EVANGELISM

An Address on Permanence and Change in Church and Mission

BY

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Second Printing
1936

A MOVEMENT FOR WORLD CHRISTIANITY
140 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Ill.


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FOREWORD TO SECOND PRINTING

The continuing demand for copies of Dr. Hocking's address on Evangelism is an indication of the critical importance attached to it by an increasing number of men and women in the churches.

The Executive Committee of A MOVEMENT FOR WORLD CHRISTIANITY is the happier to make this presentation to the public since the address, delivered at the meeting held in Rochester in May, 1935, of which the Movement was the direct outcome, had no small share in consolidating the purpose of those present and so in launching the Movement itself.

We send this booklet out in the conviction that the Gospel of Christ, rightly interpreted, is the hope of the world. We are today catching a new vision of the largeness of that Gospel, of its ability to save from every type of "lostness"—to use Dr. Hocking's word. We believe that the interpretation of Evangelism given in this address will bring new insight to missionaries of alert and contemporaneous minds and new enthusiasm to those who support them.

Douglas Horton.

FOREWORD

The address that follows is of too great significance and value to be limited to the constituency of a single movement within the Christian Church. It offers a profound insight into the interrelationship of permanence and change in the content and form of the Christian message to the world. It gives spiritual intensity and comprehensiveness to that greater evangelism that must inform the mission of the Church at home and abroad. It is in itself a noble effort to illustrate the way in which the Church as a whole must, from time to time, envelope any single projection of its life like the Foreign Mission, in order that the part may be reinformed by the fresh meaning that has entered into the conception of the world mission of the Church as a whole.

The occasion on which this address was given was the first annual meeting of the National Committee of the Modern Missions Movement, in May 1935, to which had been invited as participants in the deliberations, representatives of the Foreign Missions Boards of the various communions, missionaries from the world field, Commissioners of the original Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, and a strong group of younger church-

men, in significant places of leadership in the churches and college life of the nation. The critical questions to be decided were, whether there is a necessary function for such a movement to perform in the Church at home and abroad, and, if so, what should be its purposes and method. It was inevitable that one of the principal addresses should be given by one who, both in the original Report and since, has made such a profound contribution to the clarification of the issues that confront the Church and Mission in our time.

This address will therefore, we trust, give some deeper understanding of the spirit that informs this Movement, that includes many varieties and diversities of the one Christian faith and purpose; and some adumbration of the larger service which it is now attempting to implement in ways that will shortly be announced. Some of the other addresses that will be published later, will further illustrate the fact that the churches of the non-Roman tradition have at their service, no less than the older Church, those "winged minds", who can bring to them the firmness of vision, the depth of sympathy, the strength of insight, the profound concern and spiritual passion, which are the living channels of the Spirit's guidance, and by which the Church is continually renewed, and made competent and able for its supreme mission in and to the world.

Ernest Graham Guthrie.

EVANGELISM

I was asked to speak to you about foreign missions,—what is changing and what is permanent about them.* I am not departing from that theme if I choose to speak about 'evangelism'; for evangelism is the essential work of both church and mission. And that is where our real concern lies when we talk about change and about the 'modern mission': have we any different conception of 'the gospel', or of its fitness for other lands, or of the mission as a way of spreading it?

Since evangelism is the center of the matter, I propose to speak to you this evening in the language of theology. There is no need in this company either to avoid it, or to explain it. It is a language which has history in it; and for that reason it carries those continuities of meaning which we especially need to remember when we are thinking of change.

There are three remarks which I would like to make upon this theme. Let me first briefly mention them, and then enlarge on one or two of them.

* An address delivered at Rochester, New York on May 28, 1935, before a convention called by the Modern Missions Movement.

First: *The obligation to preach rests, not on any part of the Church, but on the whole Church.*

There is no one, cleric or lay, official or unofficial, who is exempt from this duty, or who can transfer it to any delegate—to his minister, to his missionary, to his board.

Second: *The parish of all preaching is the world.*

The condition of the world is the obligation of the church, and that means the whole world. If Christianity should begin to appear as a local religion, let us say a religion for Europe and America, it would automatically cease to be the religion of Europe and America. For the moment we begin to think of it as a special cult of our own we have ceased to be Christians.

The mind of man is naturally religious: so much psychology and sociology today are inclined to assert. The religious trait is universal. But if Tertullian is right, the mind of man is also naturally Christian; in its religious journey it cannot come to rest short of that goal. Unless we believe this to be the case, we are ourselves sitting loose from our own profession. For our religion is by definition that attitude toward the world which we hold valid for all men. Hence nothing less than 'the world' can be the object of any live church or of any live Christian.

The third point is: *The preaching of Christ is also a learning of Christ,—the two go together.*

It is natural to suppose that we first finish our learning and then proclaim our message. This is an error. There is a half truth in it. No one can have any motive to preach unless he has something to say of which he is convinced. But the effort to express is an element in continuing to learn: the best learning one does is in trying to teach. It was so with the disciples; it remains so.

It is for this reason that we have not first to finish up with America before going to Asia. If what we have to preach is completely finished in our minds, we would better keep hammering away at home until we make some impression. But if the effort to preach Christ in Asia is also a way of learning what we have to say, it may well be that we shall find in Asia some things which will make our preaching in America more pertinent and effective. I think this is the case; our experience in Asia will add much to our conception of Christianity.

This bears on our relation to other religions. We certainly have something to give; otherwise we have no right whatever to appear as preachers. But in attempting to convey that something, we are not dealing with minds empty of faith and of a vision of God; there will be a mutuality of giving. If we deal with their best minds, we shall have to

become very clear about the nature of the treasure we offer. Hence our relation to these other religions cannot be one of immediate displacement, as if, for example we wished Buddhism at our approach to throw up its hands and disappear. Buddhism through centuries longer than our own era has done much to sustain the slumbering fires of the Spirit in that vast continent; and until we have a deep understanding of how it has done this, we shall not know the soul of Asia, which is a great part of the soul of man. The test of a religion lies in its power to interpret. Men will adhere to that religion which most profoundly interprets what their hearts have felt; the ultimate religion will be that one which comprehends all that other religions have seen, and more beside.

Hence the relation of Christianity to the non-Christian religions must be that of *an experiment in interpretation.* We cannot sit down, here in America, and decide in advance what the final relation of Christianity to Buddhism is to be. But we do see things we can help; and we can conceive the attitude of Christ toward the mind of man in every place and under every type of faith in these terms.—"You are seeking for something or someone whom you haven't yet found,—I that speak unto thee am He". It is the power to interpret the human heart which will decide that heart's power to recognize and assent. This is the great responsibility of the mission; and it is because of this that

evangelism abroad may be our best way of learning of Christ.

With these three remarks before us, let us consider the fundamental motive of evangelism everywhere, namely, the lostness of the world and its salvation,—for these terms, theological as they are, are quite as pertinent to the situation of the human race today as they have ever been.

I. The Lostness of the World.

Compassion for lost men has been the motive of all the great renewers of religion, as it was the motive of Jesus himself. If we say that men are lost when they are without a guide, without certainty, without an inner peace, without a sure direction of action, then that motive has lost none of its force during the years. One might venture to say that there is more lostness in the world, more widespread and deliberate lostness than ever before.[1]

On the face of it, this judgment looks like a confession of failure, not alone of progress but of Christianity itself. If, in face of all the evangelism of nineteen centuries, the world reverts to a condition of lostness which resembles nothing so much as that of the Roman Empire it might well seem that all religions, together with the easy

[1]It is in a political journal, in a review of a political book, that I find the phrase: "The greatest blow to mankind is its loss of the idea of God, which (loss has) cut men off from transcendental relations." The reviewer quotes the author, Werner Sombart, as follows:

"The life of mankind has become meaningless. Cut off from transcendental relations, cut off from directive ideals, man has recoiled into himself, has sought there the realization of his ideas, and found it not . . . In all his struggles to find the meaning of life, he is continually met with an iron breath of senselessness which drives him into silence and cold."

hopefulness of a liberal evolutionism, might be called on to declare bankruptcy. I do not accept this judgment. "Progress" has not failed, neither has Christianity failed.

"Progress" has not failed. Enlightenment is a fact. The sciences do move forward. The arts move with them. They know how to retain their gains; the loss of knowledge and technique has become almost unthinkable; accumulation is automatic. Social life is cushioned by this movement; goods are multiplied, and the evils of life will continually be traced to their causes and one by one be eliminated.

"Progress" is real enough; it is simply that social progress is not moral or religious progress. The evolutionists were inclined to rely on an inevitable march toward social improvement; 'salvation' was to be translated as the gradual result of moral development, the increase of sympathy, the substitution of co-operation for strife. This result has not taken place. The growth of science and of technique have brought, instead, simply greater powers for whatever ends men wish to pursue: neither science nor technique carry any instruction about those ends. They make no one wise about values. They are very likely to bring absorption in themselves, bedazzlement with the partial knowledge and achievement they bring, and bewilderment because those partial gains do not satisfy.

Hence progress does not carry with it religious progress. It means rather that men have found *new ways of being lost.* For progress invites reliance on inferior gods. The scientific are in danger of becoming superstitious about the automatic push-forward which they ascribe to 'Nature'; or about human prowess, aided by power over nature. The powers they celebrate are real powers. But power is morally neutral. The soul is not committed to goodness by its possession. To regard it as the end is the essence of irreligion.

Thus the older personal polytheisms are replaced by a newer *impersonal polytheism;* each science and each art presents itself as a saving power, and gains its multitudes of adherents who do not see that this power is subject to an ultimate condition. They become the rational idolaters of the modern age.

This is why the progress of civilization, instead of dispensing with religion, increases the need of it.

The "heathen heart" is not alone the heart that bows down to idols that abound in the temples of India and China; it is the heart which "puts its trust in reeking tube and iron shard".

In our own world, it is not alone the Bushmen and the Untouchables who are lost: it is the intelligent and the wealthy, the bourgeois and the proletariat-in-power, the governing as well as the gov-

erned, the institutions, the homes, the schools and universities. *They* are more prone to self satisfaction and false finalities than are the simple of the earth; it is still harder for them to be saved than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

Hence it is to them as well as to the poor in spirit that our compassion must go out. If we are indeed to pray for the salvation of the world, we must not address ourselves alone to those who are easiest to help. It is the true instinct of the great preacher that leads him to Corinth, to Athens, and then to Rome.

I fear that we must say of the preaching of our time especially in the mission field that it has evaded its hardest problems; it has addressed the multitudes, the poor and the outcast, as it should have done; but it has avoided the scribes and pharisees, as it should not have done. To this extent it has been unworthy of its Master. It has shirked the labor of thought. It has not sought to save the world but only a fragment of the world.

It is not 'progress' that has failed. Is the lostness of the world, then a failure of Christianity?

Christianity has not failed.

In the first place, lostness belongs to the conscious self, and underneath this surface there is a vast deal of habit and motive whose religious sources belong to history and cannot be ex-

punged. Of the lost millions of our time, the very science as well as much of the social order has Christianity for one of its parents. The Russians who have ceased to profess Christianity have not overcome the momentum of centuries of training; under their skins they remain Christians in effect.

In the second place, we set up false expectations when we conceive as our goal a world so far saved that it cannot be lost again. There is no warrant for any such expectation, either in the Gospels or in the history of mankind. We cannot banish the freedom of the will. Nor can we suppress the experimental trait which leads the human mind to devise new ways of thought and life, most of which are wrong and therefore short-lived. A new stage of thought is a new point of departure, from which men will try in new ways the rejection of the good. They are new modes of lostness; but they are also new requirements on our understanding of our own faith.

Thus, the challenge to belief in God offered by Russia today is a deeper challenge than that of the older atheism. It is an experimental atheism, not merely a personal negation. It is a national atheism, carrying itself out consistently, or trying to, into all institutions. It is an atheism flanked by a powerful social philosophy and carried on a wave of responsible passion for mankind. If we are to meet it, we must get hold of our own truth at a deeper level.

Hence, the phenomenon of lostness has a function to perform in the growth of faith itself. So far from being a failure of Christianity, it is, for the Christian, an agency in the deepening of his religious respiration. It can be regarded as a phase of the work of the Holy Spirit in leading us into further regions of truth.

This leads to a comment on one of our bad habits in thinking of the motives of evangelism. We tend to assume that it promotes evangelism to grow desperate about the state of the world. If we no longer listen to the ticks of the clock, as has been done in the memory of persons in this room, and count the souls slipping into perdition with these time-beats, we still grow panic-stricken in view of the advance of anti-religious movements, of communism, of threats of war, of the various ways in which our civilization may collapse; and use these fears to fan the fervor of evangelism. But evangelism does not require impending catastrophe to give it urgency. Nor can it be conducted in an atmosphere of panic, which is an atmosphere not of faith but of lack of faith. Concern, ardor, compassion are true motives of evangelism; fear is treasonable, for it is inconsistent with what Christianity must offer men,—serenity, stability, peace, based on certitude in the midst of whatever heavings of the world. The Christian needs perpetually to be stirred out of sloth by the reminder

that the miseries of a lost world are his personal responsibility; but the alarmist has already ceased to be a Christian.

II. Continuity and Change.

The lost world is a world in need of new truth. But whenever one speaks of new truth, there is distress in some quarters, and an arousing of the protective spirit of loyalty toward what is old and permanent.

Here it is particularly important to discern where the real issues lie. For it is one of the tragedies of Christian history—and one from which the history of this movement is not free—that misunderstandings may be created by unreal issues. Whatever the differences between the trends called conservative and liberal in theology, there is no point in making an issue between continuity and change, between the new and the old. It is like making an issue between food and drink. There is an old saying which states with much accuracy the position of the preacher on this point:

> "Every scribe which is instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."[1]

From the point of view of this very clear hint, there are two ways of failing to meet any situation

[1] Matt. xiii, 52.

that confronts our evangelism—one is to draw out of our treasure only the old things, the other to draw out only the new things.

In view of the ease of our misunderstanding on this point you will perhaps bear with me if I say some very simple and commonplace things; for it is just these things, matters of plain common sense, which in our search for subtleties, we are likely to overlook. And besides, we have a way of driving each other to extremes. There are some who want no change at all, merely because there are others who would change everything. And there are those who reject any continuity, and want to change everything simply because there are others who admit no change at all.

Let me then say a word first of all to those who fear any change—though I doubt whether there are any such present!

Your central position is just. It is the whole point of religion to bring a man into the presence of what is eternal, unchanging. Were this not the case, religion would not be what it is, a refuge and relief from the shifting foundations of the flux all around us. There are such things as persistent religious problems, the problems which spring out of the moral life of man, his sin, his suffering, his ignorance, his transiency: these problems are the same from age to age. And when the true answer

to these problems is found, it remains a true answer. If Christianity contains true answers to these problems, or to any of them, the passage of time is not going to render these answers false.

But these problems, we have to remember, are the problems of actual human beings; hence they always arise in a context, the context of those personal lives. In a sense, there is no such thing as "the problem of sin"; it is always my individual problem of my individual sin. Hence if the preacher is to speak to the problems that exist, he has to follow that contemporary road; he has to find the man *where* he lives and *when* he lives. Otherwise his message is insulated; he fails to equip his convert with the mental means of living his concrete life in his own community.

Jesus had one unchanging truth to convey. Yet never in our records does he repeat himself; he never gave twice the same prescription. He followed the method of the wise physician, who knows that each disease is the disease of an individual patient, and that there is no standard remedy to fit all cases. He knew, as a wise teacher knows, that truth cannot be *inserted* into a mind; it can only be received there as an answer to a question which that mind has formed for itself. It must be *grown*, and that means that its stem will have historic roots. Hence change, even in preaching, is the very condition of life.

Few things have changed so much in the course of history as have Christian missions. Our missions are not the missions of Paul, they are not the missions of the middle ages, they are not the missions of the sixteenth century. They are a new set of missions, they are only one hundred and fifty years old. Paul's was not a foreign mission in our sense, it moved within the Empire; it was not backed up by any board. He did not even settle down for good, to stay where he preached. He left the scene and moved on, and expected the church to take care of itself with the aid of a few pastoral letters.

I will not take time this evening to detail the respects in which the oriental mind has changed its questions since our missions started, nor the African mind, nor the South American mind. It is obvious that people everywhere are facing religion with different presuppositions, with different questions, as the line between human knowledge and human ignorance, doubt, perplexity, takes new contours. The present questions come out of a different mental history and out of different tempers. One hundred and fifty years ago the oriental was ready to assume that there is a religion of authoritative origin, and that his only problem was to find the right authority. He was ready to decide this authority largely on the basis of the strong personal impression made by the great preachers

coming out of an unknown western land. Today, the oriental in touch with school or city life is not ready at once to consider *any* authority. He has been touched by the temper of human self-help through science and through government. He is more than half alienated from any gods at all, unless they can make common cause with these human agencies. Further, he knows vastly more *about us* than he did, and what he knows does not make the task of the preacher easier. The man of God is still the man of God; but his words will be interpreted by the whole of our civilization. The obvious innocence of the missionary was once a protection against resentments stirred up by commerce and diplomacy; but now that same absence of connection with these affairs or knowledge about them is taken as a sign of guilt or of folly, and he must be prepared to carry the weight of a century of disillusionment and the indictments of an 'economic interpretation' of history.

Hence, however stable the goods which our religion has to offer, it has a new case to present, a new pledge to give, a new mode of offering what is eternally true. I am not making any plea for the justice of the present temper of the new oriental lands; there is much in it which will not last,—it is full of illusion. It is not that the questions now put to Christianity by the Orient are deeper or more searching than any other questions have ever been; it is simply that these are in fact the new

attitudes, presuppositions, doubts, with which we have to contend.

Christianity itself—if it is the truth we can live by—must be always ahead of the 'newest' thought. In its own nature, it is prepared to catch the soul of Asia, and of America, at its next turn, and at each future turn, having been there long in advance. But it requires everlasting nimbleness on our part *to be there with it!*

Now an equally obvious word to those who fear continuity and who distrust the idea that truth can be identical from one age to another.

Some of you feel that religion, since it has a living function to fulfill in a living social body, must be continually reborn, as that body is reborn. An eighteenth century heart cannot function in a twentieth century body, still less a first century heart. Hence you appeal for a resolute scrapping of old conceptions, and for launching out on something called modernity. As a matter of fact, you point out, *religion does move.* Has it not been trending steadily toward humanism, toward social concern, toward admitting variety of theological outlook? Then why not be hearty about it,—give these tendencies full sway, cut adrift from the supernatural, from the stuffy pieties of the private self, from the impossible ideal of credal unity, and go in for humanism, science, variety?

Here we have the illusion of the reformer. His slogan is that "all things must become new"; he feels the course of change so violently that he is in an incessant revolutionary pother. He fails to see that on his basis all the thoughts of men are condemned to futility, including whatever brand-new truth may be served up hot from the scientific griddle today. For on such a plan whatever truth we get will shortly be rendered untrue by its successor; and with that the whole importance of getting truth evaporates. This view wholly misreads the history of thought. There are novelties—and today they come thick and fast, especially in the fields of science; but these novelties are never pure displacements, they are new branches on a slowly growing stem, which has a permanence of form and place.

Further, there is no 'trend' in the history of thought which is uniformly one way. Thought has its reverses of tack, like a sailing vessel; it recurs to former positions with better definitions; it alternates positions, moves to new ground, and yet preserves unaltered a central core of truth of which it becomes through all changes more clearly conscious. Hence 'trends', whether to humanism or to any other form of outlook, are the poorest of grounds from which to discern the future.

We can be sure that the truth of Christianity will show these traits. Our apprehension of it is

subject to growth and change; any formulation we reach will be a fair target for revision. Yet there is an enduring essence of which we become slowly aware, and which draws us together, even while our definitions tend to split us apart. An exhaustive statement may never be within our reach; but even now it is possible to indicate some portion of it which we can together regard as permanent.

III. Permanent Practical Demands.

Some of the abiding essence of Christianity is certainly contained in the four words which were so often used by Jesus: Repent, Believe, Love, Enter. These are, in rude outline, the four practical demands of the gospel.

Repentance. This is the first step out of 'lostness', for it contains an awareness of being lost: the only hopeless lostness is that of a person wholly contented with a false direction. Repentance is the state of mind of one who begins to feel that he has been worshipping a false god, placing some creature (such as a science) in the place of the Creator. This sense of inadequacy is the sign of the working in him of a better vision of truth; he may not see clearly what this positive thing is, but he is aware of the negation it arouses, the alienation from the false good. His repentance is the beginning of a new life. There are many in the present state of the world who have begun to repent in this sense, having lost their confidence in the cheaper, yes, even in the finer goods of civilization, so far as these lack the touch of infinitude which preserves them from mortality.

Believe and Love. These two demands go together; they are the requirements placed on cog-

nition and on feeling; they are the positive attachments which the soul must win toward what is supersensible and real; they are its hold on God. The call for faith is not merely a demand for assent to a proposition, it is a demand for recognition of present reality, the concrete presence of God. It is a leap out of oneself, but a leap into the realization of self. It is a perception that the thing which has been working in me to make me dissatisfied with my former goods, to bring about my repentance, that thing, the object of my deepest longing, is here and with me. I must have the courage to recognize that what I have wanted to believe true *is true*. This deed of courage is faith. It includes a belief that the world can be changed, since good rather than evil is its true nature; it is this vital courage which is chiefly lacking, at this moment of history.

And when faith comes, one loses all the reasons for hatred and alienation and fear of men; the temper of love enters with the attainment of that central certainty and repose in the goodness of the most real. ("We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" I John, iii, 14; cf. John v, 24).

But there remains the fourth injunction, Enter, —a call not for knowledge nor feeling but for decision and deed. This decision is primarily an individual and solitary act; but it is an act which

involves union in an historical effort with other men. It is expressed by Jesus in various ways: Follow me; Take my yoke upon you; Strive to enter in at the strait gate; Go, work in my vineyard;—but in all cases there hovers around the expression this issue, as to whether one does or does not "Enter the kingdom of heaven". It is a critical moment in the religious life of an individual when he sees its requirement as not merely being right, thinking right, feeling right, but as doing right, and as doing one particular right thing,—taking part in a joint effort in history to bring about a kingdom of God among men. This conscious demand—which specifies an active historical church as an organ of individual religion marks a difference between Christianity and any other of the great religions I know of, though all these religions have been missionary in their spirit and activity.

These demands are ancient demands; but we do not outgrow them. They are still the kernel of the gospel in its requirements, and in its promise or assurance that he who complies with them "hath everlasting life", has the germ of eternity in him even now.

And we may remark in passing that they differ in two important points from the "common faith" which Professor Dewey has so powerfully recommended to our generation. Dewey has seen, as few naturalists have seen, the reality of religious

experience, and the element of rebirth or conversion which it involves. It implies, as he sees, a surrender of one's self to the wholehearted effort to realize ideal values, in the assurance that there is something in the nature of things which makes this effort a reasonable and hopeful one. The gospel says all this; but it adds two things which Dewey tries to keep out of the picture, first, that this 'something in the nature of things' *is* the supernatural being, capable of solicitude for men, whom men have called God. Second, that this religious experience which is religiousness-in-general shall become a particular historical effort. Religion shall become 'a' religion (and every good pragmatist should join in this demand, for on Dewey's principles it is not generalities that do work in the world, but concrete entities). Religiousness apart from 'a' religion remains a eunuch in the spiritual generations of history. It is this fourth demand of the gospel which constitutes of religious truth a church, dedicated to the task of realizing, not sporadic "ideal values," but a kingdom of God in history. It is through the religious organization that the wills of men, sharpened to self-surrender by the new vision of life, flow together into the very concrete though infinite enterprise of the salvation of the world.

If any change should break the minds of men away from these conceptions of the gospel, and

from this historic task, it would *ipso facto* break them away from Christianity itself. The force of modern conditions whether upon the church or upon the mission can only be to deepen our realization of these eternal elements of the faith.

IV. Is There a Modern Evangelism?

In what sense, then, is there a 'modern' evangelism? I answer, in precisely the sense in which the preaching of Jesus was modern in its own time, namely in its relevance to the problems which then and there were facing the souls of men; in its definite naming and rejection of those inadequate or perverse answers which at that time gave him the picture of the "blind leading the blind". His preaching was universal, and yet definitely timely.

For example, civilization for upward of five hundred years had been pulling away from localism, and trying for the political form of a world-empire. Political conceptions had reached out toward something universally human in the Roman type of justice with local pacification. The political order was prepared to tolerate local religious belief and practice when it was not too serious: it was *obliged* to tolerate this localism because religious thought had not kept pace with the scope of empire. It had realized that the hereditary national cults were no longer adequate; citizenship had broken away from tribal religious fraternity, and citizenship was no solution for the problems of the soul. This was the peculiar lostness of the Greco-Roman world. Religion had to become world-

religion; and it had to reach this goal, not by identifying itself with the political totality (the false hope of the Empire), but by reaching the individual soul at a level deeper than his citizenship, deeper than his race, deeper than his religious tradition, deeper than the fraternity of the philosophical Stoic. In such problems as these was the "preparation for the gospel": Jesus and Paul were speaking to questions which five hundred years of human history had been preparing. They spoke in the 'ripeness of time'. "Neither at this mountain nor in Jerusalem", was an utterance of universal truth; but it was a word spoken to the personal dilemma of a Samaritan woman of the first century. And spoken earlier or later in the history of mankind, it could hardly have had its immense liberating value.

Now if our own preaching is to have the same kind of relevance, it must show the same sensitive and profound appreciation of the questions which our last five hundred years of history have been preparing for us. Let me illustrate how this requirement of relevance might be transposed to our own time.

Our times are tremendously puzzled by the place which *pugnacity* has or ought to have in civilized life. Christianity has something to say on that point. What has it to say?

Our first answer is likely to be: Christianity does away with pugnacity; it teaches a gospel of love, forgiveness, patience, peace, non-resistance. Is this the whole gospel on that subject? And if so, are the Marxian critics of religion right when they say that it makes men sheep before their shearers, the exploiters of the world? Is there nothing in Christianity to spur men to resist injustice, and to fight for the establishment of a decent economy and politics?

Let me tell you a story of a great negro educator, who long ago in his student days turned up in a class in metaphysics at Harvard College. I had noticed this boy: he had taken a good part in our discussions. I had noticed that he was dark, but I didn't know that he was a negro. One day he stayed after class and said, "May I have a personal word with you?" He began his story by saying, "I am a negro;" and then he said, "I have a personal decision to make. I have been offered a position by the American Association for the Advancement of Colored People, but I have been planning to be a minister. As a minister of the Gospel I should be associated with people many of whom are uneducated. If I take this job I shall be associated mostly with college men. If I become a minister, I shall have to exhort my people to patience, forebearance, foregiveness. If I join the Association, my mind will be full from morning to night of the grievances of my people, and I

shall be exhorting them to resent their wrongs and to stand up for their rights. Now *my people need both of these things.*"

I have often recalled those penetrating words of his "My people need both of these things," and have wondered whether religion is doomed to deal only with one of them, that is, with half-truths. If we Christians preach exclusively love and patience and long-suffering; if we praise the attitude of resignation in this world which leads men to put their hope in a heavenly restitution and to be passive in face of wrong; if we persuade them that suffering is an end in itself and a means of grace to the human spirit, are we admitting that Marx was right, that our religion *is* an opiate for the masses? I say, a thousand times No! That is not what Christianity means. But if we don't mean that, then it is high time to say so. We are certainly to preach love and forgiveness; but those terms do not convey all of the Gospel. If we consider history, we find that Christianity is the one religion under which men have fought for the rights of others, as well as for their own rights. It is the one religion under which the law of civil right has grown strong. It has a structural force which is not in any other religion of the world. Love is a key-word in many a religious tradition, but the love of men demanded by Christianity is a love devoid of indulgence, capable of severity, contain-

ing the salt of a just pugnacity. It contains in solution all that sternness which Nietzsche justly saw as necessary to creative power; and had we been sufficiently alive to that side of the gospel, much of the Nietzscheian bluster against Christianity would have been pointless, and the Marxian caricature of religion as a spineless yielding to wrong, palpably absurd. The present problems of mankind should elicit here a new emphasis in preaching.

But this point leads to another. If Christianity, as we have just said, believes enough in this world to put up a fight for justice, does this mean that it rejects other-worldly interests, and becomes a purely human and social movement? Is there a competitive relation between the other-world and this-world so that we must drop one in order to do justice to the other? When Christianity spurs us out of acquiescence in preventable wrong, and demands that the Kingdom of Heaven shall include a just human order, does it at the same time insist that the unpreventable sufferings of men shall have no relief, the great body of evil no solution, and death no further destiny?

Here, again, a thousand times, No! And if we say No, we must make clear why we say it. The clear acceptance of a mundane duty, on the part of religion, puts a new burden on faith in the supermundane. Noble thinkers like the Stoics, like Spinoza, like Walter Lippmann in our own time, who

urge us to fight the good fight,—and for what we cannot achieve, to cultivate a wise and mature resignation,—put as good a face on human life as can be put within human limits. Unless Christianity is prepared to accept this resignation as the last word, for all of us who are not in at the final triumph, it would do well to reassert its care for those who die in the fight! Christianity is based on an affirmation that human life gets its meaning and dignity, not from itself, but from that which is beyond humanity. It has something to say about the universe as a whole, and about the care of the ultimate power for individuals; and without this superhuman reference it has nothing unique to lend to the fight for a better humanity. To live in the world as a Christian is, in a definite sense, to 'overcome the world'; and the world can be overcome only from a point outside it which can comprehend it as a whole. In becoming more explicitly a religion of the social order, Christianity cannot cease to be an other-worldly religion; the two sides of its faith do not conflict, but support one another.

This also is an emphasis which the problems left by the scientific and humanistic movements of five hundred years now urgently require of our preaching.

And the positive, aggressive motive of evangelism, the world over, is the imminent need and the hope which lies in preaching these things. We are

responsible, as the creators of the world-order now taking shape for better or for worse.

V. Evangelism Becomes Composite.

In view of these comments, let us now look briefly at evangelism as it appears in the foreign mission of today.

The heroes of the Modern Missions Movement which began a hundred and fifty years ago,—men like William Carey, Judson, Morrison, Livingstone,—were men of great stature. Their vision included the saving of individual souls and also the renovation of societies. Because of the magnitude of their purposes—and all such enterprises have a way of growing in geometrical ratio—the work of one man naturally became the work of many men. The modern mission Board is a necessary consequence. Some such permanent directing body and source of supply was required if unity and continuity of purpose were to be maintained among these many heads. The original missionaries had undertaken more than they knew,—any good man undertakes more than he knows,—to become 'involved' is one of the laws of all vitality. The mission Boards have preserved what otherwise would be sporadic and brilliant threads of human effort, sinking easily into the sands and disappearing. The Boards have saved from futility the work of the great heroes.

Now a new turn has appeared in the history of the modern mission—a turn which has been apparent since 1921 to all closely engaged in the task. The meaning of that turn we are still occupied in interpreting; but part of it is certainly this, that the problems of the mission are strongly felt by the church to be an integral part of the problems of the church at home, and also, an integral part of the entire impact of people upon people and of culture upon culture. The mission enterprise appears to the church less autonomous, less separable than before.

If this impression is true, then, like the original founders, the Boards also have become involved in more than they knew; and the problem is to save, by discerning its normal relationships, the work which they have in a century of labor so bravely developed. This work must be saved from scattering, from division, from internal conflict. It must be saved from misdirection, from what Professor Richter, the great missionary leader of Germany, calls "the frittering of noble energies". It must be saved from the dangers which attend all system and technical proficiency, from petty industriousness and the meretricious consolations of statistical results. It must be saved from deadly financial anxiety, and the consequent intrusion on primary aims of the secondary aim of self-preservation. It must be saved from the retreats

which attend over-expansion, and the shallowness which attends hurry and eagerness for numbers. It must be saved from being drowned out in the flood of counter-preaching by the other messengers of our civilization. It must be saved from the wastes of building local spiritual communities with great pains, in the path of revolution and other spiritual lava-flows and avalanches. And chiefly, it must be saved from the threat of irrelevance, as the world swings through that curve which makes all questions at once questions of the inner life, of the national life, and of world-culture?

How can this work be saved? Only by being enveloped by the thought and activity of the whole church, as the activity of the Boards enveloped the work of the individual missionary. Evangelism is incomplete until the whole body of the energy of the church is brought into the proper task of the church, the salvation of the world. Evangelism must become in a new sense a composite undertaking, a single voice which is a union of many voices.

In one sense it has always been composite: in the sense, namely, that the voice of the preacher has been joined with his deeds and his life in the impact of his preaching. There has never been a work of preaching which had not a body as well as a soul: there has never been a good missionary who did not do other things than preaching *as a part of*

his preaching. I am thinking at the moment of the picture of Paul and Silas in prison, on that memorable night when the earthquake came and broke the prison walls and the chains, and the poor jailer was about to commit suicide, expecting that all these prisoners of his would have escaped. These prisoners had been singing at midnight; they had had a hard day of it; they had been beaten, and how they were in a mood for singing is hard to tell, but they were. And then Paul spoke to the jailer and said, "Do thyself no harm: we are all here." It was not verbal preaching that turned the jailer around, it was this *unexpected motivation;* it was something in the conduct of these men who refrained from running away, as any ordinary prisoner would have done. They had something which produced a different pattern of behavior. That is what turned him around; that is what led him to ask "What shall I do to be saved? Whatever you have, that is what I want". By their deeds and their strange joy, his mind was prepared for the word which followed,—the word which must always be ready to assign meaning to the action. This order of events is typical of all sound evangelism, which has always been a composite of deeds and words, a temper visible in behavior which leads people to say "I want what you have, whatever it is."

This is the ancient and enduring compositeness of preaching. But now, evangelism has become

composite in other senses. With the voice of the preacher there mingle inescapably other voices; for with the rapid growth of knowledge of our civilization on the part of his hearers, he stands as representing it, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly. He is a part of the speech of civilization to civilization.

It goes without saying that this marginal and silent supplement of his preaching will sometimes aid, and sometimes confuse or cancel his impression. I am not thinking merely of the message of our science and technique, eagerly sought; nor of the spirit of our customs and laws, our family institutions, our politics; nor of the language of our art and architecture, our amusements and travels, our literature and philosophy, the play of our free thought and feeling. Still less am I thinking of the rumors of our crimes, greeds, vulgarities; or of the direct impact of our foreign deeds in commerce, diplomacy, war and peace. I am thinking of the question behind all this, *what does it reveal about the gods we really worship?* Has the Christ convinced and drawn to himself the vital and aspiring forces in what we call our civilization? What is evil, wilful and perverse in us, the missionary can denounce and to some extent disown; but from those things in our culture which attract his hearers he cannot detach his message,—as if to say, "these things are all right in their way, but religion is something quite different",—without

losing their interest and confessing an unsolved relationship. His evangelism must today be composite with the silent evangelism of all the best elements of our cultural existence. He must know his own in this wide field.

But chiefly (and in part because of this), evangelism has become composite in the further respect that all of the church is now called upon to take a conscious and thoughtful part in it. Here we return to the point from which we started, that the obligation to preach rests on the whole church.

In what way can this obligation be carried out?

The contribution of money is necessary, but not sufficient. With it must go a contribution of intelligent, appreciative, selective criticism, based on the kind of knowledge men want of enterprises in which they are vitally concerned,—not dead facts, not the comments of alien 'experts', not the back-patting of the professional encourager, but the stern and faithful judgment of a creative Christian outlook. This is a function so important, and so difficult, that its mounting will require much consideration; but its benefits will extend to all who give counsel as well as to those who receive it.

But beyond this, there is something even more significant, which must come from the body of the church. It is the contribution of a constructive *supplementary imagination*, conceiving new ways

in which the spirit of Christ can be made a working factor in human life. For *forms* of mission work are transitory; the idea of the mission is far wider than any type we have devised. There have been long lapses in mission history, during which old types have died and the new type was not born. The mission of the future should be making its initial stages while the present type is still in its strength.

As an instance of what I mean, let me mention a vacant place in the activities of our Protestant missions which has become, during these recent years, a truly serious omission, just because of the mixed currents of change in Oriental life which are vitally affecting the pertinence of what we are doing there. It is the activity of the reflective observer, qualified by a deep knowledge of the spiritual backgrounds of the life about him, and whose main business is not building institutions, but developing understanding. There ought to be here and there, as it were, watch-towers of thought from which the directions of change can be observed and suggestions sent out to the churches and to the workers in the field.

This proposal is enforced by the fact that the Roman Catholic missions carry out this activity incidentally but effectively, in ways which we may profitably consider. Near Darjeeling there is an institution, St. Mary's finishing school for Jesuit

missionaries. Our commission was invited to visit it, and some of us did so. We were told something about how these Jesuits go into their training and their work. It is an amazing thing. These young fellows after perhaps two years of college study go, on their arrival in India, for four years to an institution in the south where they receive their "philosophical training". Here they learn something of the sciences and also of the languages and religions of India. Then for three years they come out as apprentices in the Jesuit missions, or make their own studies among the people. One of these young Jesuits told me he had put his knapsack on his back and gone along the Indian road, eating, drinking, and living with villagers, incidentally taking their diseases, and fortunately coming through with a robust constitution, knowing Indian life somewhat intimately. Then come three or four other years, the "theological training", in St. Mary's. More study of the background of India, the religions, the languages, philosophies. In their marvelous library there were books listed in the Index Expurgatorius; they had some of my books there! When we got back from the tour of inspection, I overheard the Father Superior saying to my wife, "We have some of your husband's books here; we call them our bad books!" The bad books of the Index were being read; as mature students they allowed themselves that liberty. (By the way, that might be a good suggestion for deal-

ing with "Re-thinking Missions": putting it among the bad books, yet allowing the sturdy to look into it!)—But there they were, these men, getting into the thought of the world and then coming out ready to be missionaires. Whenever you meet a Jesuit in Asia, you meet a man of culture, a man who has taken time to know the deeper phases of the life around him, a man of broad sympathy. Now, what does this mean? They don't get through with their studies as a rule until they are in their early thirties; but I think of them as a group of deeply trained spirits, poised there on the heights of the Himalayas, reflecting on the problems of mankind, a kind of *wings over Asia*, quiet, unhurried, with a firm vision and a depth of sympathy, putting the strength of their insight at the service of the entire work of the old church.

Now, friends, we haven't anything like that. We have our institutions for the speedy training of missionaries and native preachers. We have none for this thorough, long-prepared adept reflection on the human scene. We think we cannot afford it, either in money or in time or in personnel. My judgment is, we cannot afford not to have them,—some such watch-towers of thought, devised in the genius of our Protestant societies. For I believe that whatever notable achievements lie before the missions of the future will be the reward of *depth* rather than *extent* of effort.

Haste will not speed the arrival; for haste and much business destroy that labor of thought which is the prayer of the church for the saving of the world. It is hard for us, perhaps especially hard for Americans, to make the distinction between urgency and anxiety, an anxiety which brings with it a pressure for speed and numbers. Let us remember one further characteristic of the preaching of Jesus,—its patience. How soon he expected the end of the world to come, we shall never know. Many of his parables reveal a long vista of the slow growth of the Kingdom from the grain of mustard seed onward. He conceived of a slow leavening process in which his followers would, in hidden ways, cure the vast lump of human life. The lostness of men was about him, as it is about us; yet the gospel he preached was an unhurried gospel; it had the note of infinite urgency without being breathless; it was not animated by panic, because it had its central certainty of the outcome in God's hands. Perhaps his last word was addressed to that sense of anxious haste which he foresaw would overtake souls of lesser faith, for it opens a long vista for a like patience on our part, —"Lo, I am with you alway, *even unto the end of the world!*"