

Thinking Missions With Christ

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

Apart from God in Christ there can be no missionary enterprise. In Jesus Christ the work of missions finds its basis, its aim, its method, its message, its motive and its goal. The evangelization of the nations is not a human but a divine project—an eternal purpose of God which he purposed in Christ Jesus. The message of the New Testament to the heathen world was redemption from sin. The word of the Cross was the message of the apostles; the power of the Cross was their motive; and the glory of the resurrection was their hope.

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Thinking Missions With Christ

*Some Basis Aspects of
World-Evangelism, Our Message,
Our Motive and Our Goal*

BY
SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

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PREFACE

Over the entrance of one of the university buildings at Upsala is this inscription:

*“Tanka fritt ar stört,
Men tanka ratt ar störré”*

“Free thought is great but true thought is better.” There is great freedom of thought on missions today. The globe-trotter, the newspaper reporter, and the man on the street do not hesitate to express their opinions on missions and missionaries. The youth of today, untrammelled by the older traditions or conventions, is free to express its conclusions. A leader among the present generation of students, when cautioned regarding the humanistic trend and syncretistic philosophy in missions wrote:

“I am personally not the least interested in modernist propaganda. The battle (if there ever was a battle) has passed wholly beyond that front for me. Modern life and my own life crack the universe clear open to its very core and make me face issues a thousand fathoms beneath those of the modernist and fundamentalist controversy . . . As a teacher I am not at all concerned with what any man thinks but only that he thinks.” This is a familiar attitude and there is considerable truth in the contention. But if the “universe is cracked clear open to its very core” and we are to think at all correctly, conclusively, and creatively regarding it and the Kingdom of God, we need first of all

to gird the loins of our mind with truth. In the battle against error there is no weapon so powerful as the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

Paul spoke of "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Because he himself did it, his epistles are without a parallel as guide for missionary thought. He had the mind of Christ. He accepted the facts of the Christian revelation, of One who came into the world, lived, suffered, died, arose again and ascended that He might subdue all things to Himself.

Apart from God in Christ there can be no missionary enterprise. In Jesus Christ the work of missions finds its basis, its aim, its method, its message, its motive, and its goal. The evangelization of the nations is not a human but a divine project — an eternal purpose of God which He purposed in Christ Jesus. The message of the New Testament to the heathen world was redemption from sin. The word of the Cross was the message of the apostles; the power of the Cross was their motive; and the glory of the resurrection was their hope.

Some of the chapters that compose this little book were written before the churches of America were summoned to "Re-thinking Missions." Others appeared in missionary periodicals or were given as addresses.

While in Arabia and Egypt, facing one of the most baffling missionary problems, one was compelled to think it through. And the only real help was found in the Word of God and in the companionship of Jesus Christ:

*“We search the world for truth. We cull
The good, the true, the beautiful,
From graven stone and written scroll,
And all old flower-fields of the soul;*

*And, weary seekers of the best,
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Is in the Book our mothers read.”*

The New Testament with its record of apostolic missions, the apostolic message, the story of the apostles' dauntless faith, their undiscourageable zeal and their assurance of a day of triumph, is the inexhaustible source-book for thinking on missions.

When so many today are re-thinking missions it seemed worth while to revise our own thoughts and bring them together in a little sheaf — gleanings after other reapers if you will — or in the words of Boaz, “handfuls of purpose.”

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

Princeton, New Jersey

CONTENTS

I. The Duty of Conclusive Thinking.....	9
II. Against Thinking in Gray.....	18
III. Stockholders or Ambassadors?.....	26
IV. The Power of the Keys.....	40
V. Putting First Things First.....	53
VI. The Supreme Motive	61
VII. "The Greatest Hymn"	73
VIII. Re-Thinking Missions With the Hymnal.....	84
IX. Guidance	94
X. How Great Is Jesus Christ?.....	107
XI. Implications of Belief in the Second Coming	117
XII. The Other-worldliness of the Missionary Enterprise	127
Index	139

I

*“The very God! think, Abib; doest thou think?
So, the All-Great, were the All-Loving too —
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, ‘O heart I made, a heart beats here!
‘Face, my hands fashioned, see it in myself,
‘Thou hast no power nor may’st conceive of mine,
‘But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
‘And thou must love me who have died for thee!’
The madman saith He said so: it is strange.”*

—Browning’s Karshish the Arab Physician.

CHAPTER I

THE DUTY OF CONCLUSIVE THINKING

“Gird up the loins of your mind”

1 Peter 1:13

TO an Oriental the girdle is everything because it is indispensable. It is the last article of dress a man will pawn or discard. On the girdle he hangs his most precious possessions — it is a sign of pride, of power, of activity, of independence.

“Thou hast girded me with strength unto the battle,” sang David. “Let your loins be girt about and your lamps burning” said David’s Greater Son. The warrior girded his sword on his thigh before the battle. Elijah girded himself and outran the chariot of Ahab on the day of destiny.

The New Testament bids the Christian first of all to gird himself with truth. Christ our Saviour wore the girdle of a carpenter at the bench in Nazareth; girded himself with a towel to teach humility (in this same letter Peter is reminded of the story); and appears in glory, girt about the breast with a golden girdle.

All this, which Peter found in his pocket-Testament and in his notes of the three years he spent with Jesus, all this occurs to him when he says, “Gird up the loins of your mind.” Tighten the belt about the loins of your wandering thoughts. Let your mind be alert, awake,

active, prepared for decision and conclusion. Gird up your loins! Free yourself from the entanglements of minor matters that cling like a robe dangling about your ankles.

The celebrated statue *le Penseur* by Rodin, which stands in massive bronze on its high pedestal near the Notre Dame of Paris, is typical in its colossal proportions and very pose of the fact that thought is toil.

“In education,” said the late Henry Van Dyke, of Princeton University, “I would sweep away half of the courses and two-thirds of the examinations, and concentrate attention on teaching men to use their powers of observation accurately, their powers of reasoning intelligently, their powers of imagination and sympathy vividly, and their powers of will sanely and strongly — in short, to know things as they are, to conceive them as they might be, and to help make them as they ought to be. That is the real purpose of education.”

The philosopher who said *cogito ergo sum*, “I think therefore I am,” pointed out the great impassable gulf, fixed forever, between man as mere animal and man as Divine in origin and in goal.

Christ’s definition of eternal life is not in terms of existence but in terms of thought. “This is life eternal that they might know Thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”

A college education is of little value to the world unless it transfers us from the class of those who toil with their hands for the common weal to the class of those who toil with their brains for the common weal. The former are called of God to discover and distribute

all material wealth; the latter to explore and exploit the spiritual universe. Masters of the art of thinking for the common good.

We live in an age that needs clear thought and decisive leadership. On the very threshold, however, you will find a host of lurking demons, to lure you away from the task. Lassitude and love of ease will bid you loosen your girdle. The superficiality of the masses will also tempt you to be satisfied with surface knowledge — to become an echo and not a voice.

The Apostle Peter, however, entreats us to do hard thinking, not primarily because we are men endowed with mind, but because we are Christians endowed with the Spirit of Christ.

The context is very significant: "Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into. *Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind*, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

No man should think so much, so hard and so highly as a Christian because he has so wide a range of thought open to him. Paul pushed back the horizon

of Judaism so far that Peter was alarmed. He upset all theories of the spiritual universe by his law of relativity in Romans and Colossians. He became the Copernicus, the Newton and the Einstein of a new universe of angels, principalities and powers, things present and things to come, height and depth — in their relation to the Incarnate Son of God. Peter was bewildered at such universalism and to his parochial and provincial mind Paul's epistles contained "some knotty points which unstable and ignorant people twist as they do the rest of the Scriptures to their own destruction."

Paul's thirteen epistles, if they had no other use or purpose, would at least condemn forever all shallow-minded and narrow-visioned Christianity. Think what those early Christians must have been to read and appreciate Ephesians and Romans on a hot Sunday morning, crowded in an upper room! Early Christianity did not follow cunningly devised fables. It did not minimize the facts of revelation to escape mental difficulties. It did not linger in the shallows of Deism but plunged into the depth of the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Restoration of a Universe, the solution of all its riddles by Redemption: "O the depth of the riches."

Concentration of thought to Peter was to tighten his belt, to gather in all the loose folds of his robe, to free his limbs for running through the surf, for tugging at the oars, for wrestling against wind and tide. He reminds us that in the realm of thought there is progress and service and conflict. We must gird the loins of our mind like the runner to win the prize, like the Master

to wash each the other's feet, like Paul's soldier of the Cross who has the loins of his mind girt about with Truth. Not a leaning on other minds, a hanging on other's girdles, but independence, strength, vigor, conclusiveness because exclusive of the inconsequent and the incompatible.

Such girding of the mind, such concentration of thought on the highest and best is the perpetual secret of a strong will, of decision of character, of perseverance of aim and singleness of purpose, and clearness of vision that bring open success or at least enable us to wrest victory out of the jaws of defeat in the arena of truth. What men have done men can do on this battlefield. The record of this warfare in the breaking of lances and the swift movement of the rapier is inspiring.

Galileo before the Papal assembly; Luther before the Diet of Worms; Gibbon the night he completed his last chapter of the Decline and Fall; Herbert Spencer when at the age of thirty-two he calmly announced his intention to write a complete Synthetic Philosophy; Arthur J. Balfour finding time to write his Foundations of Theistic Belief in the midst of a national political crisis; Theodore Roosevelt, naturalist, hunter, historian, literary critic, statesman and apostle of the strenuous life — what noble examples of the fearless thinker, who girds up the loins of his mind and brings every thought into the captivity of obedience to some great ideal.

Slovenliness in thought is far more common than slovenliness of dress or of speech, and it is less excusable in those who have had the privilege of a higher education. Yet we seldom rebuke it. Instead of clear-

cut, crystal-like concepts of the great fundamental categories of thought the slovenly thinker uses words without defining them, leaps at conclusions without the process of reasoning and generalizes before he has mustered a corporal's guard of facts.

The real student of nature or of the supernatural is swift to hear and slow to speak. A university is not a knowledge-factory or a bureau for a classified card-index of all that may be useful to the casual applicant. Shoes may be repaired and even trousers pressed "while-you-wait," but education cannot be masticated at a lunch-counter although the train of desire stops five minutes for refreshments.

This is an age of specialists. But the first qualification of a specialist is to specialize — to focus thought — to know in detail. Loose thinking has been the great cause of heresy in church and state. Political fads, new religions and patent philosophies find adherents because men do not think for themselves. They have lost the girdle of their minds. Their thoughts are at loose ends. They are driven about by every wind of doctrine and captivated by the latest fad. Remember Jesus Christ and you will think. The Christ-centered life has largest radius.

"The life of Christ," says Jean Paul Richter, "concerns Him who being the holiest among the mighty and the mightiest among the holy lifted with His pierced hand empires off their hinges, turned the stream of centuries out of its channel and still governs the ages." History is His story. His incarnation is the dividing line of ancient and modern times. His life and teach-

ing, His death and resurrection have changed the character of architecture, sculpture, music, painting, poetry, philosophy, ethics, international law — all that constitutes civilization. If we cease to think of Him we impoverish ourselves. All spiritual influence is the effluence of His affluence.

“No one ever plucked
A rag even, from the body of the Lord
To wear and mock with, but despite himself
He looked the greater and was the better.”

Faith kindles the fires of thought. Agnosticism quenches them. Life eternal, life abundant, begins for the intellect when we seek to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. The fear of God is only the beginning of wisdom. Perfect love casts out fear. Search for truth in the heavens above; in the earth beneath; in the waters under the earth. Take the wings of the morning, penetrate the darkness of stellar space beyond the spectrum and the telescope or search the deeper depths of the human soul — “all is yours for you are Christ’s and Christ is God’s.”

“I should be ashamed,” said Noah Webster, “to acknowledge Him as my Saviour if I could comprehend him — then he would be no greater than myself.”

Deep thought produces deep theology and deep piety. When our thinking is based upon the Rock of Ages nothing can disturb us, and we know that “God is in His heaven and all is right with the world.” What calm confidence those minds have that are stayed on Christ. There can be no eccentricity of thought when we have found the true centre, and all our being swings around

it. This sobriety of mind which has found its centre of rest in the contemplation of God in Christ is at once the best sedative and the highest tonic for the human soul.

“Jesus the very thought of Thee,” (sang Bernard of Clairvaux in the Middle Ages)

“With sweetness fills the breast,
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.”

That was the secret of his own calm in an age when men were kindling the fires of persecution in the West and drawing the sword of the Crusaders from its scabbard against the Saracens in the East.

In the same century, Al Ghazali, the Mohammedan mystic, in his book on “The Marvels of Creation” wrote: “To gaze up into the vault of heaven drives away anxiety, removes the whisperings of Satan, takes away idle fear, reminds us of God, banishes evil thoughts, cures pessimism, subdues the passionate, comforts the lonely and is the best direction for our face in prayer.” Did not the Greeks call man *anthropos*, the being with the upturned-face?

“Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard? The Everlasting God, Jehovah, the creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary, there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint and to him that hath no might He increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

II

“His book was published in 1912 by Morgan and Scott. It was called ‘Thinking Black.’ It was got up in striking guise and was very well illustrated. It took the Christian peoples of Britain and America by storm. It immediately became a best-seller. Many thousand copies were sold in England within six weeks of its publication. It was as widely reviewed as any missionary book had ever been. It was too positive a book not to attract criticism from some quarters, but in the main the chorus was one of joy and amazement at finding such virility coupled with so much vision, such sanity with so much sanctity.”

—G. E. Tilsley’s *Dan Crawford*.

CHAPTER II

AGAINST THINKING IN GRAY

IN his book on pioneer missions in Africa, "Thinking Black," Dan Crawford introduces us to the psychology of the Negro natives to furnish a new angle of vision. The primitive mind seems naturally to think in black and white rather than in gray. Perhaps our modern civilization has made us lose the power of sharp distinctions in the world of thought. We were told that one of the results of the war would be to teach men everywhere to think less superficially and more conclusively on moral questions.

There is always a tendency to compromise in morals, and the same tendency is evident in regard to the work of evangelization. God divided the light from the darkness, not only in the world of nature, but in the world of grace. "This, then, is the message," says John, "which we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." The attitude of the apostles toward the non-Christian religions is not expressed in gray or twilight shades. There are no blurred edges to their convictions. "Sharp as a sickle is the edge of shade and shine" in their teachings.

What Paul thinks of idolatry is clear, not only from the first chapter of Romans, but from such words as these in his epistle to the Corinthians: "The things

which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I would not that ye should have communion with demons.”

John was the apostle of love, and yet it was he who wrote in regard to the Gospel message: “If any one cometh unto you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house and give him no greeting, for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works.” Such intolerance is impossible to those who think in terms of gray.

James does not hesitate to class the Jews, who trusted in Unitarianism, with devils who also believed in one God and trembled (2:19). And Jude speaks of the false teachers in his day as “autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots . . . wandering stars for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved forever.”

In the recent volume entitled *Re-thinking Missions* the old Biblical, Christocentric basis for missions is discarded and we read: “At the center of the religious mission, though it takes the special form of promoting one’s own type of thought and practice, there is an always valid impulse of love to men; one offers one’s own faith simply because that is the best one has to offer.” The message we have here is humanistic idealism, not redemption. “An idealism solidly based upon the testimony of human experience and upon the eternal nature of the universe” — whatever that may mean. “All fences and private properties in truth are futile,” they go on to say, “the final truth, whatever it may be, is the New Testament of every existing faith.”

Such an appraisal of the basis and aim of missions is all out of focus. It resembles a passport photograph, sufficiently accurate for purposes of identification to outsiders, but hardly suited for enlargement and admiration. Such appraisal in our opinion will not produce a new Laymen's Movement, nor greatly increase missionary gifts to the Boards concerned, nor secure an array of qualified volunteers from the universities. When Moses at the command of God sent out his appraisal committee and they brought in their report, it was not a victorious document: "We saw the giants, the sons of Anak, and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Joshua and Caleb tried to save the situation, but mob psychology took a hand at Kadesh Barnea, and unbelief triumphed. *Absit omen.*

What we need today in missions is less comparative religion and more positive religion. It is possible to dwell upon the tolerable things in Hinduism and the noble things in Islam, even as one sifts out grains of gold from tons of earth, to the practical exclusion of the social evils, the spiritual darkness and the spiritual death which dominate these systems. This was not the method of the Apostles. A recent writer in the *Indian Witness* put the fact in very forcible language: The wise general does not carefully search out the strong spots in the fortress of his antagonist and then spend his time illuminating them with his searchlights. He finds the weak spots and dwells on them with his heavy artillery. Let some of our sages who are scholastic rather than practical prepare a list of the things vitally

antagonistic to Christian truth, then the men who are practical rather than scholastic will be able to avoid scattering an ineffective effort and to concentrate on those things the destruction of which by their fall will cause the fall of false faiths."

To us who work among Moslems, their denial of Jesus Christ's mission, His Incarnation, His Atonement, His Deity, are the very issues of the conflict. Almost spontaneously, therefore, what might have been mere theological dogma in the mind of the missionary turns into a deep spiritual conviction, a logical necessity and a great passion. Face to face with those who deny our Saviour and practically deify Mohammed, one is compelled to think in black and white. The challenge of the *muezzin*, so romantic to the tourist, is a cry of pain to the missionary; it hurts. In the silence of the night one cannot help thinking, that it pleased the Father that in Jesus Christ should all fulness dwell, not in Mohammed. Face to face with Islam, one cannot help asking what will be the final outcome of Christian Unitarianism. In the history of Islam its bald monotheism has always degenerated into some form of pantheism or deism.

As Dr. P. Carnegie Simpson says: "It is no part of evangelical catholic Christianity to say that a Unitarian is not a Christian. A Christian is not a man who accepts a certain theology, but is a man who is faithful to whatever meanings of Christ for thought or life he has found true. In this sense, not a few Unitarians may be better Christians than are many in the evangelical or catholic churches. On the other hand, evangelical catholic Christianity does and must say that Uni-

tarianism misreads the data which are in the Fact of Christ, and so misses the essentials of the Gospel either as the revelation of the real love of God or as a salvation for sinful man. The matter is summed up in the saying of Samuel Taylor Coleridge that 'a Unitarian may be a Christian, but Unitarianism is not Christianity.' "

Again when Moslems assert that the Gospel is corrupted and untrustworthy, the missionary can find no help in destructive criticism. One wonders whether the great conflict between Islam and Christianity will not have to be fought out between the covers of the Bible. They themselves are abandoning their traditions and the Koran, in public and private discussion, and are appealing to the Scriptures. Their appeal is often based on the interpretation of those who think in gray. A recent paragraph on the subject of Christ's deity, which appeared in an Indian Moslem magazine, copied its arguments from modern Unitarians.

An Arabic book published at Beirut some years ago was entitled "Heathen Doctrines in the Christian Religion." It is by a Moslem who fancies that he has proved Christianity false by appealing to European critics of the destructive school. In Cairo the Moslem press constantly quotes Liberal interpretation of New Testament doctrine as proof against the New Testament Christ. The Christian who has no convictions in regard to the great fundamentals of Christianity is easily led to treat Islam as a Christian heresy and *all* Moslems as true seekers after God, in their own way. If there is no real distinction between Creation and Evolution, if

there was no miracle at Bethlehem and only a martyrdom on Calvary, we may patiently await the future development of all religions. In that case the missionary is no longer a proclaimer of the truth, but a seeker after truth, as we were told in *Re-thinking Missions*. He is no longer an architect and builder, but a geologist looking for fossil specimens in old strata to complete his collection of things once alive, and now dead — but still admirable.

The tragic effect of thinking in gray is inevitable on the messenger as well as on his message. Twilight life is not conducive to spiritual health. We need the full light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. His authority must be supreme in the intellectual sphere. His belief in the Old Testament scriptures and His statement that “they cannot be broken” leaves us only one alternative; if we reject them, we reject Him also. It is not hard to accept the miracles of the Old and New Testaments if we accept the miracle in the first verse of Genesis and the greater miracle in the first chapter of John’s Gospel. As R. L. Knox says in his brilliant book, *Some Loose Stones*:

“Orthodox theology explains all the miracles recorded of our Saviour under one single hypothesis, that He was omnipotent God. But the enemy of miracles is forced to give a variety of different explanations: that the healing of the sick was faith-healing; the stilling of the storm, coincidence; the feeding of five thousand a misrepresented sacrament; the withering of the fig tree a misrepresented parable; the raising of Lazarus a case of premature burial, and so on.”

A mutilated Gospel can only mean a mutilated spiritual life. When we walk in the light we do not confound or mix colors. There is a noble intolerance in the very words used so often by the Apostle John: Light—darkness, truth—lie, life—death, God—devil. The effect of thinking in gray always leads to compromise, and where there is compromise there is indecision. Men have opinions instead of convictions; they join Erasmus in his study rather than Luther nailing his theses to the door of the cathedral. But Luther would have made a better foreign missionary than Erasmus, especially in our own day when so many in the Christian and non-Christian world are thinking in gray.

III

*“Only like souls I see the folk thereunder,
Bound who should conquer, slaves who should be
kings, —
Hearing their one hope with an empty wonder,
Sadly contented in a show of things; —
Then with a rush the intolerable craving
Shivers throughout me like a trumpet-call, —
Oh to save these! to perish for their saving,
Die for their life, be offered for them all!”*

—F. W. H. Meyer’s St. Paul.

CHAPTER III

STOCKHOLDERS OR AMBASSADORS

THE choice of words in a Christian's vocabulary is not of minor importance. Archbishop Trench says, in his classic *On the Study of Words* that there is a moral element in words themselves. "They are enough to make us feel about them that they do not hold themselves neutral in the great conflict between good and evil, light and darkness, which is dividing the world; that they are not contented to be the passive vehicles, now of the truth, and now of falsehood." We see on the contrary, that they continually take their side, are some of them children of light, others children of this world, or even of darkness.

Christian terms have a Christian lineage that should not be heedlessly disregarded. There is a flavor about old and well loved words that makes one hesitate to adopt substitutes without good reason. A new word cannot easily be filled with the historic and characteristic content of the old.

"Sharing" is a modern word in the modernized vocabulary of missions. Though in itself a good word with an honorable history, it has begun to usurp the place of ideas and ideals that are vitally related to the work of evangelism. Many "ways of sharing with other faiths" are advocated, differing in degrees of aggressiveness. Since the Jerusalem Council Meeting some claim that the proper terminology of missions centers around the

idea of sharing.* We read: "The International Missionary Conference at Jerusalem gave indications of a new trend of thought which is of profound significance for missionary work. Just as the Edinburgh Conference struck the note of sympathy and was followed by an era of endeavor to understand other faiths and to appraise their values sympathetically, so the Jerusalem Conference struck the note of *sharing*, and will, we hope, be followed by many different experiments in the method of sharing religious values and experiences with members of other faiths."

The same idea is prominent, not to say dominant, in the recently published Laymen's Appraisal of Foreign Missions. "The fundamental motive, the imperative of *sharing* whatever certainties we have in the field of religion remains," . . . this tends "to lessen the apparent need and certainly the insistent urgency of haste of the work of the foreign preacher and philanthropist." (Ch. I) "As Christianity *shares* this faith with men of all faiths, they become changed into the same substance. The names which now separate them lose their decisive meaning and there need be no loss of the historic thread of devotion which unites each to its own origin and inspirations."

"Ministry to the secular needs of men is *evangelism*, in the right use of the word. The aim of Christian missions today in our conception would take this form: To seek with people of other lands a true knowledge and love of God, expressing in life and word what we

* H. A. Popley: "Sharing with Other Faiths as an Evangelistic Method."

have learned through Jesus Christ, and endeavoring to give effect to His spirit in the life of the world.”

We believe this is loose thinking and is due to lack of discrimination in the use of the word *sharing*.

The use of this word without careful definition is to be deprecated for four reasons: It is not Scriptural; it is subject to many and very loose interpretations; its careless use shifts the very basis and aim of Christian missions; and the idea of sharing our human thought and experience is not the central idea of evangelism.

To share the Gospel is not biblical terminology. In relation to the Messiah of the Old Testament and the Gospel message of the New Testament the words used more than one hundred and forty times are: *bashara*, “to tell good tidings”; *diagello*, “to announce”; *katagello*, “to tell thoroughly”; *evangelizo*, “to spread good news”; *laleo*, “to talk or preach”; and (most frequently) *kerusso*, “to herald or proclaim.” The idea of “sharing” is foreign to the New Testament vocabulary in relation to the message of salvation. The Apostle Paul did not merely bring his own *experience* to the Gentile world, but he proclaimed the atoning death and life of Another. “We preach not ourselves.” How incongruous it would be to use the word “sharing” in place of “preaching” in passages such as the following:

They repented at the *sharing* of Jonah.

It pleased God by the foolishness of *sharing* to save them that believe.

Whom we *share*, warning every man.

How shall they *share* except they be sent?

It is not an earthly message or experience that Paul brings as the subject of his preaching. He proclaims the fact that the reconciliation of God and man in the death of Christ brought a new epoch and produced a new creation. The individual soul is bankrupt, no less than the wisdom of the world, before the fact of Christ.

A recent book by the leaders of German evangelical missions, entitled *Botschafter an Christi Statt*, contains a paper by Inspector Karl Hartenstein of Basel on the authority and aim of Christian missions. He bases the whole of his argument on the statement of Paul in II Cor. 5:20. "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, we beseech you, in Christ's stead." In these words, says he, Paul proclaims the duty, the basis, and the essence of evangelical missions. Missions have only one ground and the missionary message one great content, namely, "Be ye reconciled to God." The subject of missions is God Himself, whose message comes through His ambassadors. The object of missions is a lost world. The missionary is the envoy of Christ. He comes not as lord but as servant. He is absolutely and only an instrument, a tool, a channel for the Message. This is true not only of the proclamation he gives but of his own life and of all his activities. The missionary is not first of all a leader, nor is he a religious personality who can "share" what he possesses with others. All he can do is to bear humble witness to Christ, who is all and in all.

The use of the word sharing leads to loose and contradictory interpretations of its meaning. It lacks definite content. Dr. Daniel J. Fleming, in formulating

“a code of ethics for those who share,” admits the many possible interpretations of the idea of sharing. Is it to be reciprocal sharing in the spirit of a common search, with all the perils of syncretism? This seems to be the idea in one paragraph of the Laymen’s Appraisal Report:

“Sharing is a common search for truth and becomes real only as it becomes mutual, running in both directions, each teaching, each learning, each with the other meeting the unsolved problems of both.”

Is it to pool our individual experiences of God and the work of His spirit at an *ashram* with Hindus and in the mosque with Moslems and secure “shares” of the highest present market value from each other? Is it to give freely that Gospel which we have freely received — the one and only message of hope in all its fulness? Or, on the contrary, does it mean to find among non-Christian religions and philosophies a lost chord or an unknown mystical experience that will satisfy the longing heart of Christendom? Mr. Popley tells us what this means in India today:

“In some places attempts have been made to use the non-Christian festivals, just as the early Church took over pagan festivals and christianized them. Indian Christian scholars, like Chakkarai, Appaswamy and Tilak have found themselves making an increasing use of Hindu terms to express their own Christian experience. The old aversion to the use of Hindu terms for God and for other religious ideas is gradually passing away, and this change has been marked in South India by the substitution of the word *Kadavul* (meaning God)

for *Thevan* in the new Tamil translation of the Bible. A recent Marathi translation of the New Testament by an Indian Christian has come in for a good deal of criticism by some Christian scholars, because it was said to make too much use of Hindu terms and expressions."

And if men cannot agree on the *process* of sharing — whether it is to give what we have, or to give and take by way of exchange — what of *the thing we share*? Again we quote from Mr. Popley's article:

"The early Protestant missions thought of it (the Gospel) as a message centering around the Atonement as a substitutionary act of Christ, and as the only means of saving men and women from an eternal hell of physical and spiritual torment, which awaited them if they did not receive and heed the message. Later Protestant missions tended to think of it as a message of a Christian civilization, which would ensure all the supposed blessings of Western civilization to people accepting it, and also as a message of a perfect divine revelation granted once for all, which must displace or fulfill all other imperfect revelations which had been granted to men. The present generation has not yet clearly thought out its idea of the Christian message."

In that case the present generation had better get busy, for the work of nineteen centuries has been wasted! Some of those who talk of sharing are investing in stock from worldly markets, now that the old Gospel message is quoted below par. As a result they are in the midst of a spiritual depression.

"If we accept the truth of the revelation to Abraham we can hardly deny the possibility of a revelation

to Zarathustra, unless we take up the *a priori* attitude that His revelation was limited to the Jewish people. The message of the Jerusalem Conference says on this matter: 'We welcome every noble quality in non-Christian persons or systems as further proof that the Father, who sent His son into the world, has nowhere left Himself without a witness.' It is impossible for many of us to think of the revelation of the all-loving God and Father whom Jesus has shown to us as a revelation limited by our theological systems, and there is nothing in the teaching of Jesus to suggest that God has so limited His own revelation

"We cannot expect that those who embrace the Christian faith will be prepared to scrap all their previous religious experiences, any more than the converted Jew could bring himself to give up the Psalms and Prophets, or the converted Greek the philosophy of Plato." *

This brings us to another reason for greater discrimination in the use of the word "sharing" when we wish to express the idea of evangelism.

The careless use of the word "sharing" tends to shift the basis of missions and to obscure the issue. Because there are so many "ways of sharing with other faiths" and because those who profess to share disagree as to what and how they share with others, it is well to go back to the real issues. All things are of God. He reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. He gave us the ministry of reconciliation. This ministry committed unto us is called "the word of reconciliation." Because

* Popley in the article quoted above.

we are the custodians, the trustees, the ambassadors of this word for Christ, we beseech the world that knows not this message, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. The heart of the enterprise is God's work of reconciliation (John 3:16). This is the good news. It consists of historic facts. These facts were the sole message of the apostles. The acceptance of this message transforms life and produces a new creation.

Missions have for their object the salvation of souls in the mass of humanity and are not called *primarily* to political, economic, social, and racial activities. These activities are part of the duty of the church, not of missions. The method of missions is therefore the Word; the proclamation of the Gospel and not the impartation of cultural values. The task of the missionary is to preach repentance and faith. The proclamation of the Cross of Christ and the grace of God can alone deliver the enterprise from the peril of complete secularization.

It is by the message of the Cross and not by social service that men are translated from darkness unto light and from the power of Satan unto God. When we carry a divine message of reconciliation we are ambassadors. Dr. Duncan B. MacDonald of Hartford, puts the present-day issue very clearly:

“Are the missionaries of the future to be missionaries of Christ or missionaries of the Christian civilization of the West? This is the alternative which we face at present, although it is often disguised behind forms of words which conceal its real nature and essential importance. Do the missionaries of our Christian

Churches go out to proclaim to the world the unique and divine fact of the Incarnation or to carry to the non-Christian world the benefits — educational, medical, generally humanitarian — which have grown up in our civilization under the stimulus and guidance of the Christian faith?”

The answer to these questions determines the whole character of the missionary enterprise and of the type of missionary that is needed. The over-emphasis in America on the social implications of the Gospel and the alleged lack of emphasis on the Gospel itself has led our German brethren, since the Jerusalem Meeting, to speak of “the peril of Americanism” in the mission field. Inspector Hartenstein concludes the able paper, from which we have quoted, by saying:

“Over against the eclipse of this message of faith by *American activism*, and over against the minimizing of the truth of revelation by syncretism, and over against the worldly atmosphere which threatens missionary service through secularism, we must hold fast the heritage of the Reformation and of Pietism by a new emphasis on the Scriptures and the Scriptural basis of the enterprise. Missions are nothing else than an ambassadorship in Christ’s stead to a lost world, and the only power of missions, as well as the only source of authority, is the Holy Spirit.”

How utterly different all this is from the ideas expressed in the earlier chapters of “Re-thinking Missions.” Professor Hocking in this report, as in statements at the Jerusalem Meeting (Vol. VIII, pp. 160-161), believes that while there may have been a place

in the past for the one-sided proclamation of final truth, yet the greater future lies in a new form of intercourse between religions. He would have the missionaries follow "the Socratic method, not pledging people to accept their truth but finding out together what their combined resources are." Or to put it in the words of Mr. Popley:

"In the past the Theologian has tended to approach religious problems by the path of dogma, rather than by the path of experience and experiment. Certain propositions were regarded as fundamental, and the subject was approached deductively from these, rather than inductively from the experience of men. The method of sharing means that instead of laying down irrefutable propositions which must be accepted willy-nilly, we study our own experiences and those of others in order to find out the truth . . . In such a group the leader must be very careful to make no attempt to dominate, and must himself be a sharer, and not one who has come with the purpose to convert the others to his own point of view."

This is quite in accord with Mr. Gandhi's missionary program for the Christian Church. There must be no proselytism. Humanitarian service is welcome, but the distinctive Christian message is unnecessary. It is refreshing, however, to note that Mr. Gandhi knows Hinduism and the New Testament too well to speak of reciprocal sharing: "At the present moment, India has nothing to share with the world, save her degradation, pauperism, and plagues. Is it her ancient Scriptures that we should send to the world? Well, they are printed

in many editions, and an incredulous and idolatrous world refuse to look at them because we, the heirs and custodians, do not like them. Before, therefore, I can think of sharing with the world, I must possess.”*

This puts the issue very clearly. If Christ is all we need, if in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, if He is the propitiation and the reconciliation for the whole world, why not tell the world, and so win the world to accept Him as the final and supreme message of redemption.

Sharing is not the central thought in evangelism. The Gospel is God's good news, not human good will. Sharing relates to that which men can give or take. The Gospel is not of this world. It came into the world as God's unspeakable gift through the Incarnation. Tennyson wrote to a friend from Mablethorpe:

“I am housed at Mr. Wildman's, an old friend of mine in these parts. He and his wife are two perfectly honest Methodists. When I came, I asked her after news, and she replied: “Why, Mr. Tennyson, there's only one piece of news that I know, that Christ died for *all* men.’ And I said to her: “That is old news, and good news, and new news’; wherewith the good woman seemed satisfied.”

And who would not be satisfied? There is no substitute for the Gospel and no other way to win hearts — it is God's only way. The word of the Cross is the Gospel and there can be no other. Before that Cross all human wisdom and power and righteousness is bank-

* C. F. Andrew: “Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas,” p. 264, 265.

rupt. We have nothing to share; all is Christ's. Everything we have is His free gift. All superiority complexes of race or birth or position disappear. The Cross pours contempt on all our pride. This is why the message of the Cross makes the best missionaries, and the chief of sinners becomes the best ambassador of the grace of God. Those to whom most is forgiven always love most. The love of Christ constrains them; not only the missionary message, but the missionary method and the missionary passion are found in Calvary. There would have been no Apostolic missions, no Medieval missions, no Modern missions without the experience of redemption and the call to be ambassadors of the Cross. St. Paul and St. Patrick, William Carey and Henry Martyn, David Livingstone and Hudson Taylor, had essentially the same experience, the same message, and the same passion. The Gospel for them was a joyful message of redemption. This message did not offer a philosophical theory, nor a mere program for material betterment, but victory over sin and death. Such a message the human heart needs, and of such a message who would be ashamed? Lest we mistake the circumference for the center we need to remember the limitations and implications of the great Commission. "We are sent," in the words of Hugh Thomson Kerr, "not to preach sociology but salvation; not economics but evangelism; not reform but redemption; not culture but conversion; not progress but pardon; not the new social order but the new birth; not revolution but regeneration; not renovation but revival; not resuscitation but resurrection; not a new organization but a new creation; not

democracy but the Gospel; not civilization but Christ. We are ambassadors not diplomats.”

If this be true perhaps some of our methods of evangelism need overhauling and our message itself needs a clearer and less cumbersome expression. We have good news of forgiveness and pardon, of peace and victory over sin. Christ is the only hope of the world.

IV

*“I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.
Wouldst thou unprove this to re-prove the proved?
In life’s mere minute, with power to use that proof,
Leave knowledge and revert to how it sprung?
Thou hast it; use it and forthwith, or die!”*

—*Browning’s A Death in the Desert.*

CHAPTER IV

THE POWER OF THE KEYS

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven”—Matt. 16:19

PETER unquestionably occupies a position of primacy among the apostles. His name is always mentioned first in the three lists, and he is again and again their spokesman. He is mentioned one hundred and eighty-two times in the New Testament; and in the Gospel story no other apostle is drawn with clearer lines and deeper colors. We can see him stand out on the canvas; and artists who have chosen the apostles as subjects have had little difficulty in so depicting him in the group as to be easily recognized.

We can see him at the lake as a fisherman, when he received his call; in the praetorium when the cock crew; again at the lake, when he was recalled. Or on the Day of Pentecost; on the house-top at Joppa, and the next day with Cornelius at Caesarea Philippi.

The great Confessor, and once the great Apostate, is the only man in the New Testament to receive a personal beatitude: “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona!” The historian Froude, in his closing paragraph on the death of Cranmer, says: “The worth of a man must be measured by his life, not by his failure under a single and peculiar trial. Peter, the Apostle, though forewarned, thrice denied his Master on the first alarm of danger; yet that Master, who knew his nature in its

strength and in its infirmity, chose him for the rock on which He would build His Church.”

We notice in this chapter of Matthew’s Gospel that the first great confession of faith by the great Apostle is followed by a two-fold promise from the lips of Jesus. In both cases the promise alludes (by metaphor) to the character of Peter’s faith:

Peter’s faith is fundamental; therefore “On this rock I will build my Church.”

Peter’s faith is penetrative; therefore “I will give thee the keys.”

His confession was at once steadfast and confident, and it was prophetic and bold. Peter saw what others failed to see, and he saw it first, namely, the mystery of the Personality of Jesus and of His Divine mission. For Peter and for all believers, faith in Christ is the rock, and faith in Christ is the key. We confine our thoughts to the second metaphor only, and to the great promise it holds for Peter and all his successors.

Faith in Christ is a key because Christ himself is the key to all mysteries — to all life. On His shoulders rest the keys of the house of David. He opens and no man shuts; He shuts and no man opens. As one of our own poets has said:

“Christ holds the key of all unknown,
And I am glad.
If other hands should hold the key,
Or if he trusted it to me,
I might be sad.

“What if tomorrow’s cares were here
 Without its rest?
 I’d rather He unlocked the day,
 And, as the hours swing open, say,
 ‘My will is best.’ ”

Now why is faith and its confession like a key? This perplexing passage — apart from all ecclesiastical interpretations of it — gives answer. We need not pause, therefore, to give the long and obscure history of its interpretation by the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers; by Romanists, Anglicans, the Reformers, or the Modernists. We need not now concern ourselves with the *Claves Potentiae* — the keys of ecclesiastical power; or the *Claves Scientiae* — the keys of ecclesiastical knowledge, although both have their place.

Dean Alford and Wordsworth state that the promises are personal to Peter in the first instance, and then apply also to all who have Peter’s faith. So Luther, and Calvin also. No doubt Peter had the keys. Peter first admitted Jew and Gentile into the Church — although the key creaked in the lock when, with a still narrow prejudice, he bade welcome to Cornelius. Peter’s creed was the mother of all creeds, and his confession was proved by his life. He was no more infallible than his so-called successors at Rome. But at Rome, as well as at Geneva, if men cry from the heart today, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” and wherever that confession is made, the promise is true: “I will give thee the keys.” Whosoever makes it, receives the keys from the pierced hands of our Lord.

But what is a key? A very familiar object, and worthy of consideration; for locks and keys are as old as the oldest civilization. They have been found in the ruins of Ur of the Chaldees, and in the Aztec temples of Mexico. Our Yale locks, with their complicated mechanism, are only an adaptation of the Babylonian and Egyptian door-lock with wooden pins, of a pattern six thousand years old. If a man from Mars came to our earth, and we showed him a key, he might be perplexed as to its use; and yet it could be easily enough explained to him.

Every key everywhere has three characteristics: It always has a definite, fixed shape; it always has a peculiar shape; it is of no use whatever, save to open a lock. And all this applies to Peter's creed and to every creed based on the Scriptures.

Peter's creed — his living faith — had a very definite shape! "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Note carefully the three-fold use of the article. Here is the germ of the Apostles' Creed and of the Nicene Creed. It is Christological, Christocentric, concrete and personal. It is not "We say" or "They say" but "Thou art." In this statement adoration and confession meet together. Here is intellectual conviction; emotional frankness; a determination of the will to believe; and an unashamed proclamation of newly found truth.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." A creed is man's response to the testimony of God's Word. Keys are made, not of wax or of soft lead, but of bronze or steel. They

are intended to retain their original shape. Doubt is always vague and hazy and uncertain; it is a weather-vane, vacillating with every new wind of philosophy. But Faith is definite, determined, clear-cut, decisive, like the needle of the compass. A creed is only an attempt to express with the greatest precision and brevity and permanence the conviction of belief based on sufficient evidence. And there are no finer examples of exact and beautiful language than those in the creeds of Christendom — e. g., the Westminster Confession or the Heidelberg Catechism. In this respect, also, theology is the queen of the sciences. You may deny these statements of belief, but you cannot mistake their meaning or decry their literary value.

There is a brilliant passage in the preface to Dr. Shedd's *History of Doctrine*, which is worth a whole sermon: "It is a common remark, that a powerful statement is a powerful argument. This is true of the dogmas of Christianity. But there is no statement of revealed truth more clear, connected and convincing than that which obtains in the gradual and sequacious constructions of the Church, from century to century. Let anyone trace the course of thinking by the theological mind, upon the doctrine of the Trinity for example, and perceive how link follows link by necessary consequence; how the objections of the heretic and of the latitudinarian only elicit a more exhaustive and at the same time more guarded statement, which carries the Church still nearer to the substance of revelation and the heart of the mystery; how, in short, the Trinitarian dogma, like the Christian life itself as described by the Apostle,

‘being fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase unto the edifying of itself’ into a grand architectural structure — let this process from beginning to end pass before a thinking and logical mind, and it will be difficult for it to resist the conviction that here is science, here is self-consistent and absolute truth.”

But in our day, men also object to creeds because they are so peculiar. Like a key, Peter’s confession had indeed a peculiar shape! All the creeds of Christendom have peculiar shapes — mysterious angles and curious indentations and sharp-cut distinctions. What appear at times to be trivialities of expression; angular definitions; sharp corners; one-sided shapes — all of these are peculiarities which cannot be explained apart from the lock. Nor must these peculiarities be tampered with. A file is a useful instrument, but not to use on keys. To use even sandpaper on a Yale-lock key would soon make it useless.

You may say, the pattern is not symmetrical; the shape is not artistic; the form is not normal. But there is a reason for it; and no other shape would fit the lock or unbolt the door! Woe to those who tamper and tinker with the keys to the treasure house of God’s truth! They may find themselves on the outside when the door is shut!

Notice that Peter did not say that Christ was “a great leader” or “a son of the living God,” or “a son of God,” or “the Perfect Nazarene,” or “a Divine Teacher,” but “the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” That name, the Living God, is used fifteen times in the

New Testament, always with great solemnity and majestic significance — showing the transcendence and immanence of the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Peter calls Jesus “The Christ.” Only twice is that word Messiah used in the Old Testament — both times in Daniel (9:25, 26). But both the Divine nature of the Promised Deliverer, and His Kingship and Priesthood and Prophetic Office, are set forth clearly and frequently in Psalms and Prophets: The coming Saviour is the Son of God.

The keen mind of Thomas Carlyle asserted that on one Greek vowel Christianity nearly suffered shipwreck. And Athanasius insisted on the omission of that one *iota*. Against the whole world he maintained that: *homoousios*, and not *homoiousios*, expressed the eternal relationship between Jesus Christ and God. “Very God of very God, of one substance with the Father.”

“The Very God! Think, Abib — doest
thou think?

So, the All-Great were the All-Loving,
too;

And through the thunder speaks a
human Voice — ”

Today we have preachers who read, but do not believe I Corinthians 15, as they stand before an open grave. The resurrection of the body is one thing; the immortality of the soul is quite another. The latter is the highest hope of the Pagan; the former is the A B C of the Christian faith. I believe in the resurrection of the body and in the Life everlasting.

What is your faith? How big is its diameter and circumference? "In apostolic days," said the Bishop of Liverpool at the British Student Volunteer Conference in 1908, "some men advocated a Gospel without the Cross. But St. Paul would have none of it. In the fourth century Arius taught a Christianity without a perfectly Divine Saviour, and the Church would have none of it. In the fifteenth century the Renaissance, intoxicated by the discovery of Greek and Roman literature, despised the 'jargon of St. Paul,' and would have paganized Christianity; but the Reformation brought Northern Europe back to the Scriptures and to the Christ.

"Today men are proclaiming a Gospel without the supernatural. They are asking us to be content with a perfect human Christ; with a Bethlehem where no miracle was wrought; with a Calvary which saw sublime self-sacrifice, but no atonement for sin; with a sepulchre from which no angel's hand rolled away the stone. But we must have none of it. We will hold fast, we will transmit the Faith once for all delivered to the saints. We will hand down to our children, we will proclaim to all the tribes of the earth, Christ incarnate, atoning, risen, our Intercessor at God's right hand, waiting to come to judge the quick and the dead."

Islam and Orthodox Judaism hold many truths in common with us; but the only Christian doctrines that are essentially Christian are those that are peculiar to Christianity. Peter's creed announces the finality, the sufficiency, and the absoluteness of Jesus Christ. Every statement made by Peter was peculiar.

Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah of whom David and Isaiah wrote; Jesus the carpenter's son, the Son of the Living God! The God who proclaimed amid the thunders of Sinai, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me!" Here is Incarnation, Deity, Redemption. Peter agreed with Paul that "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory." That was Paul's Creed and Paul's Gospel.

"O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" Are we in this Apostolic succession?

Consider also that the confession of faith has penetrative power. The key opens the lock! Christ did not say, "Keys to the Kingdom of Heaven," but "Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." Royal keys, the King's own, fashioned by His own hand! The Key of faith in Christ opens all spiritual mysteries; for we are "in Christ" when we confess Him before men. Then He opens and no man shuts; He shuts and no man opens! "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Christ is the supreme mystery, the supreme miracle of the Scriptures. If you believe Him and believe in Him, all else is easy. Browning, in one of his poems, expresses it: "I say the acceptance of Jesus Christ solves for thee all mysteries in heaven and earth." If Christ Jesus is the Son of the Living God, all that God can do or did do, Jesus can and does, and will do for

those who love Him. He who stilled the tempest on Galilee's lake can do it in China, in Russia, in your heart and mine.

Faith in Jesus is the key to the mystery of pain and suffering and death. Men ask about this mystery today, and want an answer. For our age is supersensitive to pain, but callous to sin. Men offer an abundance of anodynes and anaesthetics, but there is no sensitive conscience. Repentance is made easy. Only Christ's holiness and separation from sin, His patient agony in the Garden and on the Tree explain the mystery.

The Cross stands against the lurid sky of history in the shape of a great key — the Key of holiness and love and redemption — a key drenched in blood. A Key of Life! It is almost the same shape as that of "The Key of Life" in ancient Egypt.

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the Gate
Of Heaven and let us in."

And, "If He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." With this key in their hands, Peter and Paul and Polycarp died as martyrs in the first century.

"They climbed the steep ascent to heaven,
Through peril, toil and pain.
O Lord, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train!"

Yes, faith in Christ, the Son of the Living God, opens the doors of death and the glory of heaven — even

though it be by the dark door — the terrible door, of martyrdom. So it was for Peter. You remember the story of how Jesus met him fleeing from the pain and shame of the Cross and how Peter went back and was crucified with his head low to the earth! When you have lost that key — of willingness to suffer for Christ — “Quo Vadis?” may be whispered in your ear as it was in Peter’s.

In conclusion, note that Peter not only received the keys, but used them freely. Read the Acts of this apostle. He used them to open the door of repentance. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God; therefore, Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee.” He used them to open the door of healing at the Beautiful Gate. “Silver and gold have I none”; but I have a key to health — the most ancient and the only Christian Science! “In the Name of Jesus Christ, arise and walk.” He used them to open prison doors. Prayer was made for him, and he was praying; and then the great iron gate opened automatically.

Were you ever in a dungeon of dark despair or discouragement? Bunyan in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, tells how Christian found the key when he and Hopeful were in the clutches of Giant Despair. How true to Peter’s life and to our lives is the picture:

“Now, a little before it was day, good Christian, as one half-amazed, breaks out into this passionate speech: ‘What a fool,’ quote he, ‘am I, thus to lie in a stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk at liberty! I have a key in my bosom called Promise, which will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.’ Then

said Hopeful, 'That's good news; good brother, pluck it out of thy bosom and try.'

"Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom, and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt (as he turned the key) gave back, and the door flew open with ease, and Christian and Hopeful both came out. Then he went to the outward door that leads into the castle-yard, and with his key opened that also. After that he went to the iron gate, for that door must be opened, too; but that lock went damnable hard, yet the key did open it. Then they thrust open the gate to make their escape with speed; but that gate, as it opened, made such a creaking that it waked Giant Despair." But he was powerless to pursue them once they got back into the King's Highway.

Peter used the keys also to open the door of Death. When Dorcas was lying dead in the upper chamber, Peter kneeled down and prayed, and, turning him to the body said, "Tabitha, arise." — "Verily, I say unto you, the works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father." Again Peter used them to open the door of faith to gentiles, baptizing Cornelius and his household. And at the last he used them to open the very door of heaven by faith in Christ. Listen to his last words:

"I know that the putting off of my tabernacle cometh swiftly, even as our Lord Jesus Christ signified unto me. Yet I will give diligence that after my decease ye may call these things to remembrance. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,

but we were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when there was borne such a voice to Him from the majestic glory. ‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’ And this voice we ourselves heard when we were with Him in the holy mount.”

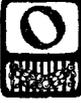
V

*“All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall
exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good,
nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the
melodist
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth
too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the
sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once; we shall hear it by-
and-by.”*

—Browning’s *Abt Vogler*.

CHAPTER V

PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST

 ONE of the tests of sanity is a sense of proportion and a sense of the law of priority. An unbalanced mind dwells on the petty, the insignificant, the trivial, or, on the other hand, magnifies that which is small until it stands out in colossal proportions that seem grotesque to all others save the patient. Megalomania is that form of insanity in which the patient imagines himself to be of more importance than all other persons or objects. We are “not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but to think soberly” — that is according to the laws of sober thought.

It is only when we “come to ourselves” or rather when Christ comes to us, that we see everything in right proportion. John Bunyan’s parable of the man with the muck-rake, whom Christian saw in the house of the Interpreter, teaches the same lesson. How often we gather rubbish and are blind to the glory of the angels and the crown.

In 1922 it was my privilege, when visiting the Dutch East Indies, to meet a missionary of the Rhenish Mission who had spent many years of faithful service on the west coast of Sumatra. He met me on the landing-stage at Sibolga and insisted on carting my luggage in a little wheelbarrow to the mission house nestled in the palms with its adjoining church and dispensary. That night I slept in their neat, though simple guest room, and I shall never forget the German verses which hung on the

wall. They were written by Maria Schwallenbach, one of the mystics and, translated, read as follows:

“Light of Eternity, Light Divine,
Into my darkness shine,
That the small may appear small
And the great, greatest of all.
O Light of Eternity shine!”

It is a beautiful prayer for a sense of proportion. This little mission station, like a candle burning in the night, was far greater in its influence than the huge tobacco-trade of Medan, the rubber-market of Singapore, and the wealth of the Dutch Indies. It was because “the small appeared small and the great, greatest of all” that this band of pioneer missionaries have, within a single generation, lifted whole tribes of cannibals from heathen darkness into the inheritance of God’s sons. Meditating on this prayer in Persia, (where a German missionary at Tabriz gave me a beautiful, illuminated copy of the whole poem) I was led to study three passages in the New Testament which give the law of priority.

In the great prophecy of our Saviour concerning the last days, the troublous times when wars and famines and earthquakes would make men’s heart fail for fear, He tells us “And the Gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:10). The only hope of the world is the Gospel; all other questions that perplex men’s minds, all other problems of history, the chaos and clash and commotion all around us, are, after all, secondary. Our *first* duty is to carry the Gospel to

every land and every nation. Amid the winds of politics, the earthquakes of social upheaval and the fires of national or international persecutions and wars, we must listen for the still small voice, and it always has the same message — “*this Gospel first.*” When the waiting disciples desired to gratify their curiosity on the Mount of Olives, they asked a threefold question and Christ’s reply was a threefold rebuke. It was not for them to know the times and the seasons; they were not to be over-curious about the fulfillment of prophecy, but to attend to their business, which was to extend the message of the Kingdom. That Kingdom was not limited and localized; its bounds were beyond Israel, even to the uttermost part of the earth. The imperative of a primary duty demands that secondary things shall take a secondary place, both in our thoughts and in our activities.

A second passage in the New Testament also refers to this law of priority and this sense of proportion. It occurs in the great resurrection chapter, (I Corinthians 15) where Paul explains the character and content of his Gospel which he received and delivered “first of all,” namely, “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” Other foundation no man can lay than Christ crucified. This was to him the real fundamental of the Gospel. Everything else was therefore secondary. No other Old Testament or New Testament teaching can occupy this supreme place. When we realize what this involves for ourselves and how it determines our attitude toward others, then we are true Christians. If Christ died for our sins, His death is a reality and His resur-

rection confirms its necessity and validity as the only atonement for sin. Our sins, then, are exceedingly sinful, so that by faith in Christ we experience forgiveness and are constrained to carry the message to others. This truth also determines our attitude toward all who love our Lord. It was a Roman Catholic, Thomas a Kempis, who put this great fundamental first in "The Imitation of Christ." It was a layman who, although professing to be a Unitarian, wrote the great hymn, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory." Where men agree to preach the Cross, to glory in the Cross of Christ, to rest beneath that Cross, to find there the solution of the deepest problems in the universe, there we find in this great fundamental our one Lord, our one Faith, and our one spiritual Baptism. To put this message first, foremost, at the front, is the secret of moral conquest and world-wide victory. Mr. D. E. Hoste, of the China Inland Mission, recently wrote:

"As time goes on, it becomes more than ever apparent that little, if anything, can be hoped from changes in forms of government, and we are brought back to the fundamental fact that the Gospel of Christ alone provides a solution of the prevailing sin and disorder, whether in individual, social, or political life."

Once more Paul uses the striking phrase, "first of all." In his first Epistle to Timothy he says, "I exhort, therefore, that first of all prayers and supplications be made." Prayer had priority in his program. Our first duty always and everywhere is to pray. If we do that, all other duties become easier. Unless we know the power of prayer, no great task is feasible. It is far

easier to give of our substance to the missionary cause, or to go in person, than it is to pray truly for the Kingdom. In the light of eternity, it is astonishing how much time we spend in organization or for big appeals, when the real work of missions must be accomplished on our knees. The present situation at home and abroad is first of all a summons to prayer. There never were so many open doors, nor so many doors that are closing! Never such response to the Gospel and never such bitter and determined opposition. In many lands the conditions are such that we have no other means to enter them *than on our knees in prayer*. Dr. Karl Heim, Professor at the University of Tübingen in his book *The New Divine Order* has a remarkable statement in this connection:

“It is part of the essence of prayer to have the certainty that the whole of world-history, from the solar orbits to the oscillations of the electrons, lies in this moment in the hand of God like soft clay in the hand of the potter. He can make of it what He wills. No sparrow falls from the roof without His will. Whether the form of the world changes or remains the same, it does not happen from causal necessity, but because God so wills. In everything that may befall me in the next moment, I have to deal not with dead matter, with the laws of Nature, nor with men, but only with Him. Always I stand before the simple choice between Him who draws me upwards, and the adverse force, which wants to draw me down. Everything else is only expression and precipitate of this spiritual strife. Prayer, therefore, whether the one who prays is conscious of it or not, as-

sumes always the interpretation of Nature which has been evolved in the foregoing discussion. For men who pray, the history of the world, when seen from within, is Will, divine and demoniac Will. Miracle is the victory of God in this strife of spiritual powers. Everyone who prays knows that this victory is possible at any moment and in any situation."

Dr. Paul W. Harrison says in regard to one of the hardest mission fields, Arabia:

"Working out here one comes to realize what is true, of course, everywhere, that nothing but God's own divine power can open men's hearts for the entrance of Christ, and nothing but His entrance will meet their needs. That means, I suppose, that the one thing we need is prayer It is a hard field, but it is in God's will to see it brought to a knowledge of Christ and God's will is something greater than all the difficulties in Arabia."

In putting these three first things first, we will have an outlook and an insight and an outreach worthy of sons of God. Is there not a grave danger that in the present-day emphasis on the social problems of our age, men will turn to every remedy except the one supreme hope of the world, the Gospel of God's grace? Is there not a danger that in carrying this Gospel, we may fail to emphasize the heart of its message, which is the death of Christ for human sin? Dr. Denney, in his book entitled "The Atonement and the Modern Mind," drives it home unmistakably:

"If the atonement quite apart from precise definition of it, is anything to the mind, it is everything. It

is the most profound of all truths and most creative. It determines more than anything else our conception of God, of man, of history and even of nature; it determines them, for we must bring them all, in some way, into accord with it. It is the inspiration of all thought, the key, in the last resort, to all suffering . . . The atonement is a reality of such a sort that it can make no compromise. The man who fights it knows that he is fighting for his life and puts all his strength into the battle. To surrender is literally to give himself up, to cease to be the man he is and become another man. For the modern mind, therefore, as for the ancient, the attraction and the repulsion of Christianity are concentrated on the same point: the Cross of Christ is man's only glory or it is his final stumbling block."

If the whole Protestant Church would put these first things first — Evangelism, the message of the Cross and intercessory Prayer — the revival for which many are longing and waiting would be here.

"Light of Eternity, Light Divine,
Into my darkness shine,
That the small may appear small
And the great greatest of all.
O Light of Eternity, shine!"

VI

*“CHRIST! I am Christ’s! and let the name suffice you
Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed
Lo with no winning words I would entice you,
Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.*

*“Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,
Yes, without stay of father or of son,
Lone on the land and homeless on the water
Pass I in patience till the task be done.”*

—F. W. Meyers’ St. Paul.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUPREME MOTIVE

NO human enterprise requires stronger motives than the work of Christian missions. There is no enterprise so vast in its extent, so difficult in its character. It often staggers our faith. Nineteen centuries after the inauguration of evangelism the disciples of Christ still face great unoccupied fields where the name of Christ has never been proclaimed. Missions often disappoint hope. At times, where the harvest was ripening, the blast of persecution or the blight of revolution has ruined the expectations of the reapers. Signs of a new day have sometimes been signs of a false dawn. Think of the missions on the east coast of Africa, in Turkey, or of the Armenian Church today.

In such a crisis as foreign missions face today, and at a time when new "movements" are on foot, it may be well to consider the old and the new missionary motives. To abandon those that are unworthy or inadequate and to urge those that are true and efficient, would seem the part of wisdom.

The history of the Church, at home and abroad, reveals a multitude of motives that drove men to earnest effort in the propagation of the Gospel, and yet not all of these motives were approved of God or beneficent in their results. Jesus speaks of the Pharisees of His day, as compassing land and sea to make one proselyte. Their zeal was for Judaism rather than for God. The

story of Roman Catholic missions and of Protestant sectarianism affords similar instances. The scramble for denominational prestige in an unoccupied field, the multiplication of sects and parties on the frontier of new territory, the missions which are based on rivalry of church parties — all work that is based on mere ecclesiasticism is based on an unworthy missionary motive. We are to lead men to Christ, not win converts to our own sect.

Another motive is that based on Christian imperialism. Because missions promote civilization, encourage trade and produce social progress there have been those who use these outward manifestations as an argument for extending the boundaries of nominal Christendom. The flag follows the missionary and trade follows the flag. A pioneer mission may not only create homes, schools, and literature among a barbarous people, but may introduce western commerce and civilization so that the result is colonial expansion, not to say exploitation. There is a real relation between Christian missions and social progress but to confound the two or make them co-ordinate is fatal.

“Pity for the heathen” was once a leading motive in the missionary movement. The exaggerated contrast of the conditions among savages and those in western lands, the grotesque picture of the non-Christian religions in their popular and degraded form of idol worship, suttee, self-torture, slavery and other degradation made its appeal to the emotions.

The conditions of the non-Christian world then and now are such as to move hearts. It was Ian Keith Fal-

coner who said before sailing for Aden in 1889, "while vast continents are shrouded in almost utter darkness and hundreds of millions suffer the horrors of heathenism and Islam the burden of proof is on those who stay at home, why they should *not* go to the mission field." Christ himself had compassion on the multitudes and wept over Jerusalem. But the motive of compassion is one that stirs only the emotions, and often leaves the intellect and the will dormant. We need a motive that will lay hold of all the powers of the soul.

Others say that we must urge the success of the missionary enterprise and so win men to complete the task. Statistics can be arrayed to prove that the Kingdom of God is coming with power; that the number of Christians was never so large; or that baptisms and revivals and mass-movements are proof that "missions pay." Why not invest your life and your money in such a successful venture? But this motive fails piteously in the hardest fields and in most trying circumstances. Robert Morrison had no outward success when he toiled twenty-eight years in China for ten converts. The missionaries in Arabia have endured the burden and the heat and the fanaticism of the Arabs for forty-four years and in all Arabia there are not yet forty-four Moslems won for Christ and openly confessing his name! The utter inadequacy of statistics was pointed out by the late Professor Harlan P. Beach of China:

"My observations make me yearn for the filling out of such items as these: Number of missionaries forced prematurely into the work before being fitted for it, linguistically or otherwise; number giving most of their

time and strength to financing their station; number annually breaking down from overwork; number who do not find time to nourish their own spiritual lives sufficiently to make them fruitful workers; number of native helpers who are adequately fitted for their responsible duties; number of helpers who are doing as much harm as good; number of converts who are undeserving the name of Christian through lack of instruction and spiritual rebirth; number acquainted with Christianity who might be won for Christ if only tactfully approached; number who will never hear the gospel because the force responsible for evangelizing the region is hampered by lack of funds or men, etc. Such items should furnish the church with food for thought and prayer."

Statistics of success may prove a motive in this holy war, but will statistics of failure bring recruits and resources?

Again, the great motive of duty, Christ's last command to His disciples, the categorical imperative of the New Testament, should appeal to every man's conscience in the sight of God. As the Duke of Wellington expressed it, "We have our marching orders." To some minds this appeals strongly and is the final word. Like compulsory service in the World War, those who refuse to enlist and do their part are then ranked slackers or traitors to the cause. Four times the great commission is reiterated in the Gospel record. Yet it is evident from the Acts that the Apostles were not moved by a mere command. The early Church would have been an evangelistic force without it. There was an inner urge and passion deeper than the sense of duty. "They that were

scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Why did they go? What constrained them to the task? What was the motive of Philip and Silas, of Mark and Timothy, of Paul and the Apostles?

The love of Christ constrained them. His love for a lost world; His love for them; His love in them. This was the three-fold cord that bound their hearts to the task and made them eager bond-servants. But if the love of Christ (understood in this three-fold sense) is the supreme missionary motive, why was it not always fruitful in missionary zeal? Peter professed his love to Christ and preached that Love to the Jews at Pentecost. But he was unready and unwilling to preach the good tidings to a Roman centurion until the three-fold vision made his latent love active. Luther and Calvin were lovers of Christ but had no vision of the foreign missionary task and its demands. One searches in vain in the Reformation catechisms and creeds for a clear and outspoken message regarding the non-Christian world. In Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and in Thomas a Kempis' "Imitation of Christ," the message is one of personal salvation and personal sanctification. Christian and Faithful stopped their ears in Vanity Fair instead of opening their mouths to preach to the lost. There are many beautiful prayers in "The Imitation" but no prayer for missions. Why are so many churches and Christians lukewarm toward missions when they profess their love to Christ? Why do many eat of the Bread that was broken in their love for Christ, but refuse to drink of His cup of suffering for the lost? We dare not say that the great mass of Christians do not

love Christ; but the missionary societies know that the great mass of Christians have no sacrificial part in the work of missions. It is the vicarious task of the few.

Can we therefore, you will ask, find back of all the motives mentioned, a supreme and final motive for missions? It would not, naturally, appeal to all or appeal most easily. "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit." The carnally-minded are babes in Christ. Nor would this motive be easily explained or understood. On the contrary because of the spiritual character of the missionary enterprise it would be appreciated only by those who have passed beyond other worthy, although less worthy, motives.

We believe this motive to be a passion for the glory of God in the coming of the Kingdom. Some motives are ego-centric or cosmo-centric. This is all theo-centric and finds its source and goal beyond time and space in eternity. The chief end of missions is not the salvation of men but the glory of God. "For of Him and through Him and unto Him are all things" — also missions — "to Him be the glory for ever." Not only Luther and Calvin but in our own day, Otto in "Das Heilige" and Karl Barth in his commentary on the Romans have shown that the sovereignty and holiness of God are the basis of all theistic thought and that a Christian world-view is impossible without these *numinous* elements. We find it in the Old Testament prophecies and in the Law of Sinai. "Thou shalt have no other gods . . . for I thy God am a jealous God." "Jehovah, that is my name and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." The absolute character of Jewish

monotheism is its distinguishing characteristic and glory. Syncretism is absent from the mind of Isaiah and Daniel when they tell of the coming Kingdom of the Messiah. His glory is to cover the earth. Every knee is to bow before Him. This missionary motive and idea is proclaimed at the Incarnation. "The Word became flesh" and men beheld "His glory, a glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." There would be "peace on earth and good will towards men" but the angels *began* their song with "Glory to God in the highest." We must not reverse the order. The great commission is preceded by a great assertion: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth" — this gives authority to the command. Without it, Jesus the Nazarene sends out his few disciples on a futile errand. With it the Incarnate Word communicates His message with power, His mission and authority to His Church for all the ages.

We read the Lord's Prayer in Matthew's gospel, or the High-priestly prayer in John and are impressed with the same idea: the glory of God as motive and goal. Seven times in his intercession as High Priest, Christ refers to God's glory. "I have glorified Thee . . . I have finished the work." To glorify God is to finish the work; for Christ and for us. This motive dominates all Paul's epistles. One has only to turn to a concordance or study the doxologies (that is, Paul's missionary prayers) to be convinced of his passion that his Lord alone might be glorified through his life and death and message (Phil. 2:11; Rom. 16:25-27; I Cor. 1:26-31; Eph. 3:20).

In the vision of John, the entire redeemed church from every nation and tongue and people ascribes glory to the Lamb. In their great Halleluiah Chorus we can hear the interpretation of this same missionary motive — glory to God.

Now if, in view of the above, we grant that this is the highest motive — namely a passion for God's glory — we must admit that we have here also a supreme standard of values, because everything that is moral must be measured by its relation to its source and aim, which is God. If in "eating and drinking" then surely in missionary administration and execution we must do all to the glory of God. This becomes the test of the spirit of our obedience and the character of our service. It gives a new impetus to prayer. "Thy Kingdom come . . . for thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory." Our gifts are measured by the motive back of them and not by their intrinsic value. We contribute not to a Society but to our Saviour. Every mite-box and offering-plate bears the print of the nails like the open hand of the Risen Redeemer. Who can put a mean or paltry offering into such hands? Our per capita giving shrinks into insignificance when we think of His "per capita"—"*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden,*" "O sacred head once wounded."

We go and we send with alacrity and eager passion because His glory is at stake. He wills it. Therefore He laid down his Life for us, that we should lay down our lives for the brethren. In the light of God's holiness and the glory of Christ the non-Christian religions are not only *inadequate* but they are *intruders* and *usur-*

pers. The Lord is a jealous Lord, not only in the Old Testament, witness Moses, Elijah and Isaiah; but He is the same Lord in the New Testament. Paul's attitude to the non-Christian religions, and the final chapters of that terrible drama of missions in the Apocalypse, are clear evidence. Idolatry, superstition, falsehood, impurity dishonor God. "For this purpose," writes the loving disciple, "was the Son of God manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." We need to study afresh the teaching of the apostles regarding "spiritual values" in man or in human philosophy to realize that they taught the moral bankruptcy of the whole race and that in Christ are hid, not some, but "*all* the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

The comparative study of religion may broaden our minds and give us new points of contact with non-Christians; but the study of positive religion revealed in the mind and life of Christ will fill us with a missionary passion for God's glory. Again, this motive tests all of our methods. We are workers with God. He has the right to approve or disapprove our methods. That method is best at home or abroad which is most to the glory of God and least to the glory of man. He must increase and we decrease in the administration of the indigenous churches. He is the director of all operations and advance movements, if we acknowledge His spiritual leadership. "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and us," the apostles wrote in their missionary report. Not *our* time-tables are to be followed, but God's eternal plan, hidden from the wise and prudent but revealed unto babes. Spiritual men only can do spiritual work.

Spiritual resources are not commanded by organization, or publicity or money-power. Faith is the victory. Men appoint committees. God finds a man. Prayer is the sole dynamic in the Acts of the Apostles. Life is more than any uniformity of method. God has a way of breaking through barriers and the unexpected is to be expected when He is leading on.

Finally in this motive we find the supreme and only test of success. By other standards, the enterprise may be an apparent failure — our plans may be frustrated, our hopes disappointed — but when we consider the glory of God, success blossoms from seeming defeat. The Cross is always victorious. Peter's preaching not only, but the stoning of Stephen was to the glory of God. The baptisms at Ongole, two thousand two hundred and twenty-two on one day, by the Lone Star Mission, and the Armenian massacres — each had a place in the great plan of God for the unfolding of His eternal purpose. Who but God can tell the infinite from the infinitesimal? An event insignificant to the newspapers has often been as life from the dead to those that sat in darkness and shadow. The harvest is not the end of the annual report but "the end of the world." The reapers are not the missionaries but the angels. We have only to wait on God. His power is infinite. His time limit is eternity. With God, the missionary enterprise has in it all the glory of the impossible, the adventure of leading a forlorn hope to certain victory; the glory of apparent defeat and real triumph at the end. If we would glorify God let us finish the work he has

given us to do. And we may all learn something from the prayer of Ignatius Loyola, for he too was a missionary with a passion for Christ:

“Teach us, Good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest; to give and not to count the cost; to fight and not heed our wounds; to toil and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will.”

VII

“There are those who, in Hymns, as in Art and in Music, are clamorous nowadays for the new, the precise, and the aesthetic. But the ‘old wine’ is good enough yet, and there is honey still in the lion-carcass of the field-preaching Church of Lady Huntingdon’s day. I shall not defend archaic expressions, bad rhymes, and halting rhythm, but I shall constantly aver that Hymns are pre-eminently the utterance of Spiritual Life, and that what the Church Universal adopts and cherishes is, by that fact, removed both from the control of a picking pedantry and of a cold-blooded correctness.”

—Samuel W. Duffield.

CHAPTER VII

“THE GREATEST HYMN”

THERE are diversities of gifts but the same Spirit. Some missionaries have been pioneer explorers, others bold apostles or flaming evangelists; some have exercised gifts of healing, others of administration; some have been distinguished scholars and linguists or translators of the Scriptures. Reginald Heber (1783-1826) became immortal through his missionary hymns, written both before and after he went out as the second Anglican Bishop of Calcutta. Among his fifty-seven hymns, five are well known in the churches today: “Hosanna to the Living God”; “Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning”; “Holy, Holy, Holy”; “The Son of God goes Forth to War”; and “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains.” Dr. Eugene Stock characterized the last of those mentioned as the greatest of all missionary hymns. It has been very widely used and has been translated into the leading languages of Europe and into many others on the mission fields. Is the hymn, as some say, “too old-fashioned and conventional for present-day use?” One meets with strong prejudice against certain of its expressions, but closer study will reveal new elements of power and beauty.

Reginald Heber was born at Malpas, Chester, England, and at an early age began to write poetry. At Oxford he produced a prize poem entitled “Palestine.” Later he traveled in Northern Europe and became rector of Hodnet in 1807. In 1815 he delivered the Bampton

lectures, was made canon of St. Asaph in 1817 and soon after was appointed Bishop to Calcutta, as successor to the first Bishop, Dr. Middleton. Bishop Heber is described as a brilliant scholar, a true poet, a devoted parish clergyman, a fascinating personality, loved and admired by all who knew him. The Earl of Shaftsbury spoke in highest terms of his character, saying: "No man ever equalled Bishop Heber. His talents were of the most exquisite character. If he were not a Socrates, able to knock down by force of reasoning the most stubborn opposers, he was like Orpheus, who influenced even stones and trees by the enchantment of his music." Bishop Heber was a warm supporter of the missionary societies of the Church of England and of the Bible Society. He made earnest effort to unite the Church Missionary Society and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, saying: "Why should there be two societies for the same precise object?" He actually formulated a plan of union.

Bishop Middleton had declined to license any missionaries in Bengal or to ordain natives, although he learned to value their services, but Bishop Heber's policy was quite different. He avoided friction with the civil authorities, made friends with the Baptist and congregational missionaries, and put the work of evangelization to the front. He sought to build up educational institutions and to increase the number of mission stations. But his excessive labors in a trying climate were brought to a sudden termination by death from apoplexy at Trichinopoly on April 3, 1826, at the early age of forty.

Four years before his consecration as Bishop, he wrote his great missionary hymn under circumstances that are most interesting.

Dean Howson, in the *Art Journal* for June, 1873, relates that Mr. Heber, then rector of Hodnet, was visiting Dean Shirley, dean of St. Asaph and vicar of Wrexham, his father-in-law, just before Whit-Sunday, 1819. A royal letter had been issued, calling for missionary offerings in aid of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, on that particular day. Mr. Heber had gone to hear the dean preach and to take his share of the Sunday evening lectures just established in that church. On the Saturday previous, he was asked to prepare some verses to be sung at the close of the morning service. Sitting at the window of the old vicarage, in a short time he produced this hymn — except the lines, “Waft, waft, ye winds, His story,” which he wrote later. Only one change was made in the copy — “heathen” being put instead of “savage” nations. This was the first of modern missionary hymns that speaks imperatively to the conscience and at the same time with persuasion and tenderness. It came as a trumpet-call to duty.

Not until 1823, when the hymn came to American notice, did it receive the appropriate tune by Dr. Lowell Mason, now so familiar. The story of its composition also reads like a romance.

A lady residing in Savannah, Georgia, had in some way become possessed of a copy of the words, sent to this country from England. She was arrested by the beauty of the poetry and its possibilities as a hymn.

But the meter of 7s, 6s, D., was almost new in this period; there was no tune which would fit the measure. She had been told of a young clerk in a bank, Lowell Mason by name, just a few doors away, down the street. It was said that he had the gift for making beautiful songs. She sent her son to this genius in music, and in a half-hour's time he returned with this composition. Like the hymn it voices, it was done at a stroke, but has lasted through the years.

An interesting passage in Heber's "Journal of a Voyage to India" refers to the "spicy breezes" that can be detected under certain circumstances, thirty or forty miles from Ceylon.

Whatever may be true of odors wafted by breezes from Ceylon seaward, there is no doubt that the odor of the sweet ointment of this missionary hymn poured out for Christ has been wafted as a witness to all the world for over a century. It has been an inspiration to missionary gatherings held in many tongues.

In the revival of 1858, we are told, several sailors were on board the "North Carolina," a frigate of the U. S. Navy. When they compared nationalities it was found that ten countries were represented. One man said that he came from Greenland, whereupon they spontaneously and heartily sang the international stanzas of this old hymn.

When Dr. Alexander Duff returned from Calcutta on his first furlough and thrilled large audiences with his appeals for India, he closed a powerful address given before the Church Missionary Society with these words:

"Oh, that the blessed era were greatly hastened! Oh, that the vision of that mitred minstrel who ere-while sang so sweetly of 'Greenland's icy mountains' and 'India's coral strand' were speedily realized! that glorious vision wherein, rapt into future times, he beheld the stream of Gospel blessings rise, and gush, and roll onward till it embraced every land and circled every shore —

'Till like a sea of glory,
It spread from pole to pole.'

'Even so, Lord Jesus! come quickly: even so. Amen.' " And then, we are told, that Duff sat down amid a tempest of applause.

Does the hymn still appeal today? Or does it need revision? No one disputes that its language is chaste, its structure logical (once we grant the premises) and that it conforms in its imagery and rhythm to the laws of good hymnody.

The fact is that this hymn offers a concise summary of the modern missionary enterprise as conceived by the men who laid its foundations. The first stanza proclaims the *universality* of the task; the second its *necessity*; the third its *urgency*; the fourth its *certainty of accomplishment*. One could scarcely crowd an argument for the basis, the aim, the motive and the goal of missions into smaller compass than we have in these four verses of eight lines each.

Many today have lost the sense of urgency; no longer do they yearn to save lost souls or to evangelize the world in one generation. Others have lost the sense

of Christ's sufficiency and finality. There is no longer the calm assurance that He alone can meet all of humanity's needs and aspirations.

If this be true of some of our churches and some of our pulpits, then Bishop Heber's hymn comes as a challenge. Chains of error still bind men and women and little children in Africa and India. Lady Simon's recent book on "Slavery" and Katherine Mayo's "Volume Two" on child-marriage in India, make one ashamed of humanity. Along many an ancient river and in many a palmy plain there are still seen the horrors of heathenism and there are those who call us to deliver them from age-long error and darkness.

It was not the intention of Bishop Heber to assert that the inhabitants of Ceylon were sinners vile above other men, but to point out, by one example of conditions in his day, the need for a Saviour from sin in all its terrible forms in all the world and the tragedy of spiritual blindness in the worship of the creature rather than the Creator — whether on the Gold-coast of Chicago or of West Africa man bows down to wood and stone.

There is no more sympathetic and truthful description of Hinduism extant than "The Rites of the Twice-born" by Mrs. J. St. Clair Stevenson (1920). It gives the detailed life-story of a Brahman from birth and babyhood to death and the funeral pyre. In the chapter on temple worship she writes:

"Perhaps one of the most illuminating ways to study idolatry sympathetically and scientifically is to watch what is done with a broken idol. The superficial ob-

server or the globe-trotter often says: ‘The Indians only think of their idols as photographs of the divine, and they mean to them exactly what the Sistine Madonna does to us.’ If such an one really desires to learn whether an idol be only a photograph, let him watch what is done if a *linga* be broken. We have seen that it cannot be repaired or mended, but must be removed, and no man, Brahman, mason, or low-caste, dare enter into the inner shrine and lay hands on a broken *linga*”

“When finally a sacred bull, by means of a gold or silver wire, has drawn the broken idol out of the temple, it can be touched; so then the Brahmans take it, pack it up most carefully with sweets or sugar, and some high-caste gentleman, carrying it in his hand, drives or goes by rail to the sea. Then he goes out in a boat and drops the parcel containing the *linga* into deep water.”

Mrs. Stevenson alludes to the resulting Sakti-worship. “So widely spread is this sect that no book on modern Brahmanism would be complete which did not refer to it. For the sake of truth it may even be the terrible and austere duty of some one to investigate it but the present writer confesses herself unable to sully either her pages or her memory with further details.”

A letter on this subject appeared in *The British Weekly* for February 22, 1934, which is very significant:

“Dear Sir:—As one who for one-and-twenty years was an Indian missionary, I am interested in the mis-

sionary hymns of the new Methodist Hymn Book. I see we may no longer sing, 'The heathen perish.' The objection could not have been to the word 'heathen' only, for non-Christians are thus described in several other hymns. Indeed, in one hymn Kipling is allowed to call them 'lesser breeds without the law.' In Kipling's favour it must be stated that in the next verse he asks for 'mercy' for the 'foolish word.'

"Is it then our modern view that the 'heathen' do not perish? If they do not, who is perishing? There must be some perishing, for in one hymn we are exhorted to 'rescue the perishing.' Paul thought some were perishing. And John 3:16 seems to point in that direction. In our new book Bishop Heber's great missionary hymn has been mutilated. The 'spicy breezes' verse has been eliminated. Why? Because the Bishop says that 'only man is vile'? He did not write 'man is only vile.' What beside man is 'vile'? Animals cannot be vile, because they cannot be good. If man is not 'vile,' why must he be born again? When James Boswell asked, 'But, sir, do you not think that man is naturally good?' Johnson answered, 'No more than a wolf.'

"Perhaps objection was taken to the final lines, 'The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone.' No one will suggest that he bows down to wood and stone because he is enlightened; for in another hymn we sing, 'And soon may the heathen . . . cast their idols all away.' If it be said that he does not bow down to wood and stone, but to the gods for whom they stand, that will not help; that only makes things worse. I

have in my study images of Krishna and of Kali. Their worship will not help the man menaced by the tiger and the libidinous ape within him. There is much more that is sordid and putrid in Hinduism than some of our college professors know. Speaking of the religions of the Near East, that very gentle scholar, Dr. James Hope Moulton said, 'Religion herself became a Circe who touched men with her wand and turned them into swine.' "

(Signed) C. Phillips Cape.

"Can we whose souls are lighted with wisdom from on high" continue to discuss the spiritual values of higher Hinduism and deny to the masses of India the lamp of life? If we no longer feel the urgency of our message it is because we have lost the overwhelming sense of its necessity. He who knows what salvation is for himself must share the good news.

Salvation! O Salvation!

The joyful sound proclaim

Till earth's remotest nation

Has learned Messiah's name.

There is no substitute for the missionary passion. To revive the spirit of evangelism, to restore the note of immediacy, to convince the world that we have a message sufficient for all men, everywhere and always, we must go back to the Gospel as proclaimed by the

apostles: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and rose again."

Waft, waft, ye winds, His story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till like a sea of glory
It spreads from pole to pole.

This missionary hymn does not need revision. It needs reiteration and revival. Africa and India, and we ourselves still need the old Gospel.

VIII

“Christianity according to Fundamentalism is one religion. Christianity according to Modernism is another religion. Which is the true religion is the question that is to be settled in all probability by our generation for future generations.

“There is a clash here as profound and as grim as between Christianity and Confucianism. Amiable words cannot hide the differences. ‘Blest be the tie’ may be sung till doomsday, but it cannot bind these worlds together.

“The God of the fundamentalist is one God; the God of the modernist is another. The Christ of the fundamentalist is one Christ; the Christ of Modernism is another. The Bible of Fundamentalism is one Bible; the Bible of Modernism is another. The church, the kingdom, the salvation, the consummation of all things — these are one thing to Fundamentalists and another thing to Modernists.”

—Editorial in “The Christian Century,” Jan. 3, 1924.

CHAPTER VIII

RE-THINKING MISSIONS WITH THE HYMNAL

THE words quoted at the beginning of this chapter from "The Christian Century" are a challenge for us all to do more thinking when we sing in church. Amiable and solemn words cannot hide chasms of thought between the believer and those who have ceased to believe. Sincerity is the first essential of true worship—otherwise we will indeed sing, till doomsday!

The great hymns of the Church are at once a shrine of her deepest experience down the ages and an evidence of her catholicity and orthodoxy. Did not some one say, he cared not who made the laws of a people if he could write their songs? The great missionary hymns embody the great doctrines of salvation and express the great prophetic truths of the Scriptures. But they will need drastic revision and many will need complete excision if the Church adopts the theology of the new Laymen's Appraisal of foreign missions. Take the first lines of some of our hymns and some brief paragraphs from the book, "Rethinking Missions,"— and the way-faring man, though a fool, can judge easily as to their agreement in regard to world-evangelization and the task of missions. We give eleven examples from the great and most familiar hymns used in all our churches; in some cases two or three of the hymns are grouped

together as expressing the same fundamental theological thought.

1. *“Faith of our fathers living still . . . we will be true to thee till death.”* “It would be an advantage to drop out the word ‘theological’ altogether from the name of the institutions where preparation for life-guidance is to be the central aim unless the word can be raised to a higher significance” (Chapter V).

“In the course of history the insistent problems of religion came to Jesus with peculiar clarity and force, and he gave answers to them which, because of their simple and essential nature, may be taken as final. Further, he exemplified his own teaching in life and death, and affords to all men who come to know him the most transparent and accessible example of a life lived greatly through immediate union with God. Because this career was given wholly to manifesting the meaning of religion, and was carried through under the severest tests, it stands as a unique support to all who subsequently desire to carry out the same venture” (Chapter V). Do these paragraphs express in any way the faith of the Catholic Church in regard to the Son of God, begotten, not made, and of one substance with the Father?

2. *“Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon the Throne.”* “Some prefer the words which unite the present with the earlier languages of the Christian world. Others desire to avoid the language of tradition, not as untrue, but perhaps as obscurely figurative or symbolical, and for this reason an obstacle to the spontaneous recognition of the majesty of that figure to

whom men's thoughts return as by a natural instinct of the heart" (Foreword).

"For Christianity, the truth that God is holy as well as loving, implies that He is not capricious, nor vengeful in his justice, nor moved by desire to which men can minister except by inward fidelity and love. He is therefore not to be moved by gifts and sacrifices, nor in need of conciliation" (Chapter III). But the Old and New Testament, not to mention all of the great ethnic religions, seem to teach that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."

3. *"Ten thousand times ten thousand in sparkling raiment bright."* "In the founding of institutions of religion, there are also results which can be expressed in statistical totals, as of accessions to membership. Such numerical totals, considering the time of mission activity and the progress made by other religious movements under comparable conditions, are not impressive" (Chapter I). They seem to have impressed John on lonely Patmos even as statistics — a great innumerable multitude — but the dynamics of the Christian gospel are not measured in statistical tables. The harvest is not at the end of the report but at the end of the world.

4. *"Rescue the perishing, care for the dying."*

"Far, far away in heathen darkness . . . will be lost."

"The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin."

"Of all changes in the world, a theological change will, of course, bear most directly upon the missionary motive. If the conception of hell changes, if attention is drawn away from the fear of God's punitive justice in the everlasting torment of the unsaved to happier

conceptions of destiny, if there is a shift of concern from other worldly issues to the problems of sin and suffering in the present life, these changes will immediately alter that view of the perils of the soul which gave to the original motive of Protestant missions much of its poignant urgency. Whatever its present conception of the future life, there is little disposition to believe that sincere and aspiring seekers after God in other religions are to be damned . . . [we have] become less concerned in any land to save men from eternal punishment than from the danger of losing the supreme good" (Chapter I). If this is universally accepted we shall doubtless need a much shorter hymnal as well as a much shorter Bible.

5. "*O Zion, haste thy mission high fulfilling.*"

"The fundamental motive, the imperative of sharing whatever certainties we have in the field of religion, remains . . . But the changes we have noted tend, with one exception, to lessen the apparent need, and certainly the insistent urgency of haste, of the work of the foreign preacher and philanthropist" (Chapter I). Mary went with haste to the hill-country; the Shepherds came with haste to Bethlehem; Paul hastened to be at Jerusalem; Isaiah said that the Lord would hasten His work; Jeremiah, that He would hasten His word to perform it; and Peter wrote that men ought "to hasten the advent of the Day of God." The angels said "go quickly and tell," and Jesus commands in the parable "to go quickly and invite to the great supper," but these laymen assure us that *now there is no urgency*.

6. *“All hail the power of Jesus’ Name, let angels prostrate fall.”*

“Light of the world, we hail Thee.” “They can hardly be expected to turn with keen interest to a Church which is busy with abstract theology concerned with another world, and which has little or nothing to say about what to them is the central business of life” (Chapter V). “What becomes of the issues between the merits of one sacred text and another when the sacredness of all texts is being denied? Why compare Mohammed and Buddha, when all the utterances of religious intuition are threatened with discard in the light of practical reason? It is no longer, Which prophet? or Which book? It is whether any prophet, book, revelation, rite, church is to be trusted” (Chapter II). “He (the modern Christian) will look forward, not to the destruction of these religions, but to their continued co-existence with Christianity, each stimulating the other in growth toward the ultimate goal, unity in the completest religious truth” (Chapter II). Here we have nothing more sublime than a Parliament of Religions with Jesus enthroned among other immortals of human history! Like Mahatma Gandhi, this appraisal refuses “to set Jesus on a solitary throne.”

7. *“Let every kindred, every tribe, on this terrestrial ball . . . crown Him Lord of all.”*

“Watchman, tell us of the night.”

“Since the value of one’s work is proportionate to the need of the people, the missionary in dealing with his sending bodies had a temptation to exaggerate the need, in part, by dwelling on the unfavorable aspects

of the culture in which he is placed, in part, by minimizing the worth of the religions there prevalent. In his reports and letters he has often unduly blackened the picture of his environment" (Chapter I). "The excessive realism of the epoch, with its tendency to look for relief only in material changes, and with its deep tinge of pessimism and futility must not, of course, be met with a skillfully manufactured idealism, softly optimistic. Nothing less than an idealism solidly based upon the testimony of human experience and upon the eternal nature of the universe itself can meet that issue" (Chapter V).

8. *"Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the Cross."*

"Trumpet of God, sound high . . ."

"Ye Christian heralds, go proclaim salvation in Emmanuel's name."

"The truth which rectifies the faults of any religious system is already foreshadowed in its own search. Hence, all fences and private properties in truth are futile: the final truth, whatever it may be, is the New Testament of every existing faith. We desire the triumph of that final truth: we need not prescribe the route. It appears probable that the advance toward that goal may be by way of the immediate strengthening of several of the present religions of Asia, Christian and non-Christian together" (Chapter II). That is what we are told; retreat from the battle-field of truth or unconditional surrender to non-Christian faiths may be God's pathway to victory! In that case the route is

indeed already prescribed; it leads downward to utter defeat.

9. *"I love Thy Kingdom, Lord, the Church of Thine abode."*

"Like a mighty army moves the Church of God."

"Should the creation and development of the Church on the mission field be a primary or should it be a secondary aim in the new era of missions? It ought to be the primary business of an interpreter of the Christian religion in the future to permeate the personal life of the individual and the fabric of human society with creative ideals and energies which will renew and revitalize both the single units and the group, rather than to build a Church as an institution to stand out as an entity in itself apart from the larger whole of society" (Chapter V).

"If the church is to be thought of, as it has too often been thought of in the past, as a kind of magical institution, which confers certain mysterious gifts and graces upon its members and which becomes an ark of safety for those who through it hope to secure thereby their eternal salvation in another world than this, then it will almost certainly stand in the way of the profounder missionary aim and it will be likely to defeat the real missionary purpose" (Chapter V). We reply: the church is the Bride of Christ. The church is the mystical body of Christ. The church was purchased by His precious blood. It is far more than "a magical institution," it is the great mystery of God. There would be no missions without the church and there can be no defeat of missions as long as the church stands.

10. *"Sweet hour of prayer make all thy wants and wishes known."*

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire."

"Superstition is the reliance on spiritual forces to do work proper to physical forces; it is a degradation of the spiritual to the level of the mechanical. . . . It applies to meaningless taboos, to the special potencies of material objects and places as charm or shrine, and to acts of petition designed to bring the divine power into the service of the petitioner's personal advantage" (Chapter I).

"It should be said in general that the pastors and leaders in the countries which we have visited seemed to us too apt to pray at great length in a conventional manner. The period of prayer on many occasions seemed to be a time of formalism instead of being a time of fused and heightened group-consciousness" (Chapter V). It was prayer "at great length and in a conventional manner" that preceded and produced Pentecost. Every revival of religion was the result of prayer, protracted, importunate, believing prayer. Prayer is not group-consciousness. It is laying hold of God.

11. *"When I survey the wondrous Cross."*

"The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ."

"Upon this theme, the great religions have made their elaborations. They have mixed true discernment with much vagrant imagination; but there is no doubt that they have used the real foundation and have made, on the whole, genuine advances" (Chapter II).

"Christianity is prepared, with the polytheistic

faiths, to see God in varied aspects. Since he is present in all events, the sensitive soul, whether seer or poet or peasant, may perceive him at many turns and in many guises." "The message presents a way of life and thinking which the Christian conceives, not as his way alone, but as a way for all men. It is a way by which we may enter without violence the texture of their living and transform it from within. As Christianity shares this faith with men of all faiths, they become changed into the same substance. The names which now separate them lose their divisive meaning; and their need be no loss of the historic thread of devotion which unites each to its own origins and inspirations" (Chapter III).

Enough has been quoted from the Appraisal Report to show where it lands us. The Report, according to a leading pastor in Pennsylvania, "repudiates the entire doctrinal basis of the Christian faith. It ignores the New Testament, it contradicts the doctrines of the Reformation, it has its eyes always on man and his achievements, never on God and His sacrifice for us." Toyohika Kagawa of Japan says it is "Christianity without the Cross." A Roman Catholic review of *Re-thinking Missions* sums up its theology in a single sentence: "A future Christianity without the Cross or the Resurrection, without the Holy Spirit and without the grace of God, without Church and without the Sacraments." How can we unite in singing after that?

IX

*“Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God
stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is and shall be:
Time’s wheel runs back or stops:
Potter and clay endure.*

*“He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst
fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth,
Sufficiently impressed.”*

—Robert Browning’s *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

CHAPTER IX

GUIDANCE

“And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah.”

(Deuteronomy 33:8)

WHAT is your favorite book in the Bible? Spurgeon loved the Psalms. Luther said he found Christ in the Galatian epistle. Raymond Lull, who wrote very many books, wrote only one book on the Bible, a commentary on the first chapter of the Gospel of John. What was the favorite Scripture of Jesus? The question is easy to answer because in the Gospel record we find no less than a score of references to one book, which I think his mother taught him when still a child, and that is the book of Deuteronomy. When he met the Tempter in the wilderness, he took the sword of the Spirit three times from that one scabbard, “It is written.”

Yet Deuteronomy is an unknown or obscure book to many. Just as the largest pearls are found in the deepest parts of the Persian Gulf, so the largest truths are sometimes found in the difficult and obscure passages of the Old Testament. “Even as our beloved Paul in his epistles, in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction.” I suppose Peter spent many

an hour trying to understand what Paul meant in his epistles.

The text at the head of this chapter is not an easy one, but is very practical because it refers to supernatural guidance, and people all around the world — Animists, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Hindus, Christians and pagans in our country — are all the time trying to find supernatural guidance. The Mohammedan uses his rosary, breathes on it, closes his eyes, seizes a bead, and continues to count to the end, to see what God wants him to do. I once visited a Taoist temple in Shanghai, and saw a great row of vases containing sticks and bits of paper; the Chinese paid their money, took out by divination a bit paper — to know the will of the gods.

Divination has a thousand forms. Nearly everybody seems to be guilty of it. There are tea shops in New York where, after paying for a cup of tea, your fortune may be told from the dregs of the tea leaves. The newspapers carry advertisements of clairvoyants, crystal-gazers, and others who follow like forms of divination and who will communicate with the unseen and give you guidance.

In Scotland there was a time when some would take the family Bible, shut it, open it suddenly, put the hand on the page, and from whatever text the hand rested upon, they would decide what was God's will for that particular juncture.

In Israel God forbade necromancy and all kinds of superstition, or dependence on any one to guide them, except the great High priest. God, because of the hardness of the human heart, gave Israel, in the breastplate

of the High priest, something that is called Urim and Thummim, mysterious omens which gave answer when they desired to know the will of God.

The story of the terrible sin at Massah and Meribah, of the whole house of Israel and of Aaron and Moses, is well known. It is referred to in Psalm 95 and in Numbers 20. The prophets come back again and again to the sin which shut Israel out of the Holy Land and kept them forty years in the wilderness.

What do Urim and Thummim mean? The words are from Hebrew roots that evidently mean *lights and perfections*, the lights of God and the perfections of God. We come across the words several times in the Old Testament, but they are not found in the New Testament. The first reference is where the high-priest put on his wonderful breastplate with its twelve precious stones, of divers colors, shining with resplendent beauty, and in those stones or behind those stones were the Urim and Thummim.

In I Samuel 14 is another story of their use. In this Samuel, Saul and Jonathan are concerned. Saul tries to cast a lot (v. 41) to find out from the Urim and Thummim whether Israel or he and his son had been guilty. The Authorized and Revised versions are not very clear, but the Septuagint Version makes plain how they tried to learn the will of God. Saul stands and prays before God: "O Jehovah, God of Israel, why doest thou not answer thy servant this day? If to me or my son Jonathan falls the blame, give Urim: if to thy people, then give Thummim."

Later, in his self-will, Saul committed sacrilege by

performing the sacrifice, having become impatient waiting for Samuel. Finally, on the night of the tragedy of the great defeat and of his death, Saul goes down the dark, dark valley of Spiritualism, and consults the witch of Endor. On the battlefield Saul had inquired of the Lord His will, but "The Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets."

In the book of Ezra we read of a whole company of people who desired to know God's will. They said, "What shall we do? We cannot find out His will." Ezra bade them stand aside. He did not know whether God wanted them or not, but he said they might not enter the sanctuary "until there should arise a high priest with Urim and Thummim." So far as we know, God refused to answer Saul, and He did not give this supernatural answer in the days of Ezra.

What were the Urim and Thummim? In the commentaries you will find three explanations. First we have the old Jewish and Christian idea, that they were twelve beautiful stones in the breastplate of the high priest, either dim or shining with a soft light when consulted. When God said yes, the gems shone with His resplendent light and glory. When God hid His face, the jewels and gems were dimmed.

Others say that the twelve stones were placed in the breastplate, but that behind the breastplate in a pouch were two stones called Urim and Thummim, which were drawn forth by the hands of the priest. When he drew Urim, the answer was yes; when he drew Thummim, the answer was no.

But Philo says that behind the breastplate in a pouch

were two little images copied from the gods of Egypt, one which stood for Ra, the god of light, and the other, Thoth, for the god of truth. These two images were put in the breastplate, and from these images they could learn the will of God.

Whatever was the case, whether images or stones or the shining of the breastplate, there is no difference of opinion regarding the use of Urim and Thummim. The high priest carried about with him always and everywhere, officially, the incarnate will of God expressed in some supernatural sign. "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah," — and then the high priest was called, who gave the answer. But when sentence was passed upon Aaron and Moses for their rebellion and their unbelief at Massah and at Meribah, then Moses, in this great prophecy said: "Thy Urim and thy Thummim are with God (or taken away by God) whom thou didst tempt at Massah and at Meribah."

If *that* is, perhaps, the meaning of the words, what is the interpretation of the text for us today? Every tribe had its blessing. Naphtali had wonderful blessing. So did Joseph, whose branches hung over the wall. Levi had many privileges and prerogatives, but of Levi He said this: "Urim and Thummim, which was once your blessing, is taken from you." The tragedy of that chapter comes upon you when you think of Miriam, who, stricken with leprosy, died. Then of Aaron, who, going out with his brother Moses, (like an officer in the army who has been court-martialed and his stripes taken off), is stripped of his priestly garments, and then dies on Mount Hor. Finally God takes Moses to

lonely Mount Nebo, and strips him of his glory as leader and he too, dies before seeing the promised land. Their three great leaders, musical Miriam, her brother Aaron, and their great lawgiver, Moses, all die. "I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

Malachi takes up the story when he says: "He shall sit as a refiner, and he will thoroughly purge" — whom? "The sons of Levi." And He began to do it by that great Son of Levi, the greatest of those born of women, John the Baptist. His father was a Levite, and John was a Levite, and when John came into the wilderness preaching repentance, he was the last of the sons of Levi; and Jesus said, the least of those in the kingdom of heaven is greater than the last of these sons of Levi.

And John the apostle — not John the Baptist — when he leaned on the bosom of Jesus, saw in Him who came from the bosom of God, all the light and all the perfection which formerly shone from the breastplate of the high priest. No wonder that Simeon also, when he took up the infant Jesus, and looked into those eyes which shone with a light that was never seen on sea or land, said: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." Simeon and John could see that in Jesus were the Urim and Thummim of God's holiness and perfection.

How does this apply to our lives? Can you and I go to our High Priest, and by any supernatural process can we find absolute, immediate guidance in all the perplexities of life, or can we not? Neither Moses, nor Aaron nor Miriam, nor any of the priestly family had

the perfection and glory of the life and the love that was fit to guide God's people and to shine upon them in their darkness. We know that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God is found only in one person, Jesus Christ. We know that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"; and because all fullness dwells in Him, you and I, as Christians, when we need guidance, can only turn to Christ.

But how do we turn to Him and find that guidance which we need? I came across a beautiful passage in George Muller's writings: "Guidance may be by *stops* as well as by steps. The *stops* of a good man, as well as his steps, are ordered by the Lord." And He guides by the closed door, the closed pathway, just as much and as often as He does by the open door, to the pathway that leads on and on to the perfect shining.

When John leaned on Jesus' bosom, he began to understand what he wrote in his Gospel: "In him was light, and the light was the life of men." "In him is no darkness at all." And in his epistle: "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." Or, as one of our poets puts it:

"I thought His love would weaken
As more and more I knew Him;
But it burneth like a beacon;
Its light and heat go through me."

And then we belong to Him and He belongs to us. This is the privilege of the sons of Levi, that they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, tempted, and

vexed at Meribah and at Massah. Judgment begins at the house of God. But also, He shall thoroughly purge the sons of Levi, and then they will be guided again into all truth.

Here, I think, is a warning against two things, and we find them all through the books of Numbers and of Deuteronomy, in the story of Samuel and Saul and of every one who has ever missed the road.

Here is warning against self-confidence, or trusting in our own judgment, or in sacerdotalism, or in any beggarly elements taken into the Christian faith. Christians should never go to the witch of Endor. Christians should never deal with spirit-rappings, and such like. He with whom we have to do is the Holy One, Jesus Christ, the Word of God. Yet how many Christians there are — whether it be in Scotland or in our own country — who think God has favored them by some particular Urim and Thummim, so that *they* have special guidance which they may follow. It is a dangerous doctrine to believe that any man or woman can be so supernaturally guided personally, and he or she alone be conscious of it, while all the rest go astray. “When He, the Spirit of truth shall come, He will guide you into all truth.” There is no royal road by which you and I may know God’s will save through the Word and the Spirit. No hope of supernatural device by which we can discover whether, for example, God wants us to go to Africa or to India, or to stay in Oklahoma or in Ohio. The only possible way is to follow the guidance the Scriptures give us, and the guidance of Him whose are the Urim and the Thummim of God.

Paul gives the process to us in Romans 12:1-6. There we find "the rule of three," for guidance in any perplexity or difficulty. We speak from experience and from the lives of missionaries. Whenever you stand at the crossroads, open that twelfth chapter of Romans, and apply fearlessly those three rules. Light will come, perplexity will go, and "thou shalt hear a voice behind thee saying, this is the way, walk ye in it."

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice" — absolute surrender, as far as we know, to God. Everything on the altar.

"Neither be ye conformed to this world" — non-conformity to worldly principles.

"Think not of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly" — humility of judgment, distrust of self.

"That ye may know what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" — that is the result.

But there is where Saul stumbled. He did not give God submission. He was self-willed. He did not conform to divine principles. He conformed to worldly principles. He had no humility but was filled with pride. You and I can tell what God wants us to do today, tomorrow, next year, all through life if we apply these principles fearlessly.

"I'll go where you want me to go,
I'll be what you want me to be."

That is *not* easy. It is easier to write on two pieces of paper, on one, the way you want to go; on the other, where you think God might want you to go; then juggle

them, and, after praying, pull out a paper — Africa for me!

We cannot tell God's will in that way. We get to know it first by surrender. First you give Him the rudder, then you give Him the ship and the cargo. So He becomes the Captain.

Again, by non-conformity. "Be not conformed to this world." Worldly maxims are good for the world, but there is no place for them in the kingdom of God.

Humility. We fail because we do not think soberly. I know a Christian worker who has, on the fly leaf of his Bible, this text: "*to think soberly.*" Under that he has some of the tremendous facts of the stellar universe, its vast galaxy of stars; and beneath that, a fraction: $1/1,644,988,436$. That is, he knows he is one but only one of the entire population of the globe as given in a World's Almanac. When you think for a moment that this world is only a speck in God's universe, and that in this world there are living today many millions of people, and that each of us is just one — then you say with fear and confidence: "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me." "Think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." When we become small enough in God's sight, and plastic enough in His hand, then we shall know "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Then God says to us as to Gideon, "Go"; or, as to Paul: "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

A second danger against which we are warned — and we all need it lest we miss the way and go on de-

tour — is against the pernicious doctrine of perfectionism. Let no one say, I am perfect; I know *my* way is right. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” When Aaron looked at his breastplate, he must always have been conscious that he carried the names of the tribes of Israel — every tribe had its sin — and Aaron’s own heart condemned him. Was it not Aaron who had made the golden calf? Was it not Moses who struck the rock with the very rod God had given him? The very privileges God gives us we misuse, when we use them not to His glory but to ours.

The more we grow in knowledge, the more we grow in this grace of God; the more we come to the light, the more uncleanness we see in ourselves. Paul began by saying, “Not worthy to be an apostle.” He grew in the grace of knowing his own sin, and by the end of his life calls himself “the chief of sinners” “lest I also be a castaway.” What is clean to the housewife is not clean to the physician; what is clean to the physician is not clean to the surgeon; what is clean to the surgeon is not always clean to the biologist’s microscope. Just as you increase the power of your microscope to study that which requires perfect cleanliness, so your rules for perfect purity from contagion become more and more stringent. And if before God “the very stars are not pure” as Job said, how much less man? Our secret sins never appear so heinous as when seen in the light of His countenance. But if we let Him in, and pray, “Teach me Thy way, O Lord,” we shall not be failing for guidance. That great hymn written by some one

who had read the book of Numbers again and again, puts the whole of this into poetry:

“Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;
Guide me with Thy powerful hand.”

The will of God, how are we to know it? The will of God for us and the world. The will of God for our individual lives will only dawn if we lean on the bosom of our great High Priest with the Urim and Thummim, and look up into His eyes as John did again and again, until we see that light full of glory. Then we say with John, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

“If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” Then we do not say, “I know this is God’s will for me” and make ourselves objectionable to a whole company of Christians, but “we have fellowship one with another.” We are never too certain of God’s guidance unless we have fellowship in that guidance with our fellow Christians, and “the blood of Jesus Christ” cleanses them and us from all mistaken hasty judgments and unbelief, and “the path of the just becomes as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

X

*“Crown Him the Lord of love:
Behold His hands and side,
Rich wounds, yet visible above,
In beauty glorified:
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his burning eye
At mysteries so bright.*

*Crown Him the Lord of years,
The Potentate of time;
Creator of the rolling spheres,
Ineffably sublime:
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
For Thou hast died for me:
Thy praise shall never, never fail
Throughout eternity.”*

—Matthew Bridges, 1851.

CHAPTER X HOW GREAT IS JESUS CHRIST?

Hebrews 1:10

JESUS CHRIST is Lord. In our loyalty to the Word of God and in our love for the Savior, we must ever be on our guard against slipshod thinking and superficiality of pious phraseology. A thoughtless expression of orthodoxy and an over-familiarity with the awful implications of great Bible truths may even breed contempt in the hearts of our hearers. Those mysteries of the faith which angels desire to look into are not to be treated as commonplace. Let us gird up the loins of our mind as we ponder the question: How great is Jesus Christ?

If Jesus Christ is only “the greatest character in human history” — a divinity minus omnipotence — He is insufficient for the day in which we live. And if in this life only we have hope in such a Christ, we are of all men most miserable. We are told today that Christ is divine, but that “nobody should ever go to Jesus, to His manger and His cross, to find the omnipotence which swings Orion and the Pleiades.”* But that is the very thing the writers of the New Testament did, and that is what we desire to do now.

The creeds of Christendom have always seen in the manger at Bethlehem and on the cross of Calvary the Eternal Word made flesh — Light of Light, Very God of very God, and of one substance with the Father.

The heading over the first chapter of Hebrews in

* Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick.

the commentary of Professor Schlatter, one of the leading theologians of Germany, is entitled: *How great is Jesus Christ?* This first chapter, he says, gives the answer.

Did you ever read the life of James Gilmour, pioneer missionary in Mongolia? A few months before his death, he wrote to an Edinburgh friend:

“Yesterday I escaped at 5:30 A. M. and made for the hot springs, twelve miles away. I walked there and back, and in consequence today am lame, my feet badly blistered. I had a grand day, restful and quiet. Going, I sat down behind a mud wall and read the first four chapters of Hebrews. Upon arrival, I had my bath, then secured an empty room in an inn. I had sleep, dinner, tea, and read the rest of Hebrews. I never saw so much in Hebrews before.”

If we could draw away from the crowd and meditate on this great epistle, we too would say with James Gilmour, “I never saw so much in Hebrews before!” After the sublime introductory statement the writer speaks of Christ’s superiority to the angels, and then seven quotations are given from the Old Testament to prove it: No angel is called Son (Ps. 2:7), only Jesus. No angel can call God Father (II Sam. 7:14), only Jesus. All the angels worship the Son (Deut. 32:43, LXX), and that Son is Jesus. Angels are only ministers (Ps. 103:4), but Jesus is Saviour and Lord. Christ’s throne and scepter are divine (Ps. 45:7, 8), therefore He is crown prince of the universe. Angels are creatures, but the Son is the Creator (Ps. 102:26-28). No angel was ever enthroned at God’s right hand,

but Jesus was (Ps. 110) and is now (Acts 7:56).

These are stupendous claims to make for the Carpenter of Nazareth less than forty years after His death and resurrection. But not greater than John makes in his Gospel, or Paul in Colossians, or Jesus Himself, even in the synoptic gospels. To the New Testament writers Christ was Lord of all, or not Lord at all. In no book of the New Testament are statements regarding the eternal and absolute deity of Christ more strongly asserted than in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

We limit ourselves to one only of the seven quotations. This is taken from Psalm 102:25 and 26. Let us read it again in connection with Hebrews 1:1, 2.

We have specific evidence of the application of verses 23 and 24 to the Messiah by those who employed the Hebrew or some equivalent text. Here we have the explanation of how, in Christian circles at least, the accepted Messianic passage could be made to prove the doctrine that the Messiah is none other than the pre-existent Wisdom of Proverbs 8:22-31, "by whom also he made the worlds." Indeed, we shall not be going too far if, with Bruce, we say:

"It is possible that the writer (of Hebrews) regarded this text (Ps. 102:25-27) as Messianic because, in his view, creation *was* the work of the pre-existent Christ. But it is equally possible that he ascribed creative agency to Christ out of regard to this and other similar texts believed to be Messianic on other grounds."

Granted that the text is Messianic, the significance is obvious. To the writer, Jesus was superior to the whole angelic host because He made the starry firma-

ment. A startling statement — that the whole fabric of His hands will once dissolve and be rolled up like a garment, while He abides forever, the unchangeable, the eternal. To appreciate the argument we must remember that the Messiah of the Old Testament was not only the Servant of Jehovah (Isaiah), but also the eternal Wisdom (Proverbs). Therefore John declares that “by him was everything made that was made,” and Paul asserts that it is He “who was before all things, and in whom all things consist.”

The Old Testament conception of the universe was not so puerile and puny as some modern writers imagine. The knowledge and skill of that older civilization must not be despised. Egypt, Babylon and China had already made their contribution to astronomy, and recorded their observations. There were earnest stargazers, who even made star catalogues and perfected the solar calendar.

“Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou lead out the signs of the Zodiac in their season, or guide the Bear with her train?”

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number. He calleth them all by name.”

“He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers.”

“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.”

“When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers.”

“Oh God thou art very great . . . thou art clothed with majesty as with a garment.”

“Lo, these are parts of His ways; but the thunder of His power who can understand?”

“Praise Him in the firmament of His power.”

“Tell the stars, if thou be able to number them.”

We must consider also that to these writers God was transcendent beyond all the visible creation. The Jews were not pantheists, but theists. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. He abides forever. This Jehovah is our strength. “He stretcheth out the heavens . . . and maketh the Bear, Orion, the Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.”

And the writer to these Hebrew Christians says that *this Creator was Jesus, the Son of God.*

New Testament writers also expressed, in the language of that day, their astronomy, which was far higher and greater than in Old Testament times. The Greeks had surpassed the old Babylonians, Assyrians and Egyptians. They did not yet have Copernicus or Kepler, but they had Pythagoras and Ptolemy. These astronomers had taught the Greek and Roman world the endless expanse of creation, and its mysteries seen and unseen. Paul and Apollos were educated in this science of the Greeks and were not ignorant of Greek astronomy. In the New Testament there are many references to the stars. God, of whom we read on the first page of Genesis that “he made the stars also,” is welcomed on the first page of Matthew’s Gospel by the star of Bethlehem.

Paul, in the epistles, remembering his open-air

travel by night on land and sea, cries out: "One star differeth from another in glory, so shall it be in the resurrection"; "In him were all things created in the heavens and on earth"; "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." James speaks of the Father of the (heavenly) lights who knows no change of rising and setting, and with whom is no parallax (1:17); that is, God is at the center of the universe! The Apocalypse of John has more than twenty-references to the stars and the great catastrophes of heavenly powers that will usher in the day of doom! Peter says, "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," on the last day.

And it is of this vast universe to which John and Paul and the writer to the Hebrews allude, that *Jesus Christ is the creator and upholder*. What do you make of that?

"I gaze aloof at the vaulted roof,
 Where time and space are the warp and woof
 Which the King of kings, like a curtain, flings
 O'er the dreadfulness of eternal things;
 I should lightly hold this tissued fold,
 But if I could see, as indeed they be,
 The glories that encircle me,
 This marvelous curtain of blue and gold;
 For soon the whole, like a parch'd scroll,
 Shall before my amazed eyes unroll,
 And without a screen, at one burst be seen
 The Presence in which I have always been."

“As a vesture thou shalt roll them up (all the stars and firmament), but thou, O Christ, remainest!” The apostles believed it — do you?

The universe has become larger to us — we have greater knowledge. Let us be thankful for it. Have we larger wisdom? Do we still have childlike faith? Microscope and telescope have pushed the horizon further away, but has God become less necessary? How great is Jesus Christ in our new universe? Do we still take the New Testament seriously? Would a smaller Christ meet this larger problem? It is a terrible thing to fall *into* the hands of the living God, but a more terrible thing to fall out. Dare we leave God out from so vast a universe? Looking through the great telescope of the Lick Observatory at the nebulae of the Milky Way, can you still say, “By him was everything made”; “In him all things consist”?

Betelgeuse is one of the brightest and nearest stars in Orion. It is one of the few luminaries sufficiently close to be measured. Yet light from Betelgeuse must travel one hundred and fifty years before it reaches our eyes. The late Professor Michelson, of Chicago University, measured the incredible size of this star. Yet neither he nor any other earthly mortal actually gazed upon this gigantic sun, for the topaz which glitters nightly in the eastern winter sky is but a shaft of light which was thrust from the incandescent monster when the United States was in its infancy. Scientists today are themselves bewildered. Such a universe shows the shallowness and the pathetic futility of our little phil-

osophies, of our small-time conceptions, of our micro-cosmic horizons.

“What is man that thou art mindful of him?” “But thou remainest; and thy years shall not fail.” The eternal, everlasting Christ! “We have seen his glory” in all His stars; but do we worship Him as the magi did?

Other foundations none can lay beside, or contrary to, or in competition with, that foundation which is laid once for all — Jesus Christ, the actual, historical, personality revealed in the contemporary records.

“The Church’s one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord.”

What He meant to the earliest disciples of the first century, He means to us. What He was to them, He is to us. Paul did not invent a new religion. He received the message and passed it on. There is only one gospel.

“Now, brothers,” writes the apostle (according to Dr. Moffatt’s translation), “I would have you know the gospel I once preached to you, the gospel you received, the gospel in which you have your footing, the gospel by which you are saved . . . namely, that Christ died for our sins as the Scriptures had said, that he was buried, and that he rose on the third day as the Scriptures had said.” The Christ of the Scriptures is a supernatural Christ. His death was a supernatural event. His resurrection, too, was supernatural. He came, to save us from our sins. He rose again, to save us from our sins. That is the foundation of our faith, the strength of our hope, the source of our love.

If we do not adhere to these great fundamental facts, our religion is all hap-hazard. But when we accept the facts we must accept all their implications, for "great is the mystery of godliness." We go to the manger and find Omnipotence there: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." We go to Calvary and find Omnipotence there: "The church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." (Acts 20:28.) We stand before the empty grave and, behold Omnipotence has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel. Heaven's arches rang, the angels sang, and the star pointed the way when Jesus was born at Bethlehem. On Calvary,

"Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glory in,
When Christ, the mighty Maker, died
For man, the creature's sin."

It was fitting that heaven should be moved at His coming to gladness and joy; and to grief and darkness the day of His death. For when He comes again to judge the world in power and great glory, this same Jesus, then the very "heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. But according to his promise we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

XI

“Whatever else may be said of the early Church, this is undoubtedly true, that its back was toward the world and its face toward the coming of the Lord. Its course was steered not alone by the chart of its creed but by the pole-star of its hope. The fore-gleam of the day illumined its dark hours, and saved it from present fears. Its moral and ethical life found surest impulse in the certainty that Christ would come, just as it had found firm foundation in the certainty that he had come; and the inspiration of its splendid sacrifices, conflicts and triumphs was in this same sure consciousness. ‘Now’ was always ‘the day of salvation’ and hence of earnest effort to win men to Christ, since tomorrow might be the day of glory.”

—J. Stuart Holden.

CHAPTER XI

IMPLICATIONS OF BELIEF IN THE SECOND COMING

UNLESS a Christian doctrine has practical effect in our lives, it is a dead-letter. For example, there is no particular benefit in a mere intellectual belief in the Deity of Christ, unless with Thomas we are willing to call Him "my Lord and my God." Monotheism is the highest conception of God, and yet the Apostle James tells us that it is futile unless accompanied by repentance from sin and a living faith in Christ. "Thou believest that there is one God—the devils also believe and tremble." There is no spiritual power in an intellectual confession of our faith in the Holy Spirit. It is only when we receive Him into our hearts that He works through us. Christians have always had the text of their marching orders on the last page of Matthew's Gospel, but whole generations and sections of the Church have been disobedient and, as far as any practical effect of Christ's command is concerned, they might as well have torn up that page of the New Testament, as a scrap of paper.

It has occurred to me that there is perhaps no doctrine which has received such prominence in recent years, both in print and in discussion, and at the same time has been so little emphasized in practical life, as the doctrine of the Second Coming.

Everyone who accepts the Bible, believes in the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ; over seven hundred times is it referred to in the Scriptures. "Enoch . . . , the seventh from Adam, prophesied . . . , saying, 'Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints.' It is the theme of David, the Major and the Minor Prophets and our Lord Himself, as recorded in the Gospels, and it is the hope set before us in the epistles of Peter, James, John, Paul and Jude. The last book of the Bible is primarily a book on the Second Coming of Christ, revealing the apocalyptic judgments that shall fall upon the earth during the reign of the antichrist, and the glorious victory for the Son of God. It closes with His last promise, and the prayer of the Church: "Lo, I come quickly . . . Even so come Lord Jesus."

The three schools of thought regarding Christ's return have argued and disputed, and often unjustly condemned each other. All agree on the personality and the reality of Christ's return; all schools of thought are agreed regarding the supreme character of this event in history and the longing hope of the Church of Christ for its fulfillment.

The post-millennialist view is that, the world will grow better and better until the whole world will accept Christ and own Him as Lord; that thus the millennium will be ushered in, with peace and righteousness covering the earth for a thousand years, *following which*, the Lord will return again, to put an end to all human history and to assign the sons of men to the place and environment that shall be theirs forever; the Kingdom of

our Lord on earth will have accomplished its mission; His advent will be attended with the resurrection of both the righteous and unrighteous, followed by the general judgment; on the completion of this judgment the saints will be admitted into glory and the finally impenitent enter their place of punishment.

On the other hand, the pre-millennialist teaches that Jesus will return to inaugurate a reign upon the earth that shall extend for a thousand yeards. His return *will precede the millennium*. Until Christ's return, the world will grow worse and worse; at His return those who fell asleep in Christ, together with the living saints, will be transfigured, and both share in Christ's rule on the earth. Some time following the close of the thousand years, the unrighteous dead will be raised and brought to judgment.

The third, or a-millennial school of thought, does not think that *any* golden-age or millennial period is taught in Scripture. But they believe that the coming of Christ ushers in the final judgment and the end of human history. Hugh Martin, writing for the Student Christian Movement on "The Necessity of the Second Coming" says, "It is no crude, unintelligent fanaticism to anticipate such a close to human history. There is no scientific reason to hold that the present material order of things on this planet will go on for ever. On the contrary, science appears to anticipate a time when the earth will become uninhabitable." He continues:

"There is to be a Day of Reckoning, a Last Day, a Day of the Lord, a Day of Judgment. Belief in God — or at least in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus

Christ — involves a climax to the present stage of human history.”

In every case the climax of the present age, the crisis of the world in which we live is the return of our Lord; and this is the general outline of the three schools of thought. Waiving the question as to which of these three schools of thought is most Scriptural, the practical aspects of Christ's return are far more important than any theory. Some have been very clever at preparing a time-table of prophetic events and suggesting the hour when we may expect our Lord. They do not always seem to have been as anxious to be found ready for that return. Pre-millennial teaching demands above everything else other-worldliness, a sense of stewardship, and a supreme sense of the urgency of our task, which, alas, are often strangely absent.

“He comes again; O Zion, ere thou meet Him,
Make known to every heart His saving grace;
Let none whom He hath ransomed fail to greet Him,
Through thy neglect, unfit to see His face.”

The apostolic church was on the tiptoe of expectancy. No one can read the New Testament without being convinced of this fact. The Second Coming of Christ was to them the very air they breathed, the source of an undiscourageable hope, and the joy of a certain triumph. “The cloud of lesser interests was rolled away and ultimate values and eternal issues stood out before them stark and clear as never before or since in the history of our race.”

Now there is no other event in history which will have such absolute, immediate and startling effect on all property values, as the rending of the sky and the return of our Lord. In this connection I remember an experience I once had with a wealthy farmer in the Middle West, who had very pronounced views regarding the Second Advent and its imminence, but who was noted in the community as being a close-fisted man and to whom it had never occurred that his lordly acres would command no market price the day after the event for which he professed to be so anxiously waiting.

Men should have the courage of their convictions. Faith without works is dead, and it does seem, to the outside observer, highly incongruous for the one who believes this doctrine to make careful provision for investments payable, say, in 1949 or 1960. The supreme test of any doctrine is its practical value in our lives. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I command you?" Peter's challenge to the Christians of his day was based on his faith — and theirs — in the imminent return of our Lord. He wrote: "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that

ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in His sight."

Seeing "all these things are to be dissolved," how can we be blameless in God's sight when Lazarus is lying on our doorstep? Men who are the custodians of the bread-basket of humanity, not only of the bread that perisheth, but of the Bread that came down from heaven, cannot escape the emphasis of stewardship and urgency in all that the Bible teaches regarding the Second Coming. The present condition of the non-Christian world, its accessibility, its utter and awful need, its responsiveness, the call for workers — all of these, together, are nothing less than an acid-test of the rightfulness of accumulated property among church members. "It is not right for some of us to have everything until all of us have something." It is an interesting coincidence, and not without deep significance, that the same writer for the students of Great Britain whom we have quoted on the Second Advent, also writes for them on "Christ and Money." There is a close relation between the teaching of Jesus on stewardship and the return of the Master. What is the real value of money according to the mind of Christ? To possess a colossal fortune when our Lord suddenly returns to make reckoning, would be colossal crime. Our standards of living, our luxuries, our investments must be in the light of the day of judgment. That day is more certain than tomorrow's dawn.

The unity and solidarity of the human family has been startlingly revealed in recent years. No man liveth to himself; no man dieth to himself. Even Mohammed,

(whose eschatology was as strong as his soteriology was weak) taught in his Koran (especially in the 83rd and the 107th chapters) that the coming of the Last Day should produce in the hearts of all believers practical benevolence and liberal alms-giving. If this was ever true it is true today, and for Christians.

The world was never in more desperate need of the things that money can furnish and that cannot be furnished without money. Multitudes of the sick in many lands are asking for physicians whom only money can furnish. Hosts of handicapped, ignorant, and poverty-blighted lives are seeking for an education and a change, which only money can give. The destitute are suffering from lack of food and the homeless from lack of friendship. The world is crumbling and hearts are breaking.

Here are some practical questions that the Christian, who is expecting the speedy return of the Lord, must try to answer:

How much will corner lots in New York or Boston be worth the day after Christ returns?

What will be the value on Exchange of stocks and bonds for Christians, after their rapture?

How hard is it for a rich man to really enter the Kingdom of this Truth? Must he linger in No Man's Land and be afraid to cross the boundary of his own selfishness into the territory of conviction?

Did Barnabas of Cyprus make a mistake when he disposed of his property (in view of *his* belief in the speedy return of Christ) and was not satisfied to give of his income?

How near must the return of Christ be to make it

safe to touch our capital, as well as our annual dividends, for His sake?

Is it not easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to continue very rich and still proclaim his sincere belief in the imminent return of his Lord?

And, if all these questions are out of place and bear no relation to the subject, what shall we do with the great parable of the Second Coming and the Final Judgment? "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory . . . I was hungry . . ."

The Rev. Jay T. Stocking, pastor of the Pilgrim Congregational Church, St. Louis, uses striking language on the immortality of money in this very connection:

"We exhort people to give great attention to life, for that is eternal, and to set little value upon money, for that is temporal. We are in the habit of reminding people that they cannot take their money with them when they leave this world. They are immortal, but their silver and gold are dust.

"This teaching is fundamentally wrong and misleading. There is an unsound dualism about it. We cannot separate life and money in this way any more than we can separate life and labor. All the value that money has is due to the amount of life that it stands for. Money that goes into the making of character, the shaping of destinies; money that gives men hope and spells opportunity and lengthens days and wipes away tears does not 'pass away.' Money that contributes to

the onward sweep of truth is as imperishable as truth itself. Treasure that is spent for the Kingdom of God is beyond the reach of moth and rust."

This is what Jesus meant when He said, "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles."

XII

“We must therefore follow up the new consciousness concerning the nature of Time in which we stand to-day. We must reckon with the end of the whole temporal form of the world as earnestly and as soberly as we reckon with our own death. We must approach every crisis of politics, every social revolution, with the question, What light is thrown on this event by the End? The hands on the clock of the world move ceaselessly forward towards the stroke of twelve. The important point is to know which hour it has struck. If we reckon with this End and regard the course of the world from the viewpoint of the End, naturally we are exposed to serious danger. There is the danger that we shall wish to fix the date of the End and to put a fantastic interpretation on historical events. But all the fantastic ideas which have brought the Christian hope into discredit, must not lead us into any mistake about the thing itself, about the truth, that the End is coming.”

—Dr. Karl Heim in *“The New Divine Order.”*

CHAPTER XII

THE OTHER-WORLDLINESS OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

SOME years ago an article appeared in the *Hilbert Journal* by a mathematician, who was also somewhat of a philosopher, on the subject of "The Infinite." He pointed out that every man finds the idea of the infinite and of the eternal in space, time, matter and number. The atom and the starry nebulae proclaim the infinitesimal and the infinite. We lift up our eyes to what we call the everlasting hills and drink from the river that apparently flows on forever. Man is conscious not of his greatness but of his insignificance when he studies nature. "He who proclaims the existence of the infinite," said Louis Pasteur, "and none can avoid it, accumulates in that affirmation more of the supernatural than is to be found in all of the miracles of all the religions; for the notion of the Infinite presents that double character that it forces itself upon us and yet is incomprehensible. When this notion seizes upon our understanding, we can but kneel . . ." God has put eternity in the human heart. (Eccles. 3:11. Hebrew text.)

The Bible is a book that has wide horizons, infinite stretches of space and time. It deals primarily, not with this life, but with a life yet to be. The great pessimist of the Old Testament and the great optimist Apostle

of the New offer a sharp contrast in their personalities, environment and message. But the writer of Ecclesiastes and Paul both insist that the present life is only vanity of vanities when compared with the life beyond. There is a time for everything and God hath made everything beautiful in its time. Yet all man's work and man himself must face a final judgment. The things that are seen are temporal, secular, only age-long; the things that are not seen are enduring, everlasting and eternal; *totaliter aliter*, altogether different.

This conception is not limited to one favoured religion or race. It is universal. To the sages and philosophers of the past, eternity does not hover over time as an abstraction; it underlies time as a reality. This conception, says Henri Bergson, "establishes between eternity and time the same relation as between a piece of gold and the small change — change so small that payment goes on forever without the debt being paid off. The debt could be paid at once with the piece of gold. It is this that Plato expresses in his magnificent language when he says that God, unable to make the world eternal, gave it Time as 'a moving image of eternity.'" *

In this connection Barth has some penetrating words: "Eternity is not the prolongation of time. Eternity is the Quite Other, the Unknown, which in Jesus Christ has broken into our world." According to this conception time is not eternity, and eternity is not time, but eternity is, as it were, the hidden, the other side of

* Henri Bergson: "Creative Evolution," page 335.

time. Time is empty, impoverished eternity. Eternity is time that is filled. In the life of the individual there may be long intervals which can only be described as empty times, times of sleep. And then, perhaps, there comes a year, or an hour, when things grow earnest, when some crisis comes. It means that eternity is flooding into time, as a mountain freshet after a storm floods the dry bed of a stream. Therefore, "the fullness of time" is the crisis for man and for God. Death opens the door to the flood of the eternal; the eternal joy or the eternal woe of Scripture.

It was pointed out at the Jerusalem Council Meeting in 1928 that the present-day terminology of the Church and of missions lays such great emphasis on social service and the present life, that we are in grave danger of losing the sense of the eternal. Our own worldliness blinds us to the other-worldliness of those whom we call heathen. Our vocabulary is too secular. Our horizon is too earthly. Our outlook is too much the realm of time. Secular movements rivet our attention. But the sincere and devout Moslem, Hindu, or Buddhist, even the Animist, has *always* faced an eternal future with an anxious heart. To them Eternity is the home that calls; time is the present station which they have reached, and which they are soon leaving. So eternity has the greater claim upon them. Eternity is above, time is underneath. Therefore, the light or the dark terror of eternity falls continually into time, while time itself has nothing wholly its own.

What happens after death is of supreme importance in all the non-Christian religions. None of these teach

annihilation; none of them believe that death ends all. The fact is that most of the non-Christian religions, with the possible exception of one form of Buddhism, emphasize the other world as a most important fact in religion. A recent editorial appeared in a Persian paper, the *Rahnama* of Teheran on the importance of not neglecting the life that now is!

“We Persians always think of life as something very temporary. Since we are living in this world only for a short period of time and eternal life is in the other world, we do not take proper care of ourselves in this life. We build houses out of mud and mud brick just to last a few years. We make doors, tables and chairs out of thin wood. We even borrow some of our household goods from our neighbors when we have guests. Nothing is made durable and the very foundations we build are not solid.”

Men believe in the immortality of the soul because of the intrinsic incompleteness of the present life. Death closes the door, but men believe it leads to another room, because we see that character grows even after the faculties begin to decline. And among all races there have been those who believed in life eternal because of the imperative clamor of the affections.

Not only in Christian lands, but among all races, love is stronger than death. Think of the burial rites of the animist in the deep forests of Africa or in the Isles of the South Seas. In ancient times, to men like Homer, Cicero and Plato, there was no question of man's immortality — they believed in it. The religion of Ancient Egypt proclaims it in tombs of kings and

the witness of monuments. What is the Book of the Dead or Tutankhaman's tomb and treasure house save the abiding witnesses that these ancients lived for eternity. It is one unbroken testimony from Mexico, Rome, Greece, India, Africa.

Or take a modern instance. Writing on *Jainism* in the *Review of Nations* (January, 1927), a Hindu, Champat Rai Jain, says: "Happiness is not possible for him who has constantly the fear of death gnawing at his heart. In short, we want immortality, all-embracing knowledge and uninterrupted bliss, and will not be satisfied with anything else. Now, *Jainism* discovers that the soul is by its very nature a simple substance as distinguished from a compound thing, endowed with the capacity for infinite all-embracing knowledge, and blissful. The space at my disposal will not admit of my enlarging on any of these essential potentialities of the soul substance, or to undertake their proof. But very strict logical proof is available to prove the *Jaina* claim in this respect. Modern experimental psychology is generally coming round to the view that the soul is a simple substance, and, as such, deathless and immortal. The significance of the simple nature of the soul is that it is incapable of disintegration or of being destroyed, because what is not made up of parts cannot be pulled to pieces in any way. The soul, then, is immortal in its own nature."

No religion lays larger emphasis on Eternity than Islam. Mohammed preached judgment to come and the great alternatives of the Day of Doom. The Koran teaches the literal resurrection of the body, and a life

everlasting, in endless tortures or eternal pleasures. Miguel Asin's recent work, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, even shows how the eschatology of Dante was borrowed from Ibn 'Arabi, a medieval mystic, follower of Mohammed.

To sum it all up, is it not true that the best and noblest men in all the non-Christian world through all the centuries have had faith in the immortality of the soul, in the certainty of reward and punishment, in the supreme value of the life beyond? Together with this conception of the future life has come the terror of its possibilities, the vengeance of the gods, or the demons of the spirit world, not to speak of the dread of ancestral shades and their power to help or to hurt. The hell of Buddhism and of Islam are painted in lurid colors. To such a world, where men through fear of death and the hereafter were subject to bondage, Christ came. He abolished death and brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel. It is a Gospel of eternal life and eternal joy and peace through repentance and faith in His atoning death.

Again, we cannot forget that Jesus Christ in His teaching and Paul in his epistles, continually lay emphasis on the eternal aspects of the present life, of the Church and of the missionary enterprise. Christ's parables have the background of the great day of judgment and deal with eternity. The parable of the Talents, of the Pounds, of the Ten Virgins, of the Wheat and the Tares, of Lazarus and Dives, of the Net, of the Great Supper — all are eschatological and refer to the life after death. Read His last discourse in John's

Gospel or His words on the end of the age in the Synoptics, and you realize that His horizon was distant and "beyond the river that has no bridge." Eternal life and eternal punishment cannot be eliminated from the teaching of Jesus. His gospel of the resurrection at the grave of Lazarus rises far above the present earthly life. "What shall it profit a man," He said, on another occasion, "if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" To eat, to drink, to be merry, to forget the other world is the life of a fool. Here we sow, but "the harvest is the end of the world" for every one of us.

Paul's missionary message and passion were due to this vision of the eternal. "We look not at the things which are seen." "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men." "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." "If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable." Not only at Damascus, but all through Paul's life, "he could not see (earthly things) for the glory of that light" — which shone from the heavenly world.

"Our citizenship," he said, "is in heaven." Here we are only pilgrims and sojourners to dwell in tents. We must not be entangled with the things of this world if we would be Christ's ambassadors.

The Apostle preached Christ *and the resurrection* because he saw the invisible world, heard the inaudible voices and himself laid hold of the intangible realities. His fires of passion were unquenchable because he lived *sub specie eternitatis*.

At the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order,

Dr. Adolf Deismann said, "For the past thirty years or so the discernment of the eschatological character of the Gospel of Jesus has more and more come to the front in international Christian theology. I regard this as one of the greatest steps forward that theological enquiry has ever achieved. We, today, must lay the strongest possible stress upon the eschatological character of that Gospel which it is the practical business of the Church to proclaim. Namely, that we must daily focus our minds upon the fact that the Kingdom of God is near, that God with His unconditional sovereignty comes through judgment and redemption, and that we have to prepare ourselves inwardly for the *maranatha* — the Lord cometh."

If this is true, then our missionary message and methods need nothing so much as the searchlight of eternity. Our message concerns One who came from the eternal, Who died, Who rose, and Who is coming again to judge the world. Our Gospel has eternal values, and places every one who hears it before eternal issues — eternal life, or eternal death. In this connection we recall Dr. Harnack's famous definition of the Christian religion: "It is something at once simple and sublime; it means one thing and one thing only — eternal life in the midst of time by the strength and under the eye of God." That is indeed not *all* of Christianity, but it is a most important part. The Cross is our glory because it "towers o'er the wrecks of time." Amid the chaos of political confusion in the Far East, in the welter of the fanatic nationalism of India, in the midst of cynical secularism and communistic atheism, when hu-

manity is uprooted and institutions are adrift, when the torrents descend, the floods rise high and the whirlwinds blow — the Rock of Ages stands, our only refuge.

The mission fields need a Gospel message which is timeless because it is eternal and boundless as the horizon of heaven. All of the older missionary heroes, Judson, Carey, Livingstone, Martyn, Hudson Taylor, lived for eternity and preached eternity, a Gospel that was other-worldly. They went out to save the lost. Yet their social Gospel included works of mercy to all with whom they came in contact. They had their schools, hospitals, and asylums; they were not unmindful of social evils and worked for social reforms. But they considered all these as means to an end. These were only the scaffolding of the eternal palace. *That* consists of living stones, lives redeemed, character built up, souls won for glory. The aim and goal of the missionary enterprise is not of the earth and earthly. John saw it on lonely Patmos, the great multitude which no man could number “of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues” before the throne in white robes giving glory to the Lamb forever and ever.

I received a long letter from a Moslem convert in the Punjab, in which is this significant passage: “Our citizenship, St. Paul says, is in heaven. We are citizens of no mean kingdom. The first mark of a citizen is that he love his country, that he be proud of belonging to his country, that he be a patriot. In the Indian Christian Church this sense is largely lacking. We are enthusiastic for our particular nations, we are swept off our feet by the interplay of imperial and racial move-

ments, and we even identify that Kingdom of Heaven with a national cause. But in the Biblical sense we cease thereby to be Christian."

Our methods and our programme of missions may need revision when we think as clearly and as deeply as this convert did. In the light of eternity, salvation becomes a matter of great urgency, and opportunity is of infinite value. When the International Missionary Council met at Herrnhut in 1932, two centuries after Zinzendorf, one of the main questions discussed related to the other-worldly character of our missionary message. The Scandinavian delegates brought a memorial which deserved and received much attention:

"Since we are firmly convinced that the preaching of the Gospel is the essential task of missions, and must always remain so, we cannot help feeling anxious at the growing tendency of making programs for the solution of rural, social and industrial problems in the various mission fields. Naturally we do not object to discussing these important problems from the point of view of missions. But if this is done beyond a certain measure there is real danger of diverting the missionary zeal from its central objectives to such social problems as will naturally present themselves when Christianity has had a long period of development in a nation, but which in no wise need be put in the foreground at the time of laying the foundation of a Christian Church in a nation."

The Council Meeting owed much to this Stockholm letter and it was the occasion for an outspoken utterance on the central task and the supreme goal of mis-

sions. In an atmosphere that was pietistic and not materialistic, devout and other-worldly one could almost see *Zinzendorf redivivus*, and hear him:

“If we have anything to bring in the name of God to a world in need, it is certainly not our own piety, our own way of life, our own modes of thought or our own human help. What the Church has to give in its world mission is the good news of a divine act in history, of the Word made flesh. Apart from a Word which is from God, and not from man, there is no Christian mission. In face of the powerful anti-Christian forces operating in the world today we reaffirm our faith that the revelation of God in Christ is the only way of deliverance for mankind and that it alone can provide the foundation for an order of society that will be according to the will of God.”

And again they say:

“We have considered afresh what is central in our missionary work and where the chief emphasis should be laid. We are convinced that our missionary task is to proclaim in word and life God’s revelation and redemption in Jesus Christ. We have no other task; for while there is much that is useful and good, ‘one thing is needful.’ *We need to ask ourselves whether everything that forms part of present missionary activity serves the one dominant purpose of making clear the message of Jesus Christ in all its fulness.*”

INDEX

- A**
- Aaron's breastplate, 96
 Ambassadors of Christ, 29ff.
 Americanism in Missions, 34.
 Al Ghazali, 16.
 Anthropos, 16.
 Apostolic faith, 47.
 Arabia, as mission field, 58.
 Art of thinking, 11.
 Ashram of Hindus, 30.
 Atonement, cruciality of the,
 58
- B**
- Balfour, 13.
 Bankruptcy of mankind, 69.
 Barnabas of Cyprus, 123.
 Barth, Karl, 66, 128.
 Basis of Missions, 32.
 Beach, Harlan P., quoted, 63.
 Bengal, early missions in, 74.
 Bernard of Clairvaux, 16.
 Bergson, Henri, 128.
 Bible translations, 31
 Bibliolatry, 101.
 Bridges, Matthew, quoted, 106.
 British Weekly, quoted, 79.
 Browning, quoted, 48.
 Browning's Abt Volger, 52.
 Browning's Death in the
 Desert, 39.
 Browning's Karshish, 8.
 Browning's Rabbi Ben Ezra,
 93.
 Bunyan's Pilgrim, 50, 53, 65.
- C**
- Carlyle on creeds, 46.
 Ceylon's spicy breezes, 76.
 Christ in Paul's Life, 60.
- Christ the supreme mystery,
 48.
 "Christian Century," quoted
 83.
 Christian Science, 50.
 Church and the Kingdom, the
 90.
 Claves Potentiae, 42.
 Cognito ergo sum, 10.
 Comparative Religion, 20, 68.
 Concentration of thought, 12.
 Cornelius and Peter, 51.
 Crawford, Dan, 17.
 Creeds as keys, 43.
 Creeds of Christendom, 107.
 Criticism of the Gospels, 22.
 Cross of Christ, the, 49.
- D**
- Daniel's reference to the Mes-
 siah, 46.
 Deismann, Adolf, on The
 Coming Crisis, 133, 134.
 Deity of Christ, the, 9, 39,
 112.
 Denney on the Atonement, 58.
 Dorcas and Peter, 51.
 Doxologies of Paul, the, 67.
 Duff, Alexander, his appeal
 for India, 76.
 Duffield, Samuel W., quoted
 72.
 Dutch East Indies, 54.
- E**
- Education, purpose of, 10.
 End of the world, 126.
 Enoch, 118.
 Erasmus vs. Luther, 24.

Eternity, 129.
 Eternity and prayer, 57.
 Evangelism, what does it mean? 28.
 Evolution and Creation, 22.

F

Faith is the key of the Christian, 41.
 Falconer, Keith, quoted, 62, 63.
 First things first, 53.
 Fleming, Daniel J., 29.
 Froude on Cranmer's failure 40.
 Fundamentalism and Modernism, 83.

G

Galileo, 13.
 Gandhi, Mahatma, quoted, 88.
 German missionaries, 53, 54.
 Giant Despair and Christian, 50.
 Gibbon, 13.
 Gilmore, James, 108.
 Girdle of orientals, 9.
 Glory of God as motive, 67, 68.
 Gospel, Heart of the, 54, 55.
 "Greenland's Icy Mountains," 73ff.

H

Harnack's definition of Christianity, 134.
 Harrison, Paul W., quoted, 58.
 Hartenstein, Karl, quoted, 29, 34.
 Heber, Reginald, his life and hymns, 73ff.
 Hebrews 107ff.
 Heidelberg Catechism, 44.

Heim, Karl, quoted, 57, 126.
 Herbert Spencer, 13.
 Hinduism, 20, 30.
 Hoste, D. E., quoted 56.
 Holden, J. Stuart, quoted, 116.
 Hymns of Bishop Heber, 75.
 Hymns of the Church, 84ff.
 Hymnody of the Church, 72.

I

Imperialism and missions, 62.
 "Indian Witness," 20.
 International Missionary Council, Herrnhut, 136.
 Intolerance of John the Apostle, 23.
 Isaiah, 16.
 Islam, 20, 21, 22, 131, 132.
 Islam and Judaism, 47.
 Islam and the Divine Comedy, 132.

J

Jainism, 131.
 Jesus Christ, Creator, 112.
 Jesus Christ, Deity of, 111.
 Jesus Christ, Finality of, 47.
 Jesus Christ, the Messiah, 43.
 Jerusalem Council Meeting, 27, 33, 129.
 John's Epistle, 18, 19.

K

Kadesh Barnea, 20.
 Kagawa of Japan, quoted, 92.
 Kerr, Hugh Thompson, quoted, 37.
 Keys, antiquity of, 43.
 Keys of Peter, 41ff.
 Knox, R. L., quoted, 23.
 Koran, the, on Resurrection, 131.
 Krishna and Kali, 81.

L

Law of priority, 53ff.
 Laymen's Appraisal, the, 20,
 27, 30.
 Light of Eternity, 54.
 Loins of the mind girded, 11.
 Lone Star Mission, 70.
 Loose-thinking, 14, 28.
 Love of Christ as motive, 65.
 Loyola's prayer, 71.
 Lull, Raymond, 94.
 Luther, 13, 24.

M

Macdonald, Duncan B.,
 quoted, 33.
 Mahatma Gandhi, quoted, 35.
 Malachi, 99.
 Martin, Hugh, quoted, 119.
 Marvels of Creation, 16.
 Mason, Dr. Lowell, 75.
 Matthew's Gospel, 41.
 Mayo, Katherine, on India, 78.
 Messiah, 109.
 Messiah of the Old Testa-
 ment, 28.
 Meyers' St. Paul, 25, 60.
 Megalomania, 53.
 Middleton, Bishop, 74.
 Miracle in prayer, 58.
 Missions and civilization, 62.
 Missions, early Protestant, 31.
 Missionary giving, 68.
 Missionary results, 70.
 Missions and social progress,
 62.
 Missionary message, 36, 134.
 Missionary motives, 61ff.
 Modernism, 83.
 Modern mind and the gospel,
 58.
 Moffatt's translation, quoted,
 114.

Mohammed's eschatology, 122,
 123.
 Moses and Joshua, 20.
 Moses, death of, 99.
 Moslem convert's testimony,
 135.
 Moslems, Missions to, 21.
 Motives in mission, 61ff.
 Muller, George, quoted, 100.

N

Necromancy, 95.
 Non-Christian religions, 68.
 Non-Conformity, 103

O

Ongole, baptisms at, 70.
 Other-worldliness of missions,
 127.
 Otto's das Heilige, 66.

P

Pain, mystery of, 49.
 Passion for God's glory, 66.
 Passion for preaching, 25.
 Pasteur, Louis, on the Infi-
 nite, 127.
 Persians and the future life,
 130.
 Paul's Creed and Gospel, 48.
 Paul's Epistles, 12, 29.
 Peter and the keys, 40.
 Peter's great Confession, 40ff.
 Philo, on Aaron's breastplate,
 97.
 Pity for the heathen, 62.
 Popley, H. A., quoted, 27, 31,
 32, 35.
 Population of the globe, 103.
 Post-millennialism, 118.
 Pre-millennialism, 119.
 Practical aspects of the Ad-
 vent, 123.

Prayer, essence of, 57.
 Prayer, the sole dynamic, 91.
 Prayer of Supreme importance, 91.
 Preaching the Gospel, 28.

Q

Quo Vadis, 50.

R

Relativity in spiritual world, 12.
 Resurrection of Jesus Christ, 55.
 "Re-thinking Missions," 19, 23, 34.
 Rhenish Mission, 53.
 Richter, Jean Paul, 14.
 Rodin's statue, le Penseur, 10.
 Roosevelt, 13.
 Rule of three, 102

S

Sakti worship, 79.
 Schwallenbach, Maria, quoted, 54.
 Second coming, 117ff.
 Sharing, 26ff.
 Shedd's History of Doctrine, 44.
 Simon, Lady, on Slavery, 78.
 Simpson, Carnegie, 21.
 Slovenliness in thought, 13.
 Social Gospel, 135.
 Social progress and missions, 62.
 St. Clair, Stevenson, Mrs., quoted, 78.
 Starry universe, the, 113.
 Statistics, their power and weakness, 63.
 Spencer, Herbert, 13.
 Stockholders vs. Ambassadors, 26ff.
 Stocking, Jay T., quoted, 124.
 Success in missions, 63.
 Supernatural Christianity, 47.
 Supernatural guidance, 95.

Superstition, 91.
 Supreme missionary motive, the, 61.

T

Tamil Bible translation, 31.
 Tennyson on the Gospel, 36.
 Theology and thought, 15.
 Thinking missions today, 3.
 Thinking Black, 17, 18.
 Thinking in gray, 18.
 Thomas-a-Kempis, 56, 65.
 Thought and Theology, 15.
 Trench, Arch-bishop, on Words, 26.
 Trinity, the, 44.

U

Unitarianism, 21, 22.
 Universe, New Testament Conception of, 111.
 Universe, Old Testament Conception of, 110.
 Urgency of the missionary task, 77, 87.
 Urim and Thummim, 96ff.

V

Van Dyke, Henry, quoted, 10.

W

Webster, Noah, 15.
 Westminster Confession, 44.
 Will of God, the, how to know, 105.
 Will of God, the, in prayer, 57.
 Wisdom, pre-existent, 109.
 Witch of Endor, 97.

Z

Zarathustra, 32.
 Zinzendorf, redivivus, 137.