba country when Samuel Crowther and Henry Townsend established work together at Abeokuta. Let the Yoruba Christians speak for themselves of what that partnership has meant through the years. In an address of welcome in 1933 to their new Assistant Bishop and fellow-countryman, the Rt. Rev. A. B. Akinyele, they paid the following tribute :—

Christianity cannot lay claim to a century of existence in our Yoruba country; and yet within the eight or nine decades of missionary effort, Yorubaland has been able to produce five African assistant bishops of the Lagos Diocese, besides the illustrious and saintly Bishop Samuel Adjai Crowther, diocesan bishop. And should we not express eternal gratitude to God

1 Northern Nigeria, which comprises the other section of the diocese, is in every way a field apart, and claims a separate chapter.

for bringing us in contact with such a Christian and powerful organization as the Church Missionary Society who have lavished men, money, and material in bringing the light of the Gospel to us in West Africa, but particularly in the Yoruba country, and who up to the present moment are still carrying on extensive missionary work in the hinterland? When we reflect over the long list of devoted and selfless missionaries who have lived, worked, and in many cases died among us, and one of the fruits of whose labour must be regarded as culminating in the elevation and consecration of Your Lordship to the dignity of a bishop, we must raise our voices in praise and thanksgiving to heaven and exclaim: "Indeed, Ethiopia is stretching forth her hands unto God."

Through those closing words of thanksgiving echoes Crowther's own thought for the people expressed in his first letter to the C.M.S. at Salisbury Square a century before: "I have hope that Africa will soon stretch forth her hands unto God, and that joy and gladness shall be found in her."

There has been growth indeed through partnership. In places where only a few years ago not one Christian was to be found, more than a thousand people are now attending church. In the whole of the Yoruba country there is today a Christian community numbering some 163,000, owing its origin to the C.M.S., with two African assistant bishops and nearly eighty African clergy. The pastoral work is almost entirely undertaken by these African clergymen, each of whom is in charge of a district containing from twenty to ninety congregations.

The life history of an aged African pioneer in the Ekiti district is a striking illustration of the power of the Gospel. Torn from his home by slave raiders in 1870, Babamuboni became a Christian while living as a slave in Ibadan. Having obtained his release he resolved to go back as a missionary to his own people in the Ekiti district. In 1894 he preached the Gospel to the King of Ado; in 1934 he was among the crowd of Christians who welcomed to a

confirmation service at Ado the new African Bishop (Bishop Akinyele), the nephew of the man whom he himself had served in slavery.

Crowther's dream has indeed come true. In the words of Archdeacon Dallimore :—

> What hath God wrought in these forty years? A church in every village, thousands of baptized people, thousands confirmed. There is much to thank God for. There are indeed shortcomings in the Church. Yet thousands have found in Christ a Saviour from some at least of the evils of the heathen past and the changing present.

Amazing progress—and then in contrast a district which presents one of the toughest propositions with which the C.M.S. is faced in the Yoruba country: the great Benin district with its population of half a million, where the Rev. W. J. and Mrs. Payne, the only English Protestant missionaries, have long continued to carry on a remarkable work in spite of much opposition and constant disappointments. Thus while one missionary is seeking to cope with the problems of growth, another will be treading the hard and lonely way of the pioneer.

Yet even the uphill task in Benin city is not without signs of encouragement. Growing interest on the part of the African king has led him to give a very fine site for a girls' school. The project of a Christian school for girls offers wide scope to a woman educationist, for it represents a spiritual adventure to set up Christian standards in the midst of the prevailing low morality and absence of true home life. Besides offering a site for such a school, the king has set an example to his people by giving up idol sacrifices and publicly showing his goodwill to the Christian enterprise by attending the thirtieth anniversary service of the first permanent C.M.S. church in Benin city. Everywhere there is greater friendliness on the part of the chiefs than was formerly the case.

The Christian adventure in the town:

The Yoruba country is primarily a country of large towns with a distinct urban life and spirit—a fact which has had an important bearing on Christian development. The greater part of educational work is carried on in these towns. Large schools are situated in such centres as Abeokuta, Ibadan (the largest native city in the whole of Africa), Oshogbo, Ilesha, Ondo, and Owo. Educational problems in these large town schools are different from those of the bush schools in the country districts; for in the towns, modern western influences are intensified, life is much more sophisticated, and people are estranged from many of their old ways of life.

West African town life at its most advanced and progressive, with all its perils and difficulties as well as its promise, is typified by Lagos. The great port of Nigeria and the centre of government authority, Lagos is an up-to-date, cosmopolitan town which boasts more motor cars than the whole of the rest of West Africa. It is the headquarters of the diocese. Here a fine cathedral, the mother church and spiritual centre of the diocese, is growing up under skilled African workmanship to the design of an African architect—a costly enterprise in which thousands of African Christians throughout the diocese are taking a share. Most fittingly the east window is a memorial to Samuel Crowther, the pioneer African missionary to the Yoruba country.

(i) **Through the school**

Church life in the big towns has to face a crop of difficult and individual problems, and this is particularly true of Lagos. In such a town, where the wave of materialism is overwhelmingly strong, the C.M.S. has an important contribution to make, particularly through its schools which, including the primary schools, are giving a Christian education to over 2000 boys and girls. To quote the

principal of one of the most important schools: "The leaders of to-morrow are in our schools to-day, therefore we must build well." Many of the leading men of Lagos have received their education in the C.M.S. Grammar School, which stands high in local opinion. The Lagos Girls' School is still foremost among Nigerian girls' schools, though like the Grammar School it suffers from the fact that its buildings, which are in a busy corner of the town, are adapted for day-school work but not for boarders. What is badly needed is a boarding school (similar to that which has been opened for boys at Igbobi) on the outskirts of Lagos.

A glimpse of the inaugural service of the Old Girls' Association, which was held on April 30, 1934, helps one to see, through the eyes of the principal, something of the aim and purpose of this Christian school in modern Lagos:—

> Almost 200 attended, and we had a very inspiring service. It was a most encouraging sight to see so many educated women. One realized something of what the old school stood for, and of the enormous influence it had, and it also spoke of the possibilities for the future if only we can claim our present girls for Jesus Christ.
>
> The Rev. T. A. Ogunbiyi had been asked to give the address. "I see before me two women, white and black," he said, "with wings, and the wind in their wings." The wings he compared to education, and the wind to the Holy Spirit, without which education may be a curse and not a blessing.

Mrs. Oluwole, one of the foundation scholars of the school and widow of that splendid African leader, Bishop Oluwole, was appointed first president of the Association. Not the least part of the many-sided influence of Bishop and Mrs. Oluwole has been due to the witness of the fine Christian home which they built up together. Nigeria needs above all things Christian homes, and it is pre-eminently a Christian home maker whom the Lagos Old Girls' Association has chosen as its president.

(ii) Through the Bookshop

As education spreads it is essential that there should be an ever-increasing supply of good and attractive literature. A splendid story could be written of the venture known throughout Nigeria as the Lagos Bookshop—a business which began in the early days of the Mission by one of the missionaries advancing £5 to be expended on books for sale. To-day it has two large buildings with offices, shops, and warehouses; in addition to the European staff of eight, there are a hundred Africans working in the bookshop and printing press. This head depot, which provides literature of all kinds as well as religious publications, school books, and other materials directly connected with the needs of the Church, has seventeen branch depots spread over the diocese. In 1933 no less than 158,746 different publications in the Yoruba language were sold, including 12,412 Bibles and 4532 Prayer Books.

Being first in the field the C.M.S. Bookshop has to a great extent controlled the literature brought into the country, and it continues to be the chief medium for supplying the educated population of Nigeria—European and African—with reading matter. Through the Bookshop and its branches Christian influence is touching all the large tribes in Nigeria. Throughout the Southern Provinces it is possible for any one to obtain all the school or church material required within a day's journey of his own village.

It is a wonderful achievement that the Lagos Bookshop has proved capable not only of supporting the European staff necessary for its management, but also of making a considerable contribution to the work in the diocese. A European member of the staff, after his first year in Lagos, wrote :—

A member of the bookshop staff in Lagos, a seemingly prosaic and uneventful task! "C.M.S. Bookshop, Lagos." How swiftly the words become familiar, how soon the eager thoughts and anticipations of a new missionary are absorbed

into the steady flow of useful and efficient business routine, and how slowly the romance of the unromantic, woven into that name, begins to grow and deepen. . . . I think it is well worth while to have a hand in building, with Jesus Christ, the Africa of God's love.

The call to pioneering

Though Lagos may be regarded as the "Antioch" of the Yoruba Christians, the whole Yoruba country is not like Lagos with its organized church life and its educated laity. In striking contrast to the sophisticated coast town are the primitive villages in some districts of the interior, linked by the old paths trodden, not so long ago, by slave gangs bound for the coast. So remote is Lagos from some of these districts on the circumference of the diocese that their peculiar needs are sometimes in danger of being eclipsed by the rapid developments of the coastal area. During his long episcopate Bishop Melville Jones, whose head-quarters are at Lagos, has done all he could by tireless supervision to develop the sense of unity between Lagos, the spiritual centre of the diocese, and the remoter districts of the Christian fellowship. But the vast extent of the country which has come under the influence of the C.M.S. has made it difficult to develop a strong and vigorous central church life.

It is indeed a far cry from Lagos to the little-known district of Kukuruku in the Benin Province; from the modern coast town with its fine cathedral on the Marina, to one of the Kukuruku towns perched on the crest of a hill where a boy goes through the rocky streets blowing a horn to summon the people to the little church with its whitewashed walls and thatched roof. Only lately has the Gospel begun to penetrate to these isolated hill people who in the time of the tribal wars built their town on or near the top of an almost impregnable hill. The fact that each town has a distinct language or dialect of its own shows how isolated and self-contained they have been in the past. Yet even

this remote district is now feeling the influence of the tide of civilization and progress that is sweeping over Africa. The hill people are pressing into the stream of civilized life almost straight out of the age of rock-dwellings. Roads are opening up communication between the towns, and the people are finding a common medium of expression in the Yoruba language. They are open to outside influence as never before.

Now is our opportunity in Kukuruku. A small mass movement is taking place accompanied by not a little persecution, and young African evangelists—men of very little training but with sterling qualities of discipleship—are doing their best to teach the groups of converts and inquirers. So clear was the call of God that the Church took a bold step in 1933—a time of acute financial depression. It accepted the challenge of witness and oversight in the Kukuruku hills, and this newly-opened district has been placed under the care of an African superintendent.

Leaving room for false teachers

"The care of all the churches"—this growing responsibility is taxing to the uttermost the resources of African Christian and C.M.S. missionary. Though the Church is firmly rooted in the life of the country it has not by any means grown to maturity. "Unless these young churches are fed with the Word of Life," writes the Bishop of Lagos, "and are properly trained and looked after at this stage, they will not develop as they should, and nothing we can do later on will counterbalance neglect in these early days."

The lack of adequate shepherding for the rapidly-increasing Christian congregations opens the way for false teachers to enter in and possess the land. At a time when the Aladura, or Prophet Movement, with all its possibilities for good or evil, was in full swing, four out of the five large C.M.S. districts in the Yoruba country were left without a missionary superintendent. This movement

started in the Lagos Diocese in 1930, when a member of the Anglican Church named Joseph Babalola began publicly to pray and to preach in the Ekiti country, and the rumour quickly spread that this *aladura*, or man of prayer, was a prophet with power to work miracles. In spite of his inadequate knowledge of the Christian faith, this Yoruba prophet gripped the imagination of the people by his intense earnestness and his claim to possess miraculous powers of healing. In places where his preaching could be carefully followed up, good results followed. But a great danger lies in the fact that there is but a handful of European missionaries to superintend the large area affected by the movement, and to cope with the dangers which remain now that the first wave of enthusiasm is spent.

The thought that presses home is the people's eager response to the very elementary teaching of the aladura. Thousands of men and women were ready to undertake a long and arduous journey to avail themselves of the little he offered with such zeal and conviction. At the heart of this movement is a hunger for life—but we have delayed in meeting that need with the satisfying Gospel of Jesus Christ. "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat." That is the thought which burns within us as we reflect that reinforcements were not forthcoming from the Church at home to strengthen the hands of those who were longing to offer an eager people the gospel of life.

Both the discipline and the unity of the Church, which previously were affected by congregations breaking away on the question of polygamy, are again threatened by the recent formation of an aladura sect known as "The African Apostolic Church." The adherents of this schismatic church find easy access to baptism with little instruction or grounding in the Faith. Though the majority of the Christian people are not led away, the aftermath of the movement is a people unsettled as a result of the ferment and now beset on every hand by false teachers. Archdeacon Dallimore when travelling on a motor lorry

in a certain district began to discuss religion with the African sitting next to him, who turned out to be a Russellite. He was interested to hear the man's reply in Yoruba to the driver's question as to who the white man was: "*Esu ni.* C.M.S. *ni* (He is the devil; he is of the C.M.S.)!"

One of the great needs which the Prophet Movement, by its claim to heal, has revealed is the relief of sickness and suffering. A doctor is badly needed to follow up the work of the aladura. The success of Mrs. Dallimore's experiment in welfare training at Ado Ekiti shows that there is an open field in the Yoruba country for that essential element in the Christian witness—medical and welfare work. As yet the C.M.S. has no medical station in the Yoruba country; the need is recognized, but no recruit has been forthcoming. The Society owes a great debt to the Methodists and the American Baptists for the generous medical assistance afforded at their fine hospitals to patients sent in from our churches.

What partnership involves

As we look more closely at the team of African Christians and C.M.S. missionaries, busy at the task of God, turning the Yoruba soil to fruit, we discover a lack of adjustment in the harness. As in Sierra Leone, the Society's policy in the Yoruba country has been to devolve responsibility as rapidly as possible from the Mission to the Church. The system followed has resulted in a marked distinction between the diocesanized areas under the control of the Synod, and the C.M.S. mission districts. The development of the young churches in the diocesanized areas has called for the concentration of all the powers of the Christian community upon building up their own institutions. The African pastors have therefore had little opportunity of relating this task to the inspiration of fresh evangelistic effort in pioneer districts. Thus there is danger of undue emphasis on the African as pastor and the European

as pioneer. But as the Church in the Synod area and the foreign missionary element on its outskirts draw closer together, the unity and the witness of the whole Christian fellowship will be tremendously strengthened and enriched.

Masefield's picture of old Callow, the ploughman, busy at the task of God, ever on the look out for some sign to help him plough a perfect furrow, is very descriptive of the way in which the C.M.S. to-day is seeking to fulfil—in so far as limited resources of men and means allow—its responsibilities of partnership with the growing Yoruba Church. For instance, although the Society has no organized medical work in the Yoruba country, Mrs. Lennon's dispensary work in Kabba, and such experiments in welfare work as Mrs. Dallimore is making in Ekiti and Mrs. Payne in Benin city are a pioneer attempt to plough that more perfect line which is a picture of the "wholeness" of the Christian witness.

Infant welfare work is a vitally important factor in building up African family life. By reducing the exceptionally high rate of infant mortality among boys and thus lessening the preponderance of females over males, it can remove one of the chief causes of polygamy.

The Christian witness can only be firmly rooted in the very life of the Yoruba people by the development of their own resources. The chief way in which the C.M.S. is adventuring in partnership is by the training and equipping of Yoruba men and women who "united to the soil by all the ties of life, being its very essence, are yet much more; they are the soul of the field."

The "power house" of the diocese

The rapid growth of the Church makes an ever-increasing demand for clergy and teachers. St. Andrew's College, Oyo, is the "power house" of the Lagos Diocese, for it is here that ordinands, catechists, and teachers for the elementary schools of the Church receive their training. Former students of Oyo, now at work in the diocese,

include some seventy-five clergy and hundreds of catechists and teachers. Awka, in the sister diocese of the Niger, is the only other C.M.S. training institution of this kind in the whole of Nigeria.

St. Andrew's is built on a wonderful site of over 100 acres, on the crest of a flat ridge outside Oyo town—the capital of the Alafin, who is nominally "King of all the Yorubas," and is a good friend of the college. Well away from sophisticated town life, St. Andrew's gives its pupils an opportunity of living in the normal surroundings of the greater proportion of the people they are going to serve, with splendid opportunities for practical Christian service further afield.

The buildings are a fine example of the local mud work, and a large section of the estate is given up to small holdings where the men grow their own experimental crops. The compound is known far and wide as the finest garden in Nigeria. The principal, Archdeacon Burton (to whom the college owes its steady progress), is a keen botanist and his wife a practical gardener, and together they have laboured to design and build a compound and college buildings which shall provide the best possible environment for the students in training.

The men come for training from all parts of the Yoruba country. Melville Hall, the theological department, sets itself to produce men who can stand against the rising tide of secularism and the insidious attraction of "fancy religions," and can also interpret to their own people, by the quality of their lives, that spiritual freedom and fulness of life which is the essence of the Christian Gospel. In the teachers' training department, which is by far the largest section, the college has had some of the best results in all Nigeria. There is great competition for entrance to the college, and in the past the average number of students in training has been about 170. So large a number of students, though it indicates the need and the keenness for training, makes it very difficult for the staff to find time

for those personal contacts which are vital to the Christian corporate life of the college. Force of circumstances, however, has recently caused a heavy drop in numbers to less than a hundred, for the financial depression which is crippling the Church's activity in all directions, has so impoverished the villages that they cannot afford to pay their teachers. For the same reason the catechist class has been in abeyance for two years since the churches cannot afford to employ any more trained men of this type.

The place of the training college in the life of the Church is thus described by one of the younger C.M.S. educationists on the staff :—

> There are tens of thousands of nominal Yoruba Christians who are just waiting for any teaching we will give them. One missionary at Oyo can have untold influence because in training African teachers his influence is spread in all the schools. At present owing to insufficient supervision and training of schoolmasters and clergy, many of the African Christians have only the outward show and none of the unselfish living for Christ and their fellows. Such institutions as Oyo and Awka have a very large part to play in remedying this situation.

The appeal and response of the women

The most insistent appeal which is being made to the C.M.S. throughout Southern Nigeria, and not least in the Yoruba country, is for the strengthening of its partnership in the provision of schools and training centres for girls and women. Here is one of the most serious " signs " challenging the attention of those who would plough a perfect furrow in Nigeria's soil. More than half of the people of Nigeria are women and girls, and the future of the country depends upon their development. " The glory of the Gospel is their wonderful and rapid response when brought genuinely under its influence."

It is a thought-provoking exercise to turn to the C.M.S. Report and to discover that of the 24,000 Yoruba students

and pupils in its 400 colleges and schools only 7000 are women and girls. In some of the up-country districts there is still great reluctance among parents to allow their girls to be educated. In the Owo district, where it is difficult to persuade the Christians to send their girls to school, the largest mission school has some 250 pupils, of whom not more than twenty are girls. One of the greatest hindrances is the lack of women teachers: in the whole of the Yoruba country the men teachers number over a thousand, the women less than a hundred. A further difficulty is the kind of attitude, typical of many, expressed by the young man whose fiancée was attending school. In speaking to the missionary he said: "I will not permit the parents to allow the girl to continue at school, as it is not good for a woman to know as much as her husband."

But while in some areas man's pride and prejudice continue to be a hindrance to the progress of women's education, there is generally speaking an open field for advance. And because of our limited resources the amazing opportunity which it offers to those engaged in girls' work often drives the European staff to attempt more than is physically reasonable in their intense longing to cope with the great opportunities.

At Kudeti, near Ibadan, a secondary school of a hundred boarders is doing fine work for up-country girls. The United Training College near by (a joint venture with the Methodist Missionary Society), which draws its students from the schools in different parts of the Yoruba country, is beginning to supply the women teachers who are so greatly needed.

A very important centre of girls' work is the training school at Akure, in the Ondo Province. Half the pupils at Akure have had no previous schooling; they come to Akure to be made fit, in less time than appears possible, to become the helpmeets of Christian catechists and teachers. Each fiancé provides the fees for his future wife's training.

Life together for the twenty-eight girls at Akure is a stimulating experience. In addition to ordinary school subjects and organized games, time is given to housewifery, laundry work, needlework, gardening, farming, first aid, and child welfare. Experiments are being made to improve their own Yoruba cooking. There is supposed to be accommodation for forty girls in the training centre, though at present the buildings are insufficient; but plans are on foot for building four cottages where the girls will be able to live and to learn how to look after their own homes.

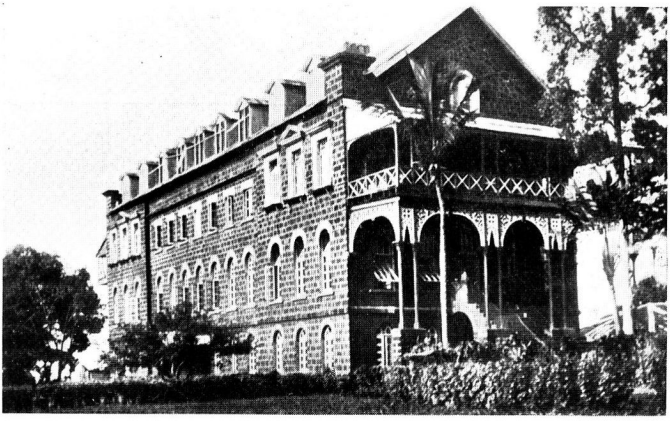
Short as the time of training may be, it achieves striking results. One of the missionaries writes :—

> Many of our girls have to leave here after perhaps one year's training, and go to a heathen village there to make a home for a struggling catechist, where perhaps she and her husband are the only literate people for miles around. It is a hard test for them, and with all that force arrayed against them it is not any wonder that some of them go back, or fall into sin. The marvel is that, comparatively speaking, so few do succumb. . . . It is a joy to have a share, however small, in bringing about such a marvellous change in them.

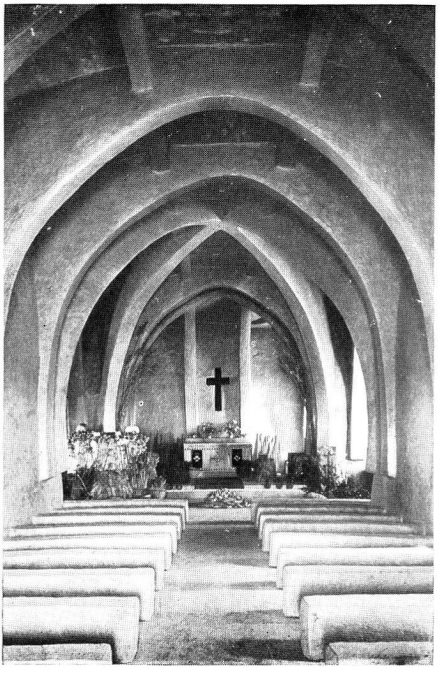
The opportunity which such a training centre gives for building the faith of Christ into everyday life is like a point of light, focusing the need of similar schools in each province for the thousands of women whose preparation for life has been equally neglected.

Girls trained at these schools are often called upon after marriage to act as leaders of branches of the Women and Girls' Diocesan Guilds. The influence of these guilds on the growth of women's work in the Church has been a marked feature of recent years. The organization is full of possibilities because of the enthusiasm of the members and the sense of shared interests which it creates between the women in the coast towns and far in the interior.

The guilds were initiated by women missionaries, and



" The house of one hundred windows " (see p. 14)



Interior of Zaria Church

A village church in building

in particular owe much to the inspiration and tireless efforts of Mrs. Melville Jones, but are carried on largely by African leaders. Such fellowships are no foreign importation to the Yoruba country, for the native genius for organization has always expressed itself in the practice of forming clubs and societies of this kind within the community, and the Church has not been slow to incorporate the custom in its own system.

The purpose of the Women's Guild is to bind together and strengthen the baptized women of numberless congregations throughout the diocese. Members pledge themselves to accept six simple rules setting forth the elementary principles of a Christian life. The first rule is to read the Bible daily with prayer. "Can you wonder that many fail here?" asks Mrs. Jebb. "Crowded together in dark and noisy huts with goats, fowls, and children causing constant distractions, what chance has a woman, who reads far from fluently, to take in any teaching from God's Word?" In that particular district the difficulty has been met by arranging for members to gather in church early in the morning and to read under the guidance of a teacher. One of the greatest hindrances to progress in women's work is the lack of any keen desire to read.

Once a year local conferences of the Guild are held, the teacher's wife from each town bringing with her one or two delegates. This annual conference affords a good opportunity for giving the women simple teaching on child welfare—a vital need in view of the appallingly high rate of infant mortality, due largely to ignorance.

In the Yoruba country the C.M.S. is faced with the problem as well as the responsibility of success. The dominant impression which this area leaves on the imagination is of a field so vast in extent, so rich in quality and in the promise of fruit that it is altogether beyond the powers of the team to cope with at all adequately without reinforcements.

CHAPTER IV

NORTHERN NIGERIA : TILLING HARD GROUND

" Open thine eyes and see thy God . . .
He is there where the tiller is tilling the hard ground,
And where the path-maker is breaking stones.
He is with them in sun and in shower,
And His garment is covered with dust."

—*Rabindranath Tagore*

AS we leave behind the palm forests of the southern lands and traverse the wide stretches of open grasslands, almost innocent of trees, in the northern territories, we are still within the borders of the same great Diocese of Lagos—but how different the setting and the problems of the C.M.S. share in the task of God in this predominantly Moslem area ! Instead of the growing materialism of the southern towns, we are faced in the Hausa emirates (where half the population of the Northern Provinces is found) with the Moslem exclusiveness and prejudice of walled cities like Zaria and Kano. Here are no eager crowds waiting to welcome the missionary at village churches, football fields, and market places, ready to accept him as a member of the family and a father of the flock : but rather a staunch conservatism or self-centred indifference to the intrusion of the foreigner. Here is no rapidly-growing Christian community, forcing the missionary to think in terms of mass movements and of almost impossibly large congregations : only the slow process of individual contacts, and the promise of a Christian Church to be formed from a handful of Christians whose courageous witness matches the fortitude and patience of the pioneer missionary.

The cost of tilling the ground

In 1857 Samuel Crowther was wrecked at Jebba on his way to see what openings there were for missionary work in Northern Nigeria. Thirty-two years passed before the C.M.S. organized another expedition which at great cost of life penetrated to the borders of the Hausa States. But it was not until the beginning of this century that the Society was able to establish a permanent foothold in this Moslem area, where a government policy of isolation continued to check for many years any regular extension of work.

When the British Government took over the control of the Northern Provinces in 1899, an undertaking was given not to interfere with the religion of the Hausa peoples and their Fulani rulers. In the fear that missionary effort might stir up bitterness and lead to trouble, severe restrictions were placed by the Government on Christian work. For sixteen years Zaria, where Dr. Miller was in charge, continued to be the solitary mission base in the Hausa States. Progress through the years in Northern Nigeria is "the story of civil restrictions patiently endured, of religious opposition worn away, and of setbacks in health surmounted, which make this tale an epic of missionary penetration, and accounts for the comparative freedom won at length to pursue the Christian mission in these Moslem kingdoms."

The growing vision of fine achievement has been wrought out of sacrifice and at tremendous cost of life. It was at their own risk that Robinson and Wilmot Brooke, the leaders of the 1890 expedition into the Northern Provinces, sought to fulfil Crowther's early ambition of entering the Hausa States. They wished for no personal safety from dangers to which their converts might be exposed, and voluntarily laid aside all claim to protection as British subjects. "If they imprison us," wrote Wilmot Brooke, "the British Government is not to interfere; if they kill us, no reparation must be demanded." Within a short time

sudden illness carried off Robinson, and Brooke only survived him by six months. Ten years later one mishap after another followed the party led by Bishop Tugwell, until only Dr. Miller was left.

To the same tradition belongs the " modern " instance of Dr. Norman Cook, whose brief but splendid spell of service enabled him to carry forward the adventure of medicine from Zaria into a new, untouched Moslem area. And the readiness with which his younger brother, Dr. Bertie Cook, went out to fill the gap caused by his death is further proof that to this generation is given the power to make traditions as well as to uphold them.

" His garment is covered with dust." The tillers of the hard soil in Northern Nigeria have been men of heroic mould. It has been well said : " The magnitude of our commission in this field is a measure of the sacrifice and the honour which our Master offers."

The C.M.S. commission to-day

For forty-five years the main objective of the C.M.S. in Northern Nigeria has been the evangelization of the large Moslem population in the Hausa States, and in the Nupé country. To-day work is carried on among the Hausa people at Zaria and Kano ; among the Nupé people in an extensive area with Bida as the centre ; and among the cosmopolitan and chiefly pagan inhabitants of Lokoja, with the Basa people on its outskirts. At a time when advance into the Moslem emirates was forbidden, the Society extended its work a long way eastward to the pagan Bauchi hill people, but lack of adequate resources made it wiser to hand over this district in 1930 to the Sudan United Mission, in order that the C.M.S. might better fulfil its share in the Moslem enterprise.

The expansion of the Society's work from Southern Nigeria to the Northern Provinces in time created the need for an assistant bishop with special care of this work in the north. From his head-quarters at Ilorin Bishop

Smith is constantly travelling over the vast area for which he is responsible. "Apart from an earlier journey of 1000 miles to Kano and Sokoto, which I took alone," he writes, "Mrs. Smith and I have quite recently travelled about 1600 miles in our car and 1234 miles by train. This has put us in touch with all our areas of work, and each one has its own claims."

Great are the distances and differences between those areas, but they have been used to foster close fellowship with other Protestant missions, as the arrangement with the Sudan United Mission shows. The joint conference at Miango gives the several missions a valuable opportunity for discussing together common problems.

A Christian village in Zaria

Gradually the isolation of the Hausa States is breaking down under growing pressure from outside. Forces of the modern world are penetrating their hitherto remote, walled cities. Every year sees new roads opened, bridges built, railways extended.

The Zaria Province is really the heart of the Northern Provinces and nowhere have these changes been more keenly felt than in Zaria town itself. The railway centre of Northern Nigeria, the hub of a considerable commercial development centring in the cotton industry, Zaria is shedding much of its old conservatism. A new spirit is abroad which is reflected in the work of the Mission and marks a new stage in its life.

Outside the city walls, on a fine site which the Government helped the Mission to secure, buildings of brown-red mud mark the nucleus of a native Christian village which may become a power centre for all Northern Nigeria. From the cramped quarters of the compound in Zaria town, where for so long Dr. Miller lived and worked, the C.M.S. work was recently transferred to this new site known as Wusasa. It is near enough to the city to keep the old contacts, and at the same time gives ample room

for expansion so that it will be possible not only to develop the work of school and hospital but also to build up a Christian community life. The Hausa is naturally an agriculturist, and the site, which is some of the finest land round Zaria, is well suited to the development of a Christian community based on the soil. It is hoped that in time the tradition of Christian service may produce men for the ministry of the Church, and it may be that the day will come when Zaria will be the centre of training ordinands for the Hausa Church.

While school and hospital are generating centres of the new life, the very heart of the life of the Hausa Christian community (182 registered members) and their C.M.S. friends is the little church in their midst—the one purely Hausa church in the whole of Northern Nigeria. It was opened on the new site on Easter Day, 1930. Like all other Hausa buildings it is built of mud, but its shape and its spirit make it unique among them all. It is African workmanship at its best, perfect in its simplicity, and within is the spirit of worship. Built in the form of a cross, its east window cut cross-shaped out of the mud, this Christian church stands as a striking witness in a Moslem land. As the spiritual life of the community develops it will be able to offer Moslem converts a real home from Islam.

Changing conditions are making pressing demands upon the school at Wusasa. It is continually being asked to supply boys for various departments of government service, for mining companies and commercial firms; at the same time it represents the source of supply for all the future work of the Mission. Miss Locke points to the result of the faithful spade work of past years :—

The Hausa Mission has always been in the van of education in Northern Nigeria, it is still holding its own to-day. We cannot produce quantity but the Christian school can still win on quality. Girls' education has been a going concern for fifteen years in the Zaria mission, and to-day Government comes

to us to ask for Hausa girls for its medical and sanitary work. With the demand for education in pagan areas and the outcry against the Islamization of pagan tribes, Government comes to us for Christian teachers to train the pagans. We have always maintained that only the highest education we can give is good enough for the Hausa Christian; this has often been criticized in the past, but to-day we are justifying our ideal, as not only the Government but other missions are recognizing the wisdom of our policy, and are asking us for highly-trained teachers to train their more elementary teachers and to assist in their boarding schools.

Medical work promises to be the spearhead of evangelism. It is rapidly overcoming prejudice in Zaria where indifference is now turning to eagerness. Moreover it has opened the way for Christian influence to reach two new Moslem areas. In the Katsina emirate a small Christian hospital (which owes its existence to the Boys' Brigade) was opened in the old walled town of Maska by Dr. Norman Cook a short time before his sudden death deprived the Mission of one of its most promising younger men. The fact that the Sultan of Sokoto, the head of Islam in West Africa, has expressed his approval and given the site for the opening of a dispensary (on similar lines to Maska) in his province, is further evidence of an encouraging forward move in the Hausa States.

Progress in Kano

As we travel north into the Province of Kano we find C.M.S. work centring in three churches in the chief city—Hausa, Southern Nigerian, and the European church built by the Rev. J. F. Cotton, a former C.M.S. missionary.

In place of a little thatched hut where the Hausa-speaking Christians have gathered for services in the past, there has recently been built a mud-brick church to meet the needs of the growing congregation. Most of the money was raised by the Hausas out of their small earnings. The dedication

of this church by Bishop Smith on Quinquagesima Sunday, 1933, marks a definite stage in the building up of the Church of Christ in this Moslem city.

The church for the southern tribes, in the "foreign quarter" of Kano, known as the Sabon-gari area, ministers to the needs of those African Christians who come up from the south or from Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast. Since Hausa education is still in a very backward state, most of the clerkships in the Government and canteens are filled by these southerners, many of whom have been educated in mission schools. To the African clergyman in charge of this church has been given a difficult but immensely important ministry. These Christians from the south—members of the Yoruba and Ibo dispersion—have in their hands much of the success or failure of the presentation of Christianity in Kano. What is needed is a quickening of spiritual life that they may be a more convincing witness to their Moslem neighbours in the native city, of the regenerating power of the Gospel.

The C.M.S. Bookshop quarters in Kano have long witnessed to the value of Christian literature as a means of approach to the Hausa people. Recently there has been made available for them that priceless and essential possession of the Church Universal and of every local church—the Bible in the people's own tongue. This massive task of translation—described by *The Times* as "a well-printed Bible extending to over 1100 pages, for the Hausa people in Northern Nigeria"—may be regarded as the crowning achievement of Dr. Miller's thirty-five years of pioneering among the Hausas. It represents the very ground of partnership between Hausa Christian and C.M.S. missionary.

A land of terror has the Gospel preached

Little more than thirty years ago the Nupé country was a land of terror where slave raiding was the chief source of wealth to the ruling classes. But the strong hand of the Government has since brought peace and security to

this fertile countryside, and though Moslem influence is entrenched, particularly in the larger towns, the veteran C.M.S. missionary at Bida is rejoicing in the sight of the second generation of Nupé Christians. Looking out from the capital of the Nupé country, which was occupied by the C.M.S. in 1903, Mr. Alvarez writes :—

I think of the eleven years of patient spreading of the gospel message that passed before the first Nupé-born convert from Islam stood up to face the mocking and taunting of his companions, to be disowned by his father, cursed publicly by his mother, proclaiming himself a follower of the crucified Redeemer of Whom he had first heard some seven years previously. I think of what it meant to be the first pioneer to Bida, amid prejudices and hostility and manifold insults, to work and wait, to wait and work, for all those long years. . . . Compared with those days the prospect now is full of hope and bright with promise for the future.

One sign of the lessening of Moslem opposition has been the willingness of the Emir of Bida to permit the licensing of the church at Bida for the solemnizing of Christian marriage. The Emir stated that he would like the Christians to have every opportunity for carrying on their worship in the way they thought proper.

Besides the main station at Bida, with its boys' school and training class for evangelists, the C.M.S. has fifteen out-stations manned by eighteen African evangelists. In these centres there are to-day places of Christian worship, put up at no cost to the C.M.S. entirely by the people themselves. In one remote hill village, where a hostile and much-feared chief has strenuously opposed Christian influence, only one youth has dared to become a reader during the last six years. What courage it must have called for! "And now," writes the African evangelist in his log book, "the chief's heart has changed towards us, the ban is removed, and four of his own sons are in our school with eleven others."

When the C.M.S. first occupied Bida, nine out of ten of its 60,000 people were slaves. As a result of the dispersion of this large slave population into the surrounding country, the villages now offer the best opportunity for missionary work, and a keen and active evangelist finds a splendid sphere of service. Work in the villages is reacting upon the towns. When the Government wanted Nupés to act as scribes to the village chiefs, the Emir of Nupé himself informed the district officer that there were many literates to be found in the villages, with the result that several of our scholars now occupy these posts.

Progress in the Nupé country is hindered, not because of any lack of African evangelists or applications for resident teachers, but through lack of funds. Three evangelists and one schoolmaster are now supported by the gifts of the Nupé Christians, and to the great joy of the little Christian community their senior evangelist was recently accepted as the first Nupé candidate for ordination.

An opportunity that is passing

In Kano and Zaria C.M.S. missionaries are dealing with one people, in one language, and in the main with one cultural and religious background, the Hausa Moslem. The same may be said of the work in the Bida district, only there are they dealing with the Nupé Moslem. But the town of Lokoja, a further hundred miles down the Niger, cannot be thought of as a single entity, and in many ways is one of our most difficult centres. It is a hotchpotch of differing cultures, social organizations, and religions; a cosmopolitan city which looks southward and not to the north of which it is an administrative centre. Here you may meet the English-speaking Sierra Leonean, the Yoruba-speaking Lagosian, the Nupé-speaking river man.

From this old-established centre of C.M.S. work an attempt has long been made to reach the pagan people in the "daughter" district of Basa. In the early days of this

century the Basa work tested to the uttermost the faith and courage of European after European. The ground was hard and stony, and for over twenty years very little fruit was seen. Now all is changed. A mass movement is taking place and people are pressing upon one another to enter into the Kingdom of God.

This amazing change is a sequel to the preaching of the young Yoruba prophet " whom the Lord took " not from following the flock, like Amos, but from driving a steam roller. Five years ago some of the Basa people travelled south into the Yoruba country to visit the aladura. As a result of what they heard and were able to go home and tell their friends, literally thousands of people in this one district where the C.M.S. had been working with little or no success since 1897, suddenly began to crowd in to church and school. The entire heathen population of the Basa country gave up their idols and poured into the Church, clamouring for Christian teaching.

It was an overwhelming situation for the little handful of C.M.S. workers. In three weeks over sixty new out-stations were added to their care. The Sunday morning attendance at church in one town rose from an average of seventy to 500 one Sunday, 800 the next, and the following Sunday there were over 1000 ! The head chief of the Basa district, where two C.M.S. missionaries, Miss Matthews and Miss Ritsert, are heroically trying to cope with the situation, offered to build them a house and school free of all cost to the C.M.S. if only they would go and live among his people. From all sides they were continually receiving urgent messages : " Send us a teacher—we have built here a house and a church—send some one to teach us how to pray." To many of these requests they had to reply that they had no money to pay for the longed-for teacher although his salary was so small. And so these people, many of them earnestly desiring to become Christians, had to be left to struggle with the little light and knowledge they had.

The door of opportunity which swung so widely open is already closing. To quote Miss Ritsert :—

One result of this movement is to have made the people dissatisfied with their old ways. We have been unable to give them the something new which they demanded, and so they are turning to those who are always ready and waiting to make converts—the Moslem *mallams* (religious leaders). I heard not long ago of a little group of villages which had seemed very keen and had built little churches and begged for a teacher; now the Moslems have stepped in and publicly " washed " and received the whole community. The little churches are abandoned; there are no professing Christians left. . . . There are still literally hundreds of people, crying out for the light and the help Christianity alone can give them; and our hands are tied; we are not able to respond to their cry.

We are back again in the atmosphere of the southern lands where the African's claim on C.M.S. partnership has advanced far beyond the pioneer stage of breaking the ground, to become the urgent demand for help in the reaping of a rich harvest.

CHAPTER V

THE NIGER DIOCESE: IN HARNESS TOGETHER

"We work together in God's service; you are God's field to be planted."—1 *Corinthians* iii. 9 (*Moffatt*)

THE Ibos of Eastern Nigeria have a wise proverb which is quaintly descriptive of the value of working together: "The right hand washes the left hand, and the left hand washes the right hand." Translating the thought into the metaphor of the soil, workers together in planting God's field is the dominant note of progress in the Niger Diocese. Through the courageous partnership of African and C.M.S. missionaries, the prayerful backing and financial support of the C.M.S. at home, there has grown up through the years, within and beyond the borders of Crowther's old diocese, an organized Christian fellowship, rooted in the life of the country and inextricably bound up with its future destiny. Within the diocese almost every town and village in the area under the influence of the C.M.S., has its church and school with its band of Christians, here a large congregation, there a small and struggling company.

The meeting of the clans

The annual gathering of the Synod is a picture in miniature of the Christian adventure in partnership. It is a living witness of the power of the Gospel to transform life and to draw men together in fellowship—a fellowship of worship, of good comradeship in thinking and taking counsel together about a common, unifying task. To this central gathering of the diocese comes a great company of some 200 clergy and lay delegates from every part of the

thickly populated countryside. The Bishop on the Niger sketches the personnel of the 1934 Synod :—

> What a composite assembly it was ! There were the African and European clergy, ranging in age from the venerable Archdeacon Crowther, who was ordained sixty-four years ago, to the newest deacon. Among the numerous delegates were the Lieutenant-Governor of Southern Nigeria, who is a lay member, simple Ibo farmers and Ijaw fishermen, the Resident of the province, chiefs of towns and villages clad in their long robes, three or four African lawyers, African carpenters and builders, an African doctor and an African blacksmith, business men, college principals, and school teachers of both races—truly a heterogeneous mass, and yet all had met with one purpose and a common inspiration, the extension of the Kingdom of Christ in the Niger Diocese.

The many threads interwoven in the Niger chapter of the Christian epic are plain for all to see at this meeting of the Synod. The majority of the delegates are Ibos, but people of at least seven different tribes and languages are in the assembly. From the creeks of the Delta, from the hill country of Nsukka, from the swamps of Isoko and Sobo, from big townships like Enugu and Port Harcourt, from remote villages in the bush they come, each delegate personifying some striking contrast between the then and now.

An outstanding example is Archdeacon Crowther, who though over ninety and frail in body, is very much alive and alert mentally and is tremendously respected. He has seen the Christian fellowship, with its thousands of disciples, grow from the very beginning. His memory spans the long stretch of history which lies between the savage paganism of his father's world and modern, swift-changing Nigeria with its well-established Christian Church. For so long in charge of the Delta region, he can look back to the old days when Bonny, the first mission station, was a centre of lizard worship and cannibalism was common. To the fearless courage of the first Christians in face of persecution

he traces the roots of the Christian fellowship which has brought new life to this one-time pagan town.

As he looks round on the assembly of Christian leaders from many a town and village, the aged archdeacon thinks of the town of Brass where the worship of the python snakes has not yet died out, but where the king and most of the people are Christians and have supplied a number of workers in the Church, including five of the African clergy. The present King of Brass was an ordained deacon at the time when he succeeded his father, and he asked the Bishop to be allowed to retain his orders on becoming king.

Perhaps because of its name, which means "never changing," the archdeacon will give thanks at the remembrance of Okrika—once a place feared by all men because of its deeds of darkness, to-day a Christian centre. He recalls the time when he first went to Okrika and found it dominated by a great juju house. With that he contrasts his experience in 1929 when he preached the dedication sermon to a crowd of 2000 people in the magnificent new church which had taken the place of the juju house as the chief building of the town, and on the following day the bishop conducted in that new church the largest ordination service ever known in the diocese.

And so the tale could be taken up by one and another of the delegates. They would tell of the Isoko country, a corner of the Niger Delta where out of gross heathenism there has been a Christian mass movement which has brought 20,000 people into the Church; of the Enugu district at the other end of the diocese, where an African clergyman is in charge of a large area in the very centre of what used to be a cannibal country, and where a "twinnery" represents a Christian experiment in meeting the superstitious fear of twins. The story of contrasts would be taken up by delegates from Onitsha (the first station of the Niger Diocese and to-day the head-quarters of the diocese), formerly known as "bad bush," where to-day there are six C.M.S. churches with congregations varying in numbers

from 150 to 1000; from Ebu Owerri, fifty miles south of Onitsha, in the very heart of the Ibo country, where in a place once thought to be haunted by evil spirits there now stands a church in which 700 people worship every Sunday, two schools which some 500 Christian children attend, a home where girls are trained for marriage, and an adult school for married women. One tale after another could be told, showing how the Gospel of Christ has brought light, life, and peace to the hills and forests and swamps of Eastern Nigeria.

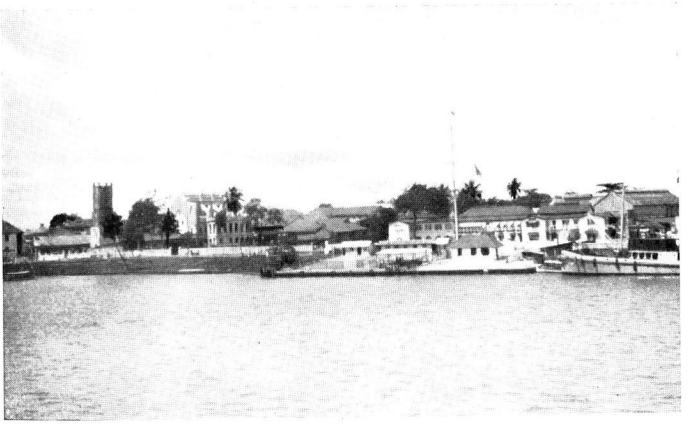
I climb that was a clod,
  I run whose steps were slow,
I reap the very wheat of God
  That once had none to sow.

That is the kind of background to one and another of the reports of the church districts throughout the diocese which are read at the Synod. A striking sign of the growth of fellowship is the newly-awakened interest shown by many a delegate in a district utterly remote from his own. Why, for instance, should a teacher from Brass in the Delta be interested in the far-off pioneer district of Nsukka? To hear a man from one part of the country asking questions about conditions in another part, showing a real sense of responsibility in regard to an area in which he has no natural interest, is to be reminded afresh of the power of the Spirit of God to create fellowship where formerly there was enmity and prejudice. Members of tribes which were once the fiercest enemies, having "beaten their swords into ploughshares," take their place together as good companions in this corporate discussion of the planting of God's field.

The Church leads and draws together

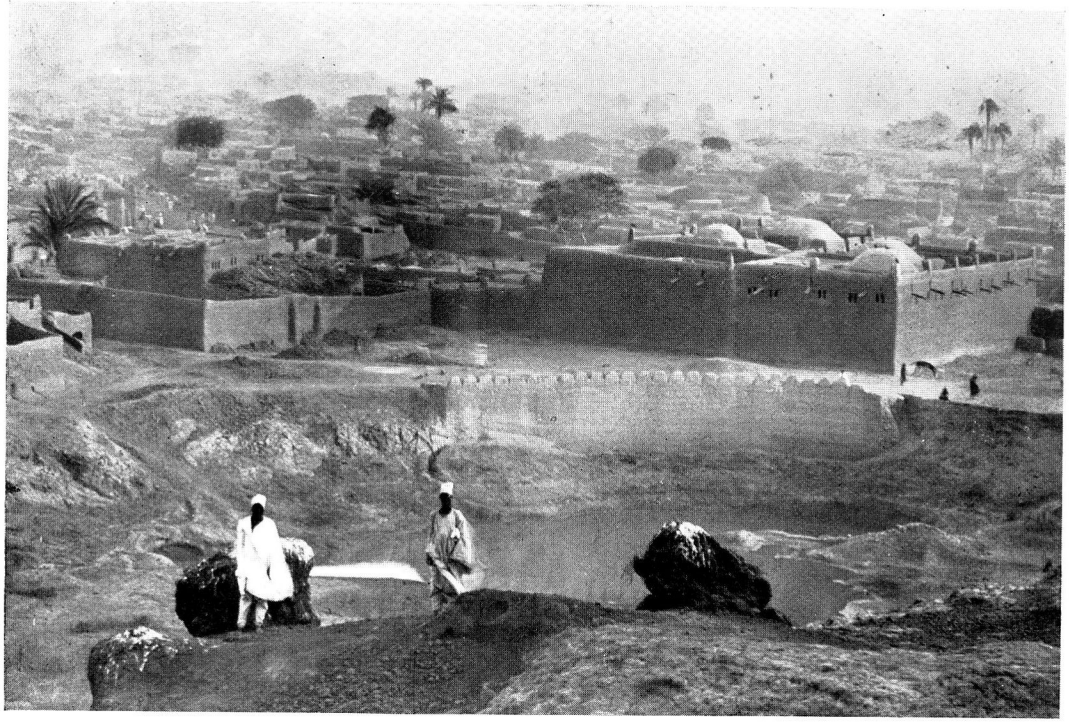
The Synod has been aptly described as the place where seeds of resolve and endeavour are sown which in due course bear fruit in every quarter of the diocese.

A sacred rock in the Kukuruku country



The landing stage and cathedral at Lagos

TWO CORNERS OF THE LAGOS DIOCESE



Looking down on Kano

At the first Synod (held in 1929) the unity of the Church was the main subject, and that discussion led to a closer linking together of the different parts of the diocese, and a firmer resolve to strive towards the goal of union with other Protestant Churches. Discussions with other Churches on unity have inspired a definite scheme which is now being worked out between the Church of Scotland, the Methodists, and the C.M.S. At two other Synods the vital importance of women's work, of training girls for marriage and home life was discussed, and the result is seen in the starting of more women's training homes, the developing of women's guilds and the work of the Mothers' Union, as well as in the greater number of girls attending school.

The live questions discussed at the 1934 Synod further bear out the Bishop's claim that the Church stands right in the vanguard of progress in the developing life of the country. The Lieutenant-Governor explained the Government's plan of native administration, and showed how the Church should enter into and seek to influence it. He pointed out that the new reforms would not work without the loyal co-operation of the Christian community. Then again, if the Church is to create a standard it is essential that the ministry shall keep apace of the developing intellectual life of modern West Africa. The growing demand from the native Church for the higher education of its leaders resulted in plans being thrashed out by the Synod for the more adequate training of its would-be clergy and senior schoolmasters. To the delight of church leaders the proposal to send one of the younger clergy to St. John's College, Durham, for a year, that he may enter into the life of the college, and in a more general way see as much as possible of the best side of English life, has found its pioneer in the person of the Rev. E. Dimieari. His visit to England has afforded striking proof of the Christian African's power to give as well as to receive inspiration in fellowship.

Not only does the Synod picture the many diverse elements drawn together in the fellowship of the Christian Church which sets a standard for the developing life of the country, it also gives living evidence of the growing unity of the Church in the Niger Diocese.

In the opening chapter we saw the diocese taking shape under the leadership of Bishop Crowther. Its rapid development led to certain difficulties in the 'nineties, and the churches of the Delta region formed themselves into a semi-independent "Delta Pastorate." This area, among the creeks and waterways of the lower reaches of the Niger, developed into an archdeaconry entirely manned and financed by Africans and superintended by Archdeacon Crowther, while the mission area north of the Delta region formed a neighbouring archdeaconry. In 1919 the two sections, administered by two distinct governing bodies, were constituted one diocese.

Under the ministry and guidance of Africans, practically unaided by European experience or funds, the churches of the Delta Pastorate have made wonderful progress. They have now over 60,000 members and adherents, and their annual contribution for church purposes is about £30,000. It is a striking achievement.

And now, thanks to the new diocesan constitution, after nearly forty years of separate existence, the Delta Pastorate is bringing into the common life of the diocese its gifts of experience and devotion for the enriching of the whole. It has become organically joined to the C.M.S. portion of the diocese. Under the authority of a single Synod the Delta Pastorate and the mission area to the north of it are now welded together in a common life of fellowship.

Actually this Niger Synod represents a bold experiment in devolution, planned with an eye to the experience of other dioceses. The Niger Diocesan Measure extends the responsibility of the native Church over the whole area, and deepens the sense of partnership by blending C.M.S.

missionaries and African clergy into a single unit of authority.

The Church surveys its task

This fine achievement owes much of its inspiration to the courage and wise statesmanship of Bishop Lasbrey—the Church's loved and trusted leader in the adventure in partnership. The chief pastor of 1100 African churches in this great river land, he draws together for common understanding and discussion at the Synod the chief elements of strength and weakness in the young but vigorous Niger Church. His finger is ever on the pulse of the Church's life. With him at its head the Synod looks out over the vast diocese and surveys its task.

The delegates from the country districts, which contain two-thirds of the churches in the diocese, voice the overwhelming difficulties facing their particular congregations. Their outlook is bound to be greatly influenced by the economic depression. Trade has gone from bad to worse. The chief source of their people's income has been the sale of palm oil to traders, and the price of a tin of oil has gone down from 7*s.* five years ago to 7*d.* or even less in recent months (1934). Great numbers of men are out of employment. How then are the church districts to pay the salaries of teachers and catechists? How are the Christians to pay their class dues of 6*s.* per annum, in addition to their Sunday collections, harvest thankofferings, their share towards a new church building, the government tax, and their children's school fees? Many churches are entirely without teachers; numbers of districts are in debt in spite of a big cut in the salaries of clergy, catechists, and school teachers. Many an open field where the Gospel might be proclaimed cannot be entered because there is no money to support at even a bare living wage the evangelist who might be sent.

While some reports show that the situation has led to discouragement and a falling away, others make clear that it is drawing out latent reserves of spiritual resources.

Some can tell of keen Christian laymen who have formed themselves into evangelistic bands and go round their districts to encourage the weak and faint-hearted and to arouse backsliders and dormant Christians. There comes before the mind of a C.M.S. missionary in that gathering a scene he has recently witnessed in a church where a special effort was being made to encourage the members to pay their assessment. He sees the poverty-stricken members of that congregation, men, women, and children, coming up one by one with an offering, some with as large a sum as two or three shillings—an example of costly giving representing the proceeds from the sale of a goat, sheep, or dog. Then again those members of the Synod who are feeling discouraged by the hard struggle which the burden of self-support imposes on their country congregations, are encouraged to learn that during a year of such acute financial difficulty the Christians throughout the diocese contributed to the work of the Church nearly £40,000; registered church members increased by over 10,000, and the number of pupils in the schools remained steady with a considerable increase in the number of secondary school pupils and of girls.

"The more we suffer, the more we think," says the Bishop—and his appeal to the Synod is before all things a call to evangelism. He stirs the whole assembly to realize that the quickening of a more vigorous spiritual life throughout the diocese cannot really be held up by financial difficulties, however serious, if every delegate and every pastor resolved to go home with the determination to urge upon his fellow-Christians their individual responsibility for the work of winning men and women to Christ. The delegates go forth from the Synod to their many and varied districts inspired anew by the certainty that the first privilege and responsibility of the Christian fellowship, which the work of the past has brought into being, is for all its members to become living witnesses in their own way to their own people; that the mission of their church is not to be ministered unto but to minister.

The C.M.S. share

How is the C.M.S. contributing to the spiritual life and progress of this young Church?

Consider first what the Church is able to do for itself. It entirely supports its forty-five African clergy, its lay workers of every kind, of whom there are over 2000; it builds its own churches and schools, it maintains its students in the training college, it has started its own pension fund for its workers. Only the salaries and expenses of European missionaries fall on C.M.S. funds from home, and some of these are met by local resources and grants. Moreover, on C.M.S. Sunday every church in the diocese gives its collection for the Society's central funds—an annual contribution which brings to Salisbury Square inspiring evidence of generous giving. Some of the more advanced districts also contribute to the work of evangelizing the parts of their own country as yet untouched by the Gospel. This advance in self-support is a magnificent achievement.

Look next at one of the greatest difficulties facing the young Church—that of supervision. There is a quite insufficient number of clergy and trained teachers to instruct and minister to the vast multitude of Christian adherents who are at one and the same time the proof and the problem of success. One African clergyman, who may not himself be a man of very great scholarship or administrative ability, has to look after eighty or ninety congregations scattered in some twenty-five towns. For assistance he depends upon partly trained or untrained evangelists and teachers who themselves make great demands on his time if their work is to be of real value.

What is expected of these men who are largely untrained and yet have to undertake the responsible work of teaching and guiding congregations of immature Christians? Through the eyes of a missionary we can watch a certain African teacher leading the worship of a village congregation on an Easter morning. The service proceeds haltingly in

the dim light of the bush church. The little group of men and women, led by the teacher, have discovered something of Christ, but the atmosphere of the service suggests that they have heard of Him rather than seen Him for themselves. This picture is not typical of village congregations in the diocese, but it illustrates the key position of the teacher in the young Church. It is the task of the African teacher to interpret Christ to his people that He may become a living reality to them in their daily life and worship. But how can he so interpret Christ unless he himself is given opportunity to grow in the Christian life through the right kind of training and guidance?

And that brings us to the wider setting of the African teacher's task. Everywhere there is a great demand for education, and this insistent need, together with the fact that the Government is now developing a strong educational policy and appeals to the missions for co-operation in carrying it out, provides the Church with a wonderful opportunity of moulding the thought and life of a people eagerly waiting to be taught. In our schools throughout the diocese—ranging from the primitive bush school to the central school which serves a group of churches, and the higher-grade secondary school—there are well over 33,000 pupils, with 127 certificated teachers and 835 uncertificated. It is easy to see that true progress must depend upon the more adequate training of those very important people—the African teachers.

The ideal of partnership may be summed up in this aim: "To give what we can in gracious co-operation with those who can give what we cannot." The greatest contribution which the C.M.S. can make is the training of clergy, teachers, and other men and women who will be leaders and yet servants in the life of the Church and the community. African pastor, catechist, and teacher—each can give to the growing Church what we cannot; but in gracious co-operation we can give what they both need and welcome: training for service. And so the Society

puts its chief weight into a number of educational institutions for " the multiplying of the doers."

First comes the training college at Awka for clergy, catechists, and teachers. Then two important schools at Onitsha (a secondary school for boys and an elementary school for girls) where the leaders and the home makers of to-morrow are growing up in a Christian tradition. The Dennis Memorial Grammar School is educating the sons of prominent men to take their place as leaders of their people; and St. Monica's Girls' School educates some 150 boarders, the daughters of chiefs, of clergy, schoolmasters, and others, who come from all parts of the diocese.

Partnership expressed in training the African to interpret the Gospel to his own people is also the chief aim of the European staff of the C.M.S. hospital at Iyi Enu, which is recognized by the Government as a training school for midwives. Inspired by the success of the Maternity Training School at Mengo, Iyi Enu is seeking to follow Uganda's example and to provide in due course a similar network of maternity and welfare centres in the care of skilled African women, whose ministry of healing service will help to proclaim a full Gospel of redemption.

A further contribution which the C.M.S. makes to the building up of home and family life is through its training homes for girls about to marry, and for married women, that by a simple grounding in elementary knowledge they may have brief opportunity of repairing the neglect of school training in their earlier years, and may contribute to the enlightenment and improvement of their homes. Miss Yeatman, who has been in charge of the Girls' Training Home at Awka, writes:—

The Christian homes scattered in all parts of the Ibo country should be the backbone of the Christian community. The wives who are ready to teach others, to be delegates to women's conferences, and members of the church committees, will do much to extend the influence of Christian womanhood within

the Church. The Christian husband and wife, with a standard of happy, healthy, home life, are a godsend to the village.

Some fruits of partnership

To take two or three examples of the fruits of the C.M.S. contribution to partnership through the training of teachers and enlightening the minds of the women through medical and welfare work.

Each year about eighteen Christian teachers pass out of Awka Training College into the schools in various parts of the diocese. Here is a thumbnail sketch of one of them—a young African, short of stature, with an alert mind and a humble spirit, yet with force of character which fitted him to be senior student in his third year. On leaving college he was sent to a very neglected area in the Delta where he was put in charge of one of the larger centres. There were practically no trained teachers in that area, and Nelson found that the school in his charge was a poor building with no furniture or equipment. Soon after he arrived it was discovered that the district had come under the scourge of sleeping sickness. The Government took steps to deal with it. Before long whole villages were deserted; ninety per cent of the pupils in Nelson's school were found to be infected. Yet this young schoolmaster loyally stuck to his post. At the end of his first year's service he went to Port Harcourt to be examined in order to make sure that he was clear of infection. He was determined if possible to go back to his school even though the number of children had dwindled to a handful, and in spite of the fact that this district of the Delta, so remote from his own home town, had for him no personal links. Within a fortnight of his return he died of pneumonia. True to a sense of vocation and the ideal of Christian service, and with courage to hold to it in face of overwhelming odds, Nelson was content to give his life in the service of his people.

"The welfare centre exists because we believe that

The medical lorry, Owerri district

Lining up for medicine, Owerri

Babies at a nursery centre

Schoolgirls at Akure

A wayside bookstall

Christ's desire for a man is that he should be 'every whit whole'," writes Miss Jewitt, and she goes on to illustrate the way in which the welfare centre in the primitive Isoko country is gradually awakening the desire for wholeness of life. A young girl who was too ill to walk was carried the long distance to Bethel by a party of men from her village. They stayed for the night in the compound, and on leaving promised to come back later to take the girl home. Some weeks after the girl had returned to her village a number of elderly men appeared in the compound. They made no attempt to ask for medicine but remained for several days, sleeping in the men's rest house at night. Then the story came out. They were the elders of the village from which the girl had come, and after much deliberation they had determined to follow the Christian way of life which they had seen lived out at Bethel. They explained that they had removed all their idols, had built a house for prayer, and were meeting there daily to pray as they had heard Christians pray, and now they had come to ask that a teacher might be sent to instruct and encourage them.

A striking illustration of partnership between the C.M.S. and Government is seen in the experiment in travelling medical work for women and children in the Owerri district. Five years ago a somewhat formidable women's rising took place in the Owerri district as a protest against what was believed to be the threat of taxation but which was actually nothing more than an attempt on the part of the Government to obtain a census of the women of the district. The riots were soon stopped, but the unrest continued. The Government, recognizing the fact that the very fierceness of the rising had brought to light latent and unsuspected powers of initiative and courage in the women, sought some means of developing these qualities in a constructive way. One decision made was to provide a doctor for travelling medical work among these women in the Owerri district. The Government, prepared to

finance the scheme, turned to the C.M.S. to supply the doctor. In response to that invitation Dr. Margaret Roseveare was released from her responsibilities at Iyi Enu Hospital to conduct this new experiment with the assistance of two enthusiastic young African workers, a dispenser dresser and a midwife, who were both trained at Iyi Enu. A C.M.S. doctor and a couple of young Africans equipped with a new skill and spirit of service, bumping together over the rough roads of Owerri in a motor lorry provided by the Government—there is something strikingly suggestive of an adventure in partnership in this little travelling company who have already brought thousands of needy women and children in touch with the Christian ministry of health and healing.

" And they beckoned unto their partners "

If such fruits of partnership can well be multiplied in the telling, no less can the claims for the strengthening of our partnership in service with the young Church.

To the Isoko district of the Niger has now been added the even larger Sobo country (formerly included in the Lagos Diocese), yet the work of this whole area has to be undertaken by the same European staff which was previously responsible for Isoko alone. A surprising amount of life remains in the long-neglected Sobo churches which had their origin in a mass movement " that was not gripped and which ran to seed " owing to lack of staff. Only a small percentage of the original adherents are now within the Church. During the last ten years from fifty to ninety per cent of those previously belonging to C.M.S. Sobo churches have either relapsed into paganism or have sought a spiritual home in the Roman Catholic Church or in polygamous sects. There are sixty-one churches but only one catechist and two teachers, and nothing beyond St. Mark's Gospel in the Sobo language. The Church has been saved from extinction by some head-men of the tribe and unpaid lay readers who have built churches, conducted

services, and taught the people as far as they could. Since the linking up of this area with the adjacent Isoko district, the Bishop has written: "The somewhat extra supervision given has brought new life to many churches. There is hope here of a great revival if the Society can replace the missionary formerly here, and now retired." It is an urgent call for the strengthening of our partnership in the life of a very young Church for which we have a definite responsibility.

In contrast to this pioneer district consider the call that comes from an old-established centre of work, the Niger Delta. One immediate outcome of the new sense of fellowship between the Niger Delta Pastorate and the mission districts, resulting from the new diocesan measure, was a call to the C.M.S. to provide two women missionaries for the Delta region to help in work similar to that carried on at Ebu by Miss Hornby. Bishop Gelsthorpe, in a recent letter, underlines this urgent need:—

> Something really must be done about this all-important matter of the training of women and girls for the coast parts of this diocese. The key to the future rests mainly with them. The training and education of men and boys will continue, and we must not let the gap between them and their wives become greater or we shall be like a bird trying to fly with one wing.

The only centre in which really efficient work of this kind is being carried on is at Umucham, near Aba, where Miss Ellis is building up out of the raw material of tumble-down buildings and undisciplined, untutored girls from heathen homes, a Christian boarding school. Some forty or fifty girls who have had no previous teaching, come to the school for two years' training that they may be fitted to become home makers for the Christian men to whom they are engaged to be married. Miss Ellis, the only woman missionary in this area, thus describes the purpose

of this one school which could well be multiplied in other parts of the Delta :—

We aim to help these girls to become not poor examples of English education, nor even good examples of English education, but, we hope, good Ibo Christian women. To this end cleanliness of body and home are taught in simple, practical hygiene, and obedience and self-control. By practical work and example we hope to teach them that as followers of Jesus Christ it is only through complete surrender of themselves to Him that they can live a life of true freedom. They have so little, and their needs are few and simple compared with those imposed by our civilization; we try to teach them to use what they have to the best possible advantage, and to see the beauty of cleanliness, purity, and love. If we can accomplish this, however inadequately, we shall be doing something for the uplift of the present homes and the future well-being of the nation.

The first half of this survey of the Niger Diocese pictured the growth and the unity of the Christian fellowship which have been achieved through partnership. The second half has shown something of the magnitude of the task of planting God's field, and the increasing demands which it makes upon the C.M.S. partner. But in this day of opportunity there is another thought to stress in relation to the task beside magnitude, and that is splendour. In the words of Bishop Lasbrey :—

It is an amazing opportunity—ninety per cent of the education of the country in missionary hands; within the Church a great mass of members constituting all the progressive elements in the land; a new nation coming into being, and with the C.M.S. above all other agencies the opportunity of moulding it and helping to make it what it will be, by training its leaders, men and women. It is the high calling of the C.M.S., by God's help, to be His instrument in building up the Church in Nigeria.

CHAPTER VI

THE ADVENTURE OF WORKING WITH GOD

" O Christ who holds the open gate,
O Christ who drives the furrow straight."
—*John Masefield*

THE story is nearly told, yet it is in no sense complete. It is a story of beginnings, and to us is committed no small share in shaping its future chapters.

The greatest story of beginnings has for its prelude that matchless expression of the divine initiative—" In the beginning God." The same certainty was always present to the mind of Paul the missionary as his thoughts travelled westward from Antioch to follow the progress of the young Churches he had helped to found. When he pondered on the miracle of growth by which slaves and " down-and-outs " of the profligate city of Corinth had found a new and transformed life within the Christian fellowship, he wrote to remind them that behind the partnership of " foreign " missionary and native Christian, inspiring it from the very beginning, lay the power and the purpose of God. They were workers together with Him, the Source of life, the Perfecter of growth. " I did the planting," he wrote in his first letter to that young Church at Corinth, " Apollos did the watering, but it was God who made the seed grow."[1]

We can imagine the leaders of the C.M.S. to-day writing a letter to the young Churches which, under God, the Society has helped to plant in Sierra Leone and Nigeria. It would read as a modern paraphrase of Paul's thought, pointing to the splendid partnership between African

[1] 1 Corinthians iii. 6 (Moffatt).

Christian and C.M.S. missionary from the pioneer days of Crowther and Johnson, Townsend and the Hinderers, Robinson and Wilmot Brooke—a partnership which prepared the African soil and sowed the living seed. And then the letter would go on to show that behind and beyond the labours of the pioneers has been manifest the power of God Who alone makes the seed grow. "In the beginning God." God prompting the enterprise, God empowering it, God bringing it to good success. The splendour of the task lies there—that it is His, and we are called to be workers together with Him in fulfilling His purpose of love for West Africa.

The responsibility of success

The story of the four great fields where the C.M.S. is at work in West Africa shows how the mighty power of God, through the faith of the pioneers, is bearing fruit to-day in a rich spiritual harvest—no mere handful of disciples but a large and vigorous Church.

The Dioceses of Lagos and the Niger which, as we have seen, divide between them the great British territory of Nigeria, are thus described in *The Call from Africa* : "As missionary dioceses these must be regarded as perhaps the most important in all Africa." In the whole of Nigeria to-day the Christian congregations which have grown up as a result of C.M.S. work have a membership of 312,000, of whom over 200,000 are baptized Christians. That vast number represents human material through which the life and spirit of Christ can be expressed throughout Nigeria, *if* the men and the means can be supplied to give these very new Christians the teaching and training needed to build them up in the Christian faith.

This is just the kind of problem, but on a much larger scale, that Paul the missionary had to face. When he wrote his letter to the Corinthian Christians he was troubled and anxious about the many signs of weakness in their

Christian life and witness. He knew that he must deal with their failings and shortcomings, though his letter is marked by the strong patience of one who remembers the background of the young Church—that it is built up of people just out of heathenism. He begins by thanking God for all the good that is in them through the grace of Christ, and then by wise counsel and teaching he seeks to build up these young Christians in the Faith that they may become a live moral and spiritual force.

And so it is with C.M.S. leaders in West Africa to-day. They begin by giving thanks for the many gifts which African Christians are bringing into the Church of Christ—gifts of faith and joyousness, of sacrifice and witness; but they also realize how urgently these African Christians need and seek the Society's help. To quote the Bishop on the Niger :—

We are faced with the problem of creating a moral conscience and maintaining a high moral standard of life among Christians. Here is a people with nothing behind them but heathenism with all its immoralities, its cruelties, its degrading views of womanhood, its ingrained superstitions and beliefs, its low standard of honour and honesty. Thirty years ago a large proportion of them were as primitive or more so than our own forefathers before the Norman Conquest. Then suddenly they have been brought into contact with all the inventions and devices of modern civilization—motors, railways, steamships, electricity, modern houses and roads, means of communication, new learning—as well as with a highly-cultured people who not infrequently, alas, show a far from helpful moral example. All their old ideas are upset, their old sanctions destroyed; new wealth and new restrictions are thrust upon them, new ambitions, new desires are astir in their hearts. New examples confront them, new aims are set before them. Is it strange that they should find it hard to keep their moral balance or to live up to the high standards, unknown to them before, which the Christian Gospel demands? Can you wonder that there are not a few backsliders, not a few sad failures among professed

Christian converts? Is it not more to be wondered at that so many face the new conditions of life and keep their Christian honour bright, showing a high pattern of purity and straightforward living to those around them? Surely seldom has a young Church been confronted with circumstances so likely to be perversive and difficult for the young Christian convert.

We have to remind ourselves again that this is a story of beginnings. Christianity is still very young in West Africa; even in the oldest centres it has only been rooted in the life of the people for three generations. With our centuries of Christian experience and tradition which have built up a standard of public opinion, it is difficult for us to realize all that it means for African Christians who are still young in the Faith to face the testing which comes all the time from the impact and the downward drag of a heathen environment. In the midst of that environment they are seeking to create a Christian tradition. And that means striving in the face of tremendous odds and overwhelming temptations to live by Christian standards, seeking to build up the kind of society which lives not for its own ends, but for God and its neighbours.

Baptism marks but the beginning of the new life. Think of the long spiritual pilgrimage which lies before a little group of Isoko Christians who, having given up their primitive faith in Omadaka, the cassava god, gather together in the simple mud church, rubbed white with chalk, the only centre of worship of the one true God in that pagan village.

When the man who was afraid has forsaken the worship of the Omadaka ju-ju and has become the man who is learning to love Christ, his journey along the road has only just begun. He has had his first vision of Christ. But Christianity does not end with accepting Christ; it means living His way of life. Out of evangelism is born the "new man." His growth and nurture in the new life are the concern of Christian education.

If quality of life is the real measure of progress, then the amazing influx of thousands into the Church can be described more truly as increase rather than growth. The pressing need for the teaching and training of these new disciples marks a stage when adequate help from the Church at home is far more crucially important than in the pioneer stages of evangelism. Their capacity for growth is illustrated over and over again by the Christian congregations who have been tended and cared for, and whose life and witness shines as a light in a dark place. But tragedy lies where the opportunity for spiritual growth is neglected and young churches are left without proper guidance and control. Of the large Sobo country on the Niger, where there has been rapid growth in the number of inquirers, the Rev. O. N. Garrard gives this picture of what the lack of missionary supervision means :—

The C.M.S. was the first Christian body (in modern times) to take the Gospel to Warri. It was visited several times by the African Bishop Johnson. The Africans themselves carried the Good News inland: ultimately between sixty and a hundred churches came into existence. I have visited one of these churches where the members say they used to number 600. Owing to lack of supervision and teaching the number to-day has dwindled to seventy. Similar reports have been given to me of other churches.

In one particular area of the Sobo country the African villagers tell of forty churches which were in existence only a few years ago. To-day there are only twelve churches; the remainder appear to have perished. Such an example brings home the kind of results which follow from a lack of recruits; from the failure on the part of the Church at home to give these young churches the help that they need. The lack of adequate reinforcements means that many a missionary is struggling to do the work of three people—an impossible task which leads to overstrain and sometimes

breakdown, in a brave effort to prevent vital work and opportunities from being neglected.

If the rapid increase in the numbers of new Christians is to be followed by all the healthy stages of growth, so that they may enrich and not imperil the life of the Christian fellowship, there must be an immediate response to the ever-increasing demand for Christian education. Through its 1000 schools of various grades which are influencing the minds and characters of over 60,000 boys and girls in Nigeria to-day, the C.M.S. is given a wonderful opportunity of training the young life of the country which will provide the leaders and home makers of to-morrow. The development of this work is imperative, for as yet little more than four per cent of the children of Nigeria are found in school.

The fact that in British Tropical Africa the Government has definitely committed itself to a system of religious education, and assists by grants all mission education which comes up to the high standard it sets, marks a new stage in partnership, and widens the range of our opportunity. A number of C.M.S. schools are working under the government education code. For certain approved schools (a very few compared with the total number) the Government gives, on an average, sixty per cent of the salaries of native teachers; grants are given for all qualified Europeans engaged in teaching work, and half the cost of new school buildings is met by the Government if they are built according to approved plans. Though a good many difficult conditions are imposed by government regulations, the gains are many. Complete freedom is given in regard to religious teaching and worship, and thanks to the grants the C.M.S. has been able to supply extra and most valuable missionaries. This policy of co-operation makes it possible for the Society to appeal for a number of men and women educationists with the certainty that financial provision is available for them. The C.M.S. has a large share in shaping the educational policy of the country, and the wide scope

of its present opportunity in developing the education of women and girls has already been made clear.

The spirit of the pioneers

The early chapters of the C.M.S. West Africa epic show at what cost the Dioceses of Sierra Leone, Lagos, and the Niger have been brought into the Church of Christ. They have been won at the cost of long patience, the heroic sacrifices of pioneers, and the faithful service of their successors in Mission and Government. Out of the yesterday of faith and dogged perseverance has grown the to-day of opportunity. Through the labours of the past we have entered upon a goodly heritage, but it is above all things a sacred trust. The future calls for no lesser spirit of sacrifice.

To no less challenging though to different adventures we are summoned to-day. Are we alive and as sensitive to God's call which comes to us in the fact of growth and opportunity, as were the pioneers when His call came to them to break the ground and sow the seed? The harvest is facing us, here and now. To quote from the General Secretary's New Year message: "We always see the harvest in the future, and hope that the next generation will reap where we have sown. But the challenge of this hour is to reap and to reap now, or the opportunity will be gone." We have only to picture what neglected opportunity is meaning in the Basa country (p. 51) if we would realize the peril of trying to believe that the harvest is always future.

Must the pioneers say of this generation: "We have sown but you have not reaped"? The need of to-day is expressed in our Lord's words to His disciples, those first missionaries of the Kingdom: "The harvest is rich, but the labourers are few; so pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to gather his harvest" (Moffatt). Labourers: young ordained men, Christian educationists, doctors and nurses—men and women ready to serve as

partners in the work of the growing Church, by educating and training as well as working with African leaders. Such a task demands not only intellectual gifts and professional qualifications, but a certain quality of character in which a living experience of Christ is combined with humility and a readiness to work in partnership with the African. It is the kind of task which, as we have seen, is beginning to be tackled in Sierra Leone where a new experiment in partnership is interpreting the Christian Gospel in a most effective way.

Raimon Lull's standard of giving—" By love, by prayer, by the offering up of our own lives "—has been the measure of past self-giving in the building up of C.M.S. work in West Africa. In the year 1894 the unsuspected scourge of yellow fever wiped out one after another of the band of C.M.S. missionaries in Lagos, including Bishop Hill and his wife. Just two months later, at a great meeting in Exeter Hall to bid Godspeed to Bishop Tugwell, the newly-appointed Bishop of Western Equatorial Africa, Bishop Bardsley of Carlisle made this striking comment on the costly pouring out of man-power :—

> Some of you may ask : " Might not the men who have given their lives for Africa have done longer and more useful service in our home parishes ? Wherefore this waste ? " Brethren, let us not take up words from the mouth of Judas Iscariot.

Forty years on. . . . During the very year for which the Niger Diocese reported the amazing increase of 10,000 registered church members (with all the demands on C.M.S. partnership which such an influx of new Christians makes), the Unified Statement of the needs of the Church Overseas, issued by the Missionary Council, drew the attention of the whole Church of England to the havoc wrought in such fields of spiritual harvest by under-staffing due to shortage of recruits—" The offering of life from men and women with the needed qualifications is wholly inadequate." We

may narrow down the field of this next sentence so that it applies particularly to West Africa :—

His *is* the Kingdom, but in vast areas He cannot enter in because hundreds of those whom He has chosen to be His heralds never dream that it may be overseas that He has called them to proclaim His message and to show forth His life.

The call to partnership

It is impossible to read the story of Crowther or Henry Townsend, or of any one of the pioneers without realizing that the one motive and allegiance which carried them through was the constraining love of Christ. They were caught up in the sweep of God's world-wide purpose, revealed to them as a call to take to the African the good news that in Christ Jesus his people are " co-heirs, companions and co-partners in the Promise."[1]

We are linked up to-day in that same great purpose of God, though it calls us to face different tasks and new opportunities. As that purpose lays hold of us we too experience the constraint which makes the offering of anything less than the whole of ourselves seem altogether unworthy of our Lord. That constraint may drive some to West Africa, while the pressure of the same Spirit will make clear to others that they can best serve His purpose in the work they are doing here at home. The inescapable fact is that it calls for the full response of every Christian disciple.

If the missionary enterprise were of human devising we could choose whether or no it was an adventure worth following. But it is not. It is rooted in the purpose and nature of God. He has chosen us to work with Him in fulfilling His purpose before ever we have chosen Him. That is the tremendous fact we have to face before meeting any of the common objections to " being keen on missions." The response to His choice of us is not to be found in

[1] Ephesians iii. 6 (Moffatt).

reason or argument, but in worship—in that realm of communion in which He lays hold of our lives, renewing and energizing them for the outreach of His purpose.

To acknowledge in our worship that Christ is Lord of all does not mean merely asserting the fact as part of our creed; it means living out its implications. If He is Lord of all He is Lord of the African as well as my Lord. If he is Lord of all He calls me "to brother" my fellow-Christians in West Africa just as much as the people living next door.

If we believe Christ to be Lord of the West African field we must be prepared to face what the fact involves. He holds the open gate, calling us to work with Him and with all who are seeking to co-operate in His purpose in that vast field, some of which is rich with harvest, some half-worked, and some as yet untouched.

To all who are united in the great fellowship of the C.M.S. comes this call to partnership. It means standing in with the team of African Christians and C.M.S. missionaries in the great areas of West Africa for which the Society has accepted responsibility; standing in by prayer and sacrifice in the spirit of the pioneers. By prayer and giving we become linked up with the lives of others. "Whatever strength we gain from our contact with Him flows on, a very current of power, through all the chain of lives we have drawn together to make the circle of prayer." In order to pray intelligently for our partners in West Africa we need to get to know a great deal more about them. Missionary literature will extend and deepen the range of our sympathy and understanding. That growing knowledge of our partners may become for us the fuel of worship, for "worship is understanding set on fire."

I kneeled there in the muddy fallow,
I knew that Christ was there with Callow,
That Christ was standing there with me,
That Christ had taught me what to be.

West Africa has given one of the greatest Christian leaders to the service of the great continent and the enriching of the Church of Christ throughout the world—Aggrey of the Gold Coast, the champion of partnership between African and European. Though he has passed on, his message summoning us to adventure with God in this day of opportunity rings out like a clarion call: "We go to help God recreate a new heaven and a new earth. It is a glorious call—a man's job. It cannot fail; it must not fail; it is God's work. His resources are at our disposal."

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