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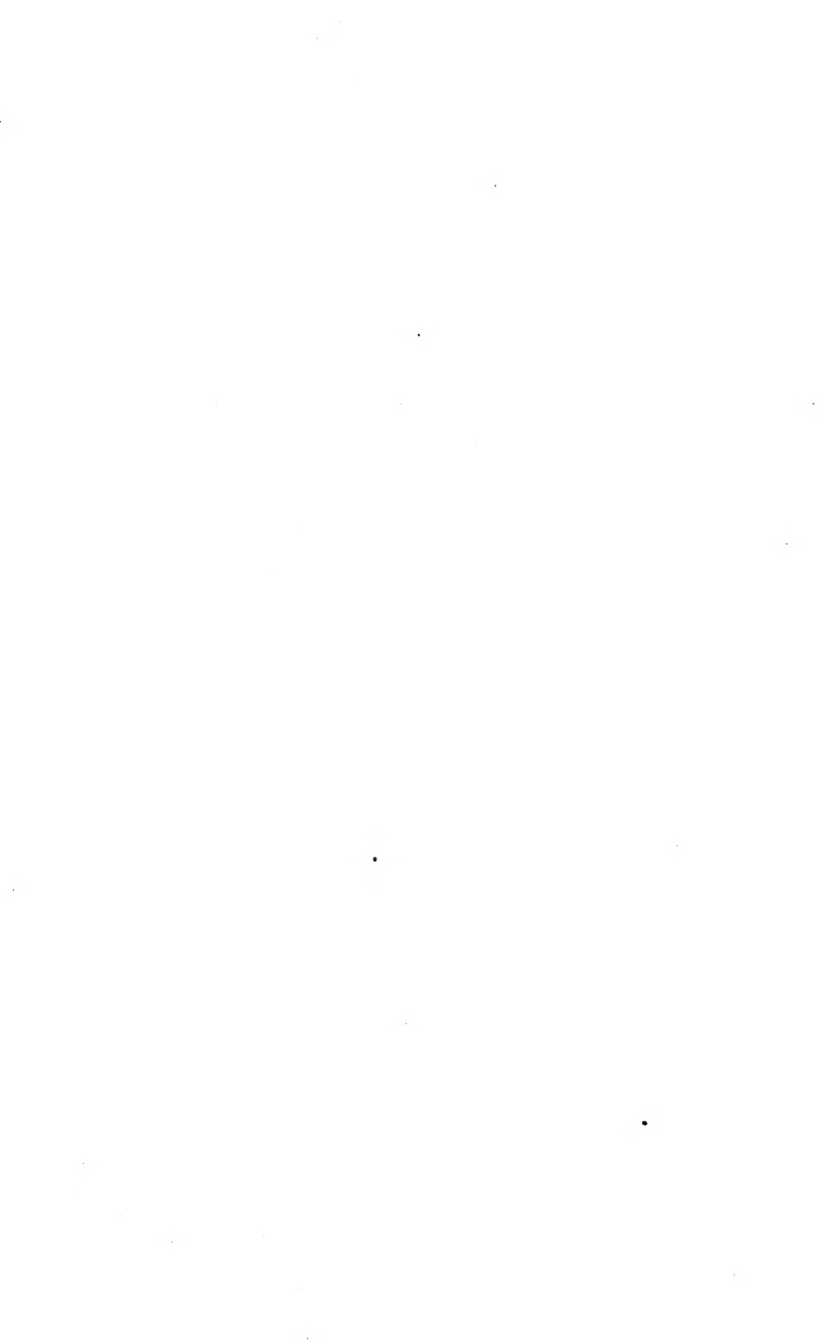
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The Bible a missionary  
message





# The Bible a Missionary Message

A Study of Activities and Methods

By

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## Foreword

THE author accepted the invitation of his friend, Professor Chas. T. Ball, General Secretary of the Baptist Student Missionary Movement [later designated American Baptist Student Union], to prepare this book on the missionary message of the Bible for use in schools, colleges, universities, theological seminaries, and for general reading. Two other studies of the teaching of the Bible concerning Missions have been prepared by the same author. *Missions in the Plan of the Ages* is an extended study for use in classes of seminaries and training schools and by others who wish to make a full study of the subject. It has been in growing use for twelve years. Four years ago *All the World in All the Word* was prepared at the special request of the Women's Missionary Union Auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention for use in their numerous study classes. Although extensively used by those for whom they were prepared, neither of these seemed wholly adapted to the uses of the Missionary Movement.

There has been no effort to avoid use of the same material in the different volumes. There has been diligent effort to adapt the use in each case to the constituency for whom it was prepared. It is hoped that the outcome may justify the effort, and that the multitudes of young men and women in our schools of learning, and in our churches, who are taking

ever-growing interest in God's plans and work for the world, will find in these studies a sure foundation and a permanent inspiration for missionary interest and effort.

While seeking always to keep in mind the needs of the students, the author has not made these studies too simple and easy. (They deal with God's redeeming idea in the history of revelation,) a subject inevitably calling for careful and sustained thought. But the effort should be amply repaid if one comes to feel that the lines of divine thought and action have been grasped in some measure. The supreme need of the Missionary Enterprise at this time is consecrated personality in which to invest the ever-increasing sums of money which the churches are ready to give. The saving gospel can be proclaimed only through men and women. They must be enlisted by the thousands. It is with the prayer that such a result may come to many a faithful servant of our Lord that the work is sent forth.

It is with pleasure also that I make mention of the valuable pecuniary aid extended by Mrs. H. Z. Duke, of Dallas, Texas, in the publication of this volume. Mrs. Duke did this upon suggestion of Prof. Chas. T. Ball. She cherishes the hope that the reading and study of this book may lead to a larger appreciation of the Bible as a missionary message.

W. O. C.

*Louisville, Ky.*



# Contents

I.	THE FACT OF THE BIBLE MARKS IT AS A MISSIONARY MESSAGE . . . . .	7
II.	BIBLICAL HISTORY MARKS THE BIBLE AS A MISSIONARY MESSAGE . . . . .	24
III.	HEBREW WORSHIP REVEALS THE MISSION- ARY MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE . . . . .	42
IV.	PROPHECY PROVES THE BIBLE GOD'S MISSIONARY MESSAGE . . . . .	60
V.	THE CHRIST GOD'S MISSIONARY MESSAGE	83
VI.	JESUS, GOD'S SON, FOUNDS THE MISSION- ARY ENTERPRISE . . . . .	103
VII.	ACTS THE GOSPEL OF THE MISSIONARY POWER . . . . .	122
VIII.	PAUL THE INTERPRETER OF THE MISSION- ARY MESSAGE . . . . .	141
IX.	THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE IN THE VISIONS OF PATMOS . . . . .	155
X.	THE MESSAGE IN THE TONGUES OF MEN .	172
	BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	192



# I

## THE FACT OF THE BIBLE MARKS IT AS A MISSIONARY MESSAGE

### I. DEFINITIONS.

Let us first of all ask what we mean by Missions. Is it not the sending of messages to those who need to hear them? There is then the sender, the message, the messenger, the receivers of the message. In Christian Missions, who sends the message? When did He begin sending the message? To whom does He send the message? Who are the messengers? Are there several classes and groups of messengers, as well as numerous individual messengers? Are all these messengers intended to share, and together to complete, one enterprise, or are there many distinct, unrelated enterprises? Do not all the messengers come from the one, the same, God?

What is the message? Where shall we find it? Does the Bible contain not only the message but the plan of its sending? Are angels and missionaries all messengers? What is the difference between an angel and a missionary? What other messengers has God besides angels and missionaries?

II. FOR WHAT REASONS MUST WE CALL THE BIBLE A MISSIONARY MESSAGE? HOW SHALL WE DESCRIBE OUR BIBLE?

I. *If it is from God, through messengers, to men,*

## 8 The Bible a Missionary Message

does it not fulfill all the features of a missionary message? If we examine fully the nature of the Bible and the facts of the history of the missionary enterprise we find that (the Bible is designed to produce, is fitted to produce, and has in large measure produced the missionary enterprise. This, again, marks it as a missionary message.)

If we go further and look into the message which the missionaries deliver when they go to non-Christian and unevangelized peoples we find them drawing this message from the Scriptures, which are thus to them the missionary message of God whose messengers they are.

2. *The bond of union between the literature of Hebrews and of Christians.*

The Bible is made up of the literature of the Hebrews and the writings of the early Christians. Why did these two groups of writings come to be united and to be regarded as one? Are they fundamentally and essentially one, in origin, in spirit, in purpose and in influence? Were the early Christians right in thinking of their writings as being the counterpart and the complement of the Hebrew Scriptures? They would be right only on the ground that the same God was found to be the source of inspiration, the object of worship and the controlling influence in both. The Old Testament was the literature of the Hebrews, "a people with a genius for religion," the people through whom developed to clearness and emphatic assertion the monotheistic conception. The oneness of God, His holiness, His personality were ideas which came to the world through the Hebrews

and especially through the Jews. Did the one, true, holy and good God use the Hebrews and their Bible for making Himself known to mankind? If so, this Bible is a message to mankind through the Hebrew people.)

The early Church was a new organization among men. It interpreted itself as embodying and extending the spirit of the Hebrew people. It interpreted Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the religious ideals and purposes of the Old Testament, as the human expression and revelation of the God who was progressively declaring Himself to the Hebrews and through them declaring Himself to the world. This understanding of Jesus Christ as the full interpretation, expression and embodiment of the Hebrew history and of the God who was the cause of Hebrew history made Jesus at once the supreme inspiration and the final authority for Christians. By this inspiration and under this authority they inaugurated the enterprise of Christianity as a force for changing the world. This enterprise extends itself by means of missions.) It was in carrying out what they regarded as the commission of their Master, in giving expression to His spirit, in obeying the impulse which faith in Him produced in them that these early Christians went far and wide, and in going produced the New Testament. The New Testament is at once the interpretation of these men and women, who produced this new enterprise in the life of humanity, and a means through which they produced their influence on mankind.

The Bible is a series of religious messages to men,

## 10      The Bible a Missionary Message

purporting to come from God. They come through men and are directed to mankind. Wherever they reach men they change the disposition of men, their ideals, their standards, their institutions. That is, they approve themselves as messages from God, they are missionary.

### III. THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

#### 1. *The Missionary use Jesus made of the Old Testament.*

We shall later have studies of Jesus especially, but we may now ask how He gained His ideas of the nature and extent of His Messiahship. A careful study will confirm the view that in very great measure *He constructed His ideas and His programme by study of His Bible, our Old Testament.* In the proper place we shall see how each of His great utterances, which reveal His programme and plan, is founded on definite Old Testament teaching.)

#### 2. *He appointed His Missionaries on the basis of the Old Testament Ideals.*

At the end of His ministry, when He had arisen from the grave and had met, in an upper room in Jerusalem, a group of His disciples, including ten of His apostles, "He opened their minds that they might understand the Scriptures." (He interpreted to them "the things which are written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning himself.") Then He summed up for them the features which for Him stood out in each and all these three main divisions of their Bible, saying: "Thus it

is written, (1) that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; (2) and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name; (3) unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem; (4) Ye are witnesses of these things; (5) and behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high" (see Luke 24: 36-48). It is to be noted that all these items Jesus found in their Bible, the Old Testament, and that in this inspiring and momentous night He gave these teachings as a summary of what the Old Testament taught concerning Himself. It was a significant meeting, this first meeting with His followers after His resurrection. They must have spent much of the night together going through these Scriptures. Did Jesus understand the Old Testament? Was its teaching about the Messiah its most important and its most determinative feature? Was the idea of the Messiah and of His mission which Jesus found therein the idea which God desired men to get from its study?

If Jesus understood God and His purpose, then the very existence of the Old Testament is a testimony to God's love of all men and of His purpose to offer salvation to all men; it is God's message of salvation to all men. It is the foundation of the missionary commission and enterprise. This which Jesus inaugurated and organized had its origin in the heart of God. No part of the Old Testament is ever rightly understood until it is interpreted in its relation to the universal Gospel. This evangelical ele-

## 12      The Bible a Missionary Message

ment is the key to the meaning, the bond of unity, the standard for evaluating all the teaching of this wonderful literature. In speaking to Hebrews God was declaring Himself to mankind.

3. *The History of the Old Testament marks it as missionary.*

The Old Testament history recounts three great occasions when its revelations were collected and copied down. Each time all of previous messages that God wished preserved was combined with what God was understood to be giving at that time, and so the Old Testament grew into that form in which we know it as the completed Bible of the Jews and the Old Testament of the religion of the eternal God. Moses prepared the first edition (see Ex. 19, and following chapters). Again in the times of Hezekiah and of Josiah, when there was a new impetus given to the study of the Mosaic writings (see 2 Chron. 30-31, 34-35), it is probable that new editions were copied and that much of the revelations and records, of the time from Moses on, were now included. Many great prophets had spoken. David and Solomon had uttered their messages from God, and men of less note had written and spoken for God. Once again, when the Jews had returned from Babylon and Ezra was organizing their worship and setting them again on their way in the worship and service of God he gave them the Scriptures (see Neh. 8-10). Since Josiah's time Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel had spoken, and many psalms had been written. Daniel's wonderful mission had been fulfilled. This later edition of the Scriptures, possibly not even yet the



latest, would be far larger than that of Moses, or even than that of Hilkiah. Yet this notable fact meets any careful student: in every edition of the Old Testament as it grew, as well as in each of its classified divisions—Law, Prophets, Psalms—this element of God's concern and purpose and love for all men is to be found, and found holding a prominent place. The stamp of the missionary purpose is on its every part. Jesus saw this and pointed it out with emphasis. In His Bible His God and Father spoke to Him of all men.

#### IV. THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

If we look at the New Testament its missionary quality is even more obvious. In most versions we have not the books of the New Testament arranged in the order in which they were written. It is not possible to determine in just what order they were prepared. It is certain, though, that several epistles were written and circulated earlier than any of our Gospels.

##### 1. *The general facts.*

Jesus Himself wrote nothing, so far as we know, nor is there any record that He commanded or suggested the writing of anything.

No writing of our New Testament makes any claim to having been written to be a part of the sacred Scriptures, nor does any one of them except Revelation reveal any clear consciousness of the writer that he was composing a work that would become part and parcel of an abiding, an eternal Word

## 14      The Bible a Missionary Message

of God to men. One may easily enough suppose that the writers were thus conscious of their importance and of their inspiration, and abundant evidence can be found to support this hypothesis. The fact remains that they did not, usually at least, write as for all time but for their own times.

It is, of course, well known that at first their writings were not parts of a recognized whole, but were all separate and each one had its own place and use. It was not until after the middle of the second century that they were all brought together in one grouping and begun to be copied as one whole, to be looked upon as God's revelation of a New Testament, *i. e.*, New Covenant, with mankind. Their inspiration had by this time approved them to the consciences of Christian men as God's word. They knew the human authorship and accepted it as a pledge of honesty and genuineness of revelation and so "the canon of Holy Scripture" came to be completed.

### 2. *Circumstances of the writing of the books.*

Now let us go back of all this and see these New Testament books in the making. Let us inquire what human situations called for them and what human motives inspired them. For the Holy Spirit used human situations, and wrought with and upon human motives, to produce them. What, then, do we find?

We find that Jesus imparted to His faithful followers a fine spiritual imperialism, a dauntless spirit of conquest, a holy ambition to master the world in His name. And He left them with a commission,

oft-repeated, to go into all the world as witnesses to Him. And He sent upon them His Holy Spirit to give them boldness and power and persistent energy in spreading the knowledge of God's salvation among men.) When on Pentecost (Acts 2) the Holy Spirit came upon them it was with two physical symbols: "a noise as of the rushing of a mighty wind," suggestive of a new, driving and cleansing force in the world; and an appearance "like as of fire," a sheet of flame, breaking up into tongues one of which rested upon each of the one hundred and twenty persons in the room, suggesting that they should all begin telling the story of Jesus, the crucified, risen, living Lord, the Saviour of the world. At once they began speaking, in all the tongues represented in the crowds in Jerusalem, "mighty works of God." And they continued this testimony wherever they went, and on whatever errand. Whether on business or pleasure they travelled, or if "scattered abroad" by persecution, "they went through the land telling the glad tidings of the word" (see Acts 8:4). God took part with them (see Acts 4:29-31, 15:4, 12, etc.), and so caused wonderful spread of the Gospel and rapid multiplication of believers. Soon church groups were springing up in various city centers, not only in Palestine, but quite beyond its borders, even in Egypt, Syria, Rome and elsewhere. To these groups, many among whom had no personal knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth, and few of whom had any sufficient understanding of the nature and meaning of the spiritual life so remarkably begun in them, or of the great enterprise of which they had now be-

## 16      The Bible a Missionary Message

come a part, to these new disciples the men who knew most and understood best the life and religion of Jesus began to write letters and discourses explaining the nature of the Christian life. Especially after the Holy Spirit had led the workers to begin a definite programme of extending the preaching of the Gospel among Gentiles (see Acts 13), did Paul, the great organizing leader in this movement, begin writing letters to the churches which were produced by the missionary labours. In this way there came into existence the earliest of our New Testament books, James, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and a little later Galatians.

Again, "in these days when the number of the disciples was multiplying" (Acts 6:1), there would be demand for information concerning the life and teachings of Jesus. This information would be required by new converts for their instruction and training, and also for use in the work of witnessing, in which all were expected to take part and to which their experience impelled them. They must know the main facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Thus it came about quite naturally and inevitably that 'many took in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which had been fulfilled among the Christians.' These narratives would be based on what was delivered unto the incoming believers by "them who from the first were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word" (see Luke 1:1-4). The two uses of these narratives were both strictly missionary; (1) for instructing and confirming converts gained by the missionary labours of the numerous witnesses;

(2) for use in these missionary labours for winning converts, just as gospel tracts, including extracts from the Gospels, single Gospels and Epistles, are employed in missionary work to-day. Of the "many" gospels thus brought into being, three won the final and permanent approval of all Christians, as being apostolic and authoritative narratives of the words and works of our Saviour. They were all, in the double sense indicated, missionary tracts. One of them, Luke, was composed by Paul's companion and physician, and was, no doubt, intended to be used for promoting just such work as Paul was doing.

Jesus left no full and detailed instructions concerning the organization, discipline and social functioning of His churches, so far as any report of His teachings informs us. These were to be wrought out and stated in the experiences of the churches under the direction of the missionary apostles. All these early churches were necessarily missionary churches. They were in the midst of environments that presented to them all sorts of problems. To meet these problems the missionaries not only gave oral guidance when present with them, but also found it needful to write frequently and at length, to direct the growing churches in matters of faith and duty, in worship and in work. Such were the Epistles to the Corinthians, and others.

To the second generation of leaders of the churches, such as Timothy and Titus, the older missionary apostles would write instructions and exhortations looking toward the extension and perpetua-

## 18      The Bible a Missionary Message

tion of the great enterprise. Thus we have the Pastoral Epistles.

In the progress of the work occasion would arise for personal correspondence. One of Paul's good friends was Philemon of Colossæ, no doubt won to the Lord during Paul's three years in the province of Asia (see Acts 19:26). One of the slaves of this man, who had run away, was soundly converted to the Christian faith and life while Paul was in prison at Rome. To these facts in Paul's labours we owe the wonderful little letter to Philemon, which reveals Paul's personality in remarkable degree.

To the heroic action of one Gaius in supporting missionaries to the heathen in the face of bitter opposition of his church under a false leadership we owe the Third Epistle of John, which carries the finest statement we have of the principles of financial support of missions.

In the same way Jesus left the theology of Christianity to be developed by His apostles. Paul was the chief of these. It was in reflection on the nature and meaning of his Lord in relation to a gospel for all mankind that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write out the great doctrines of the Christian Salvation, the Christian Righteousness, the Christian World-significance, and the Person and Function of the Christ. These he stated in the letters which he wrote to the churches of the growing missionary enterprise, Galatians, Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians.

This new enterprise in the world was certain to meet the ridicule and the antagonistic argument of

existing religions and philosophies. The first conflict was with Judaism. Then came the opposition, and in some quarters the more dangerous patronage, of Greek philosophies. Two of these philosophies, the Jewish Alexandrian which originated and flourished in Egypt, and the Gnostic which began in various quarters in the first century and flourished in the second, became serious menaces to the right understanding of Jesus Christ. By way of meeting these attacks and dangers, besides sections of other writings, we have several writings especially designed for this purpose. Hebrews shows the superiority of Christianity to Judaism and its ideal excellence, answering the arguments Jews were using against the new, aggressive, spreading religion. John's Gospel and first two Epistles meet the Alexandrian philosophy and some of the claims of the Gnostic teachers. Paul also deals with this last, in Colossians especially.

Finally, the success of Christian missions brought on persecutions in the efforts of the Roman government to check and suppress it. Within the first century two general, or widely extended, efforts of this kind brought the Christians under terrible sufferings. This experience was the occasion for apostolic messages to the persecuted saints to steady and encourage them to remain faithful under the trials and to use the trials as opportunities for advertising their Saviour and for further influencing the world. The letters of Peter and Jude and the Revelation were produced out of this situation.

It is obvious that (Acts is, in Luke's purpose, the

story of how the ascended Lord, by means of the Holy Spirit working in the Church, continued the work He had begun in His early life) "until the day in which he was delivered up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen" (see Acts 1:1-11). As Luke's first writing is the Gospel of Jesus, the Founder of the Missionary Enterprise, so his second is the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, the Director and Power in the Missionary Enterprise. Acts is the first chapter of the story of the missionary conquest of the world, a story that would have grown far more rapidly if its true nature had all along been understood and faithfully accepted by the professed followers of Jesus.

We may sum up the contents of the New Testament and the facts concerning its production by calling it the literature, (1) Of an Expanding Gospel; (2) Of a Developing Church; (3) Of a Growing Theology; (4) Of a Controverted Faith; (5) Of a Persecuted People.

#### V. CONSEQUENT MISSIONARY EMPHASIS OF THE WHOLE.

It should be very clear to us that God's plan for giving us our New Testament was to give it in connection with the missionary activity of the early Christians. Every book of the New Testament was produced first of all to meet a need of missions and to promote the work of missions. Is it possible to think of any way in which God could more emphatic-



ally have made known His wish that all who know Him should be missionaries?

Jesus gave the missionary interpretation to the Old Testament, as we have seen. He then gave to His disciples His commission to go into all the world with His Gospel. Then the Holy Spirit gave to the disciples their Bible as they worked under their commission and made their Saviour known in the world. Could the whole plan of the Bible and its making have put greater honour and emphasis on missions?

Is not the whole Bible just various forms of saying: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life"? (John 3: 16).

Is not the fact of the Bible's existence an age-long proclamation that "God our Saviour \* \* \* would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, himself (a) man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, the testimony to be borne in its own times"? (1 Tim. 2: 3-6).

Does not God speak in the whole Bible saying: "Behold, my servant, whom I uphold; my chosen in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him: he will bring forth justice to the nations. \* \* \* He will not fail nor be discouraged till he have set justice in the earth; and (even) the isles (with only small groups of men) shall wait for his law (so that none shall be left out)?" (Isa. 42: 1, 4).

Is not God everywhere bidding men to hope and

## 22      The Bible a Missionary Message

labour because "according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"? (2 Pet. 3:13). Has not God through all the centuries been calling to men, so soon as they knew Him, to be the messengers of His love and grace to all men in order that they might be saved? "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; and besides me there is no God. And who, as I (my representative, my spokesman) shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me (give a true interpretation of history), since I established the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass let them declare. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have I not declared unto thee of old, and showed it (*i. e.*, demonstrated it)? And ye are my witnesses" (Isa. 44: 6-8).

In all stages of His revelation as it was making and in every book of it when recorded God has been asserting His claim upon the whole human race; proclaiming His love to all mankind; urging His worshippers to "declare his glory among the nations" (Ps. 96:3); asking ever, "whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and waiting until men would answer, "Here am I, send me" (Isa. 6:8).

In its facts and in its formation is not the Bible marked through and through as God's missionary message?

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

Did Jesus Christ really understand the heart of the Old Testament?

How far did Jesus draw from the Old Testament His ideas of His Messiahship and His kingdom?

What use did Jesus make of the Old Testament in His meeting with the disciples on the evening of the resurrection?

What was God's method of making the New Testament?

Show the connection of each class of New Testament writings with the missionary enterprise.

Does the Bible seem any less divinely inspired when thought of as produced in the progress of God's plan with men and to help on that plan?

Can any one really understand the Bible except by interpreting it from the missionary standpoint?

Can one interpret the Bible without himself being dominated by the missionary spirit?

## II

### BIBLICAL HISTORY MARKS THE BIBLE AS A MISSIONARY MESSAGE

No other history was ever composed like that contained in the Bible. Why is this? It is not a history of the world. Yet the world's history is epitomized there. And has it not come about that all histories of the world are in a way tested by this?

#### I. CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLICAL HISTORY.

##### I. *The History of an idea.*

The Bible is not, in the ordinary sense, a history of the Hebrews. It is not their deeds that are recorded but their reaction to the will and the covenant of Jehovah. It was His land on which they lived and wrought their destiny. They were His people. Their national plan was the unfolding of His purpose. Their prosperity and their adversity were explained in relation to their righteousness or their disobedience, and iniquity as measured by the commands and desires of Jehovah, their God. It is the history of an idea and a programme, not of a nation, nor of an organization, that we have in the Bible. So far as the people play a part at all in the history it is as a people rather than as a nation, God's people through whom His idea and programme are pushing their way in the life of the world. And when the people fail

in carrying forward the programme their history ceases and the idea and programme embody themselves in another people, a people made up of men and women gathered from various peoples, from "every tribe and tongue and people and nation," in the oft-recurring phrase of the Revelation. While gathered from all sources yet the people who embody and carry forward the idea and ideals which are the burden of the Bible story are not, after the coming of Christ, physically separated from the tribes, tongues, peoples and nations from whom they are chosen. The idea is making itself at home in all lands and climes, among all races and peoples. That is its destiny, that its objective. "The kingdom of the world is become our Lord's and that of his Christ; and he shall reign unto the age of the ages." Such is the message of the "great voices in heaven" which John heard in Patmos (see Rev. 11:15).

2. *The Introduction to the History of the idea.*

The first ten chapters tell all the Bible has to tell of the history of the race or of religion up to the time of Abraham, less than two thousand years before Christ. According to the traditional chronology this is more than half the time from Adam to Jesus. According to modern anthropological studies it is, of course, far more than that. These ten chapters constitute a sort of prologue, or introductory preface, to the Bible, which enters upon its definite purpose at chapter 12, chapter 11 constituting a sort of special, transitional introduction to the story of the Hebrew founders. Now a good preface introduces us to the constructive idea of a book.

## 26      The Bible a Missionary Message

What do we find in these ten chapters? Do we not discover such ideas as these? (1) God, the Author of all being, made man as the crown of His creative work to be a companion of God Himself. (2) When man, at the first issue of ethical test, the eating of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," took the way of sin and disobedience he became incapable of that high fellowship with God which was his birthright. Man, therefore, entered upon a career of hardship in sin. (3) At once (3:15) God announces a warfare between the seed of the serpent of evil and the seed of the woman in which, though bruised, the seed of the woman shall win. (4) Men in the course of their history developed deepening intensity in sin, but God did not lose interest in them. "It grieved him at his heart," "It repented God that he had made man," for it became necessary in the interest of holiness to destroy man from the face of the ground. (5) Yet did God not give up His plan and purpose. He saved the family of Noah and with them made a new beginning under a special covenant. This covenant embraced all the children and all the descendants of Noah (see chapter 9). It is important to keep this in mind as also the fact that during all the time up to the flood God has dealt with the race as a whole. All have been alike before Him. The narrative is careful to declare the unity and solidarity of all men under this covenant and afterward (10:32-11:1). (6) This renewed race by pride, self-sufficiency and lack of confidence in God, became confused, broke up into fragments and were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Now what was God to do, who made all men, who loved them all, who has never surrendered His control of them nor His ideal for them? At this point the prologue ends and the story begins. The background is given, the *motif* appears and the drama proceeds. It is the drama of a loving God redeeming a disobedient and willful race. The material is before Him, the Great Workman begins. It is a work of centuries, of ages.

## II. EMBODYING THE IDEA IN A PEOPLE.

### 1. *The purpose of an elect race.*

It is thus at Genesis 12 that Hebrew history begins, and the Bible begins as a revelation of God and His work of spiritual creation. For is not the spiritual nature of humanity just such a chaotic mass, a formless void, as was the matter of Genesis 1 out of which God wrought the worlds, including our earth and all its products? And as the Spirit of God brooded over the face of that first, material deep, was He not equally and in a higher sense, brooding over this spiritual chaos to shape it into beauty and glory through succeeding stages of spiritual re-creation? We have thenceforward the story of an elect people, chosen for the sake of the human race.

### 2. *Abraham and the ideal of God.*

God made quite clear to Abraham the universal reach of the love that singled out this one man and his seed to be the chosen of the God of all. "Now Jehovah said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto the land that I will show thee: and I will

make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and be thou a blessing." It was this last that was God's objective, and it must be Abram's objective to be a blessing if he is to claim the promises. God goes over the ground again with Abram, in terms more concrete: "And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse: and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (see Gen. 12: 1-3). Later God assigns as the reason for making known to Abraham what He was about to do in destroying Sodom, that "Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him," and He goes on to explain that this great end is the reason for the call of Abram and for all the providences that are to follow him and his descendants (see Gen. 18: 16-19). Again when God had prevented Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, the son of the promises, God praises the loyalty of His servant in even this mistaken idea of sacrifice, promises the greatest blessing, and says, as a climax of honour: "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (see Gen. 22: 9-19).

Through four centuries this great man was able to project something of this sublime idea through his descendants so that they maintained their distinctness and their sense of divine destiny until, called and delivered out of Egypt, they stood before God and Moses at Mount Sinai. Here they were, the raw material out of which a nation was to be constructed and a religion established that should be,



both the nation and the religion, unique in the world and in influence on the world.

3. *The Ideal in the founding of the national life under Moses.*

Ask almost any student of the Bible what was the beginning of the revelations and of the teaching at Mount Sinai and the answer will be: "The Ten Commandments." There has been no end of research, study, and controversy over the social, ethical and liturgical laws of the Hebrews, recorded in Exodus and Leviticus. Very few have paid attention to the most important of all the laws there given. The few who have noticed this revelation at all have given very little attention to it. Which is more important, the ideals of a people or their detailed laws? Is not the soul of any people to be found in its ideal rather than in its regulations? A national purpose is even more vital, and more elemental than the fundamental laws, like the Ten Commandments. The detailed legislation is largely influenced by the dominant ideal, the conscious end of the life of the people.

In one brief, primary message through Moses God sought to set before the Israelites a supreme motive, to inspire them with a supreme ideal. This was His very first revelation. It came before any legislation, before the Commandments. If the people had accepted this ideal and had constructed and maintained their national life in accordance with it the history of humanity would have been very different from its actual course.

"Moses went up unto God, and Jehovah called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt

thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Ex. 19:3-6). Is it not evident here that Jehovah lays stress on the spiritual deliverance of His people rather than upon physical escape? Does He not make the place of Israel in His affection dependent upon their loyalty to His words and plans? Is it not made very clear that Jehovah claims, and will still claim, all the nations of the earth, and that He may choose from among them all a people to be His special people for a special service?

Now, what is the special service for which Jehovah God is choosing and forming a people? He will make of them a kingdom of priests. It is the function of a priest to lead a congregation in worship. If all the Hebrews are to be priests in this special spiritual sense, to be in fact a priest-nation, who are thought of as making up the congregation to be led in the worship of Jehovah? Can we escape the conclusion that God is forming Israel to be His servant to lead all the nations to Him and to His worship? What an ideal God is setting before this people!

4. *From Moses onward the Hebrew history is the history of the struggle for the idea of one, holy,*

*righteous God and for the ideal of leading all nations to the knowledge and worship of this only God.*

(1) Apart from this idea and this ideal Hebrew history would lose its meaning for humanity as a whole, and would possess only curious interest for scientific historians and idle antiquaries.

(2) In the disastrous days of Isaiah, when the people had lost the spiritual ideal and were scattered and oppressed, Jehovah comes to them through that great prophet with a promise of sympathetic tenderness and assurance. Those whom He had formed and made for Himself, Jehovah will protect, deliver and restore, "every one that is called by his name." But it is all for a great, splendid, wide-reaching purpose: "Bring forth the (spiritually) blind people that have eyes, and the (religiously) deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the peoples be assembled." All the world is called into a religious conference. Their religions are to be compared. "Who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring their witnesses that they may be justified" in their heathen religions, their idolatries and their superstitions. Or else, if they cannot approve their religions by history and achievement, "let them hear, and say, It is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no Saviour. I have declared, and I have saved, and (thus) I have showed (demon-

strated my Saviourhood); and it was no strange thing (mere unproved theory) among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and I am God. Yea, since the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who can hinder it?" (see Isa. 43: 1-13).

Is it not here emphatically clear that God is thinking first of all of Himself as the only Saviour for mankind, and of the nations of men in their defective religions as needing to be taught of Him; and then of a people specially chosen and trained to be His witnesses to these other peoples? He gives assurance of success if they will undertake this function and fearlessly give their witness.

(3) How shall we interpret Jesus' parable of the Wicked Husbandmen except on the principle of election which we are now studying? (see Matt. 21: 33-45). It was because of the failure of the Jews to fulfill the divinely appointed purpose that Jesus declares: "Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The word here translated "nation" would better be rendered "people," since it refers not to a national group but to an ethnic group. And Jesus really had to create a new type of man. Paul calls it "a new humanity" in Ephesians 2: 15.

(4) Peter interprets the ideal for us and definitely applies it to Christians (see 1 Pet. 2: 9-12). "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for *God's* own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of

darkness into his marvellous light; who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles (here meaning non-Christians); that wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." It is not possible to escape the obvious fact that the apostle is here deliberately paralleling the situation in Exodus 19 and applying to the Christian body the ideas, ideals and functions formerly connected with the Hebrews.

Is it not easy to see that in all the epochal passages here quoted the same thought dominates and persists? From the call of Abraham to the founding of the Christian Church God has maintained one ideal for His people and placed before them one great duty. He will reach all the world through the medium of a chosen people who make Him known to the other peoples. The churches of Jesus Christ are the chosen people of God, His witnesses, created and preserved for that end.

### III. CRISES IN PRESERVING THE IDEA.

We can further trace this missionary idea in the Bible history by considering how the idea was expressed and preserved at important epochs and periods of the history.

1. The period of greatest glory for Israel was

## 34 The Bible a Missionary Message

*the reign of Solomon.* The kingdom then came into its greatest territorial extent, its population was most numerous, its commerce most extensive, its renown at the highest. With all Solomon's sins and defects he was not an ignoble man in the eyes of that ancient world, and he was a glorious sovereign. It is of no light significance to find that his power and magnificence, as well as his wisdom and ability, were definitely associated with the religion of his God, in his own profession and in the minds of men, within his own kingdom and in other lands.

His most notable work was the building of the magnificent temple and the establishment of its elaborate and impressive sacrifices and ritual. In this way his piety, superficial as it may have been, made its impression on the wide range of foreign rulers with whom he had established connections, and the religion of Jehovah came to be very widely known by the peoples with whom the Hebrews had friendly dealings, more extensive now than at any other time in the fifteen hundred years of their national life.

In the building of the temple it is recorded that Solomon enlisted the friendly support of Hiram, King of Tyre, and engaged in the work of getting materials in place a hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred of Hiram's subjects. In the negotiations between the two kings it was mutually agreed that Solomon's God was above all gods and the maker of heaven and earth (see 2 Chron. 2).

When the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon it was because she had "heard of the fame of Solo-

mon concerning the name of Jehovah." And she crowned her address to Solomon with the declaration: "Blessed be Jehovah thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because Jehovah loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king to do justice and righteousness" (see 1 Kings 10: 1-10). After all allowance has been made for honorific courtesies between Oriental royalties is it not still of definite significance that this Queen recognizes that Jehovah's aim is "justice and righteousness" ?

Solomon was also a writer and a promoter of letters. What influence may we suppose his literary labours and patronage to have exerted for his religion among Gentiles?

2. *The Captivity of Israel* was used by Jehovah in the interest of His plan for promoting true religion among men. In a national religion the fate of the nation and the power of the god are wrapped up together. If the people and the nation flourish the god is supposed to be pleased with his people and able to prosper them. If they suffer and decline their god is supposed to be overmatched by the superior power of the god of the people who prosper against the failing nation. Now, from the first, Jehovah had not consented to be a national god. He was Lord of all. All the earth was His. He was the covenant God of Israel, having entered upon a special covenant with them, with a view to His being known as God by other peoples. A persistent tendency, often dominant in Israel, was to regard Jehovah as the national God, and to expect of Him

protection, preservation and patronage against the enemies of His people. In the decadent days of the two Hebrew kingdoms Jehovah was under the necessity of maintaining His character as the universal God and the God of righteousness against the persistent nationalizing tendency of a people increasingly unethical, immoral and unspiritual. How could Jehovah be true to His holiness and at the same time faithful to His covenant with His chosen people and with their great founders and leaders?

It was a very serious problem in religion. No similar triumph in religion is to be found in all history. Through the great prophets God succeeded in so interpreting the decadence and captivity of the Hebrew peoples as not only to maintain His character for holiness but greatly to extend the principles of righteousness as the essence of religion. It was made clear to many in Israel and Judah, as well as to many in other lands, that the downfall of His people was the exaltation of Jehovah's character and that this downfall was made necessary by that very truth and faithfulness which lay at the foundation of the religion of Abraham and Moses and David. In this failure of the Hebrew kingdoms God made a great forward movement in the very mission to which He had called the Hebrews and which they had so grievously failed to fulfill. So far from the nations reproaching the God of Israel, as never before they came under the influence of His ideals.

It is as impossible to escape the fact that the cap-



tive Hebrews, the vast majority of whom never returned to Palestine, carried a modifying influence into the religions of Asia as it is impossible to trace that influence in detail.

Amos, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, preëminently, grasped and preached the universalism and the righteous rule of Jehovah over the other nations as well as over the Hebrews.

If Ezekiel was a prophet of hope and restoration to his own people, he nevertheless made central in his preaching individualism, righteousness, repentance and spirituality, qualities in religion that are inevitably independent of the limitations of race and place. So he promoted the ends of the religion of the one God.

Was not Daniel a great foreign missionary in the most distinct sense? Was not his entire work as a prophet, so far as our accounts of him go, to the courts of the great Gentile world rulers? He did not preach to his own people but to their masters. And what wonderful results he achieved! He procured from three of these world rulers proclamations declaring the God of Daniel to be the Most High God, whose kingdom is endless and whose rulership extends over all. To the courts of these king-emperors he preached the power, the holiness and the universal control of Jehovah. And it was partly, at least, by his influence that Cyrus promoted the Restoration. Has any missionary in all history more truly grasped the purpose of God, or more successfully declared the message of God?

### 3. *The Restoration and the period of Judaism*

## 38      The Bible a Missionary Message

was again made to promote the ends of God in several ways. The ethical standards of this period were the highest in the history, in the general life, of the people, and they were in marked contrast with the conduct of the heathen peoples of the same period. Idolatry, in the literal sense, was wholly done away with, and polytheism, always before this a recurrent vice, was the horror and the abomination of the Jews. Moreover, their subordinate position, for most of the time subject to other powers, turned the minds of the truly religious to Messianic thought and hope. While their speculations developed along erroneous lines, they did become the harbingers of a great hope, and they did proclaim constantly the universal power and rulership of their God. That they associated God's rule over men with their own national pride and ambition, looking to see Jerusalem become the political capital of the world, no doubt greatly hindered their spiritual influence. It did not obscure wholly the central idea of God's purpose to rule the world in righteousness by means of a King whom He would bring into the world by His special will and purpose.

But the Restoration brought more Jews to other parts of what was, or came to be, the Roman empire than it restored to Palestine. Every important center from Rome eastward had its Ghetto and synagogues. Some centers had multitudes of Jews. In Alexandria two-fifths of the city was Jewish. With their purified faith, their exalted hopes, their spiritual worship, these Jewish colonies became sources of unmeasured influence. They did but a

small part of what was possible to them. They did prepare the way for the missionaries of the Christ when they should come later.

Incident to this colonizing dispersion of Jews came the translation of the Old Testament Scriptures into Greek, making them available for seekers after God wherever that language was known. By all these means through this last four hundred years of Hebrew history before Christ, the missionary purpose of God was getting expression, in limited measure, to be sure, and yet in a way very far from being ineffective.

4. *The rejection of Israel, the creation of a new Israel.* Then came the day of "the fullness of the times." "God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, at the end of the days spoke unto men in a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he constructed the ages" (see Heb. 1: 1-4).

He who through all generations had been the life and the light of men, the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world, at length became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. He had all along been in the world, which He had made, and to such men as received Him He had been all along giving authority to become the sons of God (see John 1: 1-18). Now He came to bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel. He came to inaugurate a permanent campaign of aggressive spiritual conquest that should make the will of His Father in heaven the law of human life

“from sea to sea” and “from the river unto the ends of the earth.”

Again, as at the time of the Captivity, the Jews failed God. They sought then to take God and use Him to effect their desires for a worldly kingdom and material greatness. Now, when their Christ came, they again rejected the great function of spiritual leadership. They sought to take the Messiah and make of Him a political ruler. They desired a Messiah who would enable them to dominate the world. He desired a people through whom He could save and bless the world. He began the creation of such a people. That creative work He has continued through all the centuries since. It has been a slow, difficult work, requiring the overcoming, the remaking of human nature. In the course of it the history of the Church has often presented parallels to Israel in blindness and unfaithfulness. But He has continued the work. He continues it in that spiritual movement through which He breaks down all walls that separate men into fragments of the one human race and that form barriers to the expanding grace of God. Paul declares that “if any single man is in Christ Jesus” we have therein the proof that there is “a new creation”; that God, who was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto Himself, is through His ambassadors proclaiming the reconciliation, and so producing a new humanity, a new type of human being through whom God will come to indwell the race of men (see 2 Cor. 5:17-20, and Eph. 2:13-15).

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

State the peculiar nature of Biblical history.

What is the idea whose history makes up the Bible story?

Why has God through the ages had a "chosen people"?

How did God emphasize the purpose of the call of Abraham?

What was the first message to the Hebrews at Sinai?

What was its significance?

How did God emphasize this idea in the times of Isaiah?

How does the New Testament deal with this idea?

How did the prosperity of Israel promote God's ideal?

How did God save and extend His ideal in the downfall of the Hebrew kingdoms?

How did the Jews promote God's plan in the period of the Restoration?

What was the fundamental failure of the Jews with reference to Jesus as their Messiah?

By what method did God continue His idea when the Jews rejected the Saviour?

### III

## HEBREW WORSHIP REVEALS THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE

### I. GENERAL FACTS CONCERNING WORSHIP THAT IMPLY MISSIONS.

The Bible is a book of worship. Not only has it repeated calls to worship, it is, indeed, a continuous call to worship. It gives endless examples, extensive directions and countless reasons for worship.

1. *Its purpose may be stated as to bring all men to worship the true God and Saviour of men.*

The God of the Bible is such that men cannot worship Him with true understanding and appreciation without longing and labouring to have all men worship Him. In every part of the Bible God is presented as the only God, hence the God of all men, deserving and desiring the worship of all men, and never to be satisfied until all shall know Him from the least to the greatest; until the earth shall be filled with His glory as the waters cover the sea: "His resting place," at which alone He will cease His work with sinful men, "will be glorious" (Isa. 11:10). Only then, when His full glory shall fill the earth, can He pause and be satisfied.

2. *God's desire for the worship of all.*

All that introductory section of Genesis, the first eleven chapters, which leads up to the opening of the story of Hebrew beginnings represents God as the one, only God, from whom all men go away in sin until God is "grieved at his heart" (6:6). He desires the worship of all men. "I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images" (Isa. 42:8). The first two commandments to Israel express God's desire and His call to all men: "Thou shalt have no other gods besides me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness" (Ex. 20:3-4).

3. *Provision for common worship of Hebrew and stranger.*

(1) For the Tabernacle in the wilderness it was already provided that others than Hebrews should be welcome. There was to be "one law to him that is home-born and to the stranger that sojourneth among you" (Ex. 12:29. See also Deut. 10:19). One of the curses that was ordained to be proclaimed by the Levites on Mount Ebal, while the blessings were proclaimed from Gerizim, was: "Cursed be he that wresteth the justice due to the sojourner, fatherless and widow" (Deut. 27:19). (2) When Solomon had completed his magnificent temple for the worship of Jehovah and came to dedicate it in his remarkable prayer he devoted a paragraph to the stranger: "Moreover concerning the foreigner, that is not of thy people Israel when he is come out of a far country for thy name's sake (for they shall

hear of thy great name, and of thy mighty hand, and of thine outstretched arm); when he shall come and pray toward this house: hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the foreigner calleth to thee for; that all the peoples of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as doth thy people Israel, and that they may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name”

(1 Kings 8: 41-43. See 2 Chron. 7: 32b). Can Solomon have expected that this temple would become a worshipping center for monotheists the world over? Can God have had any thought short of the whole world's worshipping Him in the spirit of the worship of this temple? How extensive would be the influence of such a temple in advertising the nature and the religion of the God for whose worship it was built? If the life and the religion of the people of Israel had corresponded to the ideals of the worship here planned and to the ethical standards here taught what influence would have been exerted on the religious and ethical life of mankind?

4. *Prediction of common worship of God by all.*

(1) Isaiah 56: 6-8. Was the Prophet right when he interpreted the wish and plan of God in these words? “Also the foreigners that join themselves to Jehovah, to minister unto him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from profaning it, and holdeth fast my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for my house shall be a



house of prayer for all peoples. The Lord Jehovah, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him besides his own that are gathered." Was not Jesus exactly in line with this in His words when He cleansed the temple and quoted this passage from the prophet? Was not the temple destroyed in the end because by its perversion and exclusiveness it had come to stand in the way of universalizing the worship of God? (2) In Isaiah 66: 18-24, Jehovah is represented as speaking in a day of deep apostasy, yet with assurance foretelling the coming time when "I will gather all nations and tongues: and they shall come, and shall see my glory." This will be accomplished by setting a sign among them. Such as see and heed the sign and escape from their ignorance, sin and degradation Jehovah will send to all nations, even "to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the nations." Their success shall be such that from all nations they will come to be "brethren" in the worship of Jehovah, who will take of these from all nations "to be priests and Levites." This is the Hebrew way of saying that race distinction and class distinction will be borne away in a common worship of mankind. The glorious outcome will be that from "one new moon to another (*i. e.* continuously), and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith Jehovah." Jehovah keeps before Him always this "new heaven and new earth which he will make," and He preserves the seed and the name of

His worshippers while this great consummation is being wrought out (see verse 22). God's heart will not be satisfied until all shall worship Him.

5. *Paul's Interpretation.*

It was in line with this message of God and with His plan thus revealed that Paul thought of his calling and mission as "the grace that was given me of God, that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the nations, ministering-as-a-priest God's glad tidings, so that the offerings of the nations might be made acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (see Rom. 15: 15-16). Does not Paul here think of God witnessing the religious sacrifices and ceremonies of the heathen, offered in so ignorant a way as to be unacceptable to Him, but still so desiring their worship that He sends such as Paul to carry the good news of God's love and interest and to instruct these blind worshippers so that they may offer true worship to God, while God's Holy Spirit Himself so works in this enterprise as to make it successful?

6. *Worship can be perfect only by being universal.*

The whole idea of worship as taught in the Bible is such as to make it a missionary message to mankind. Can any worship God with highest appreciation and acceptability until all worship Him? Must not those who recognize the glory of God, who love Him and come to Him in worship and in prayer, feel that He can never be rightly honoured nor fully worshipped until all peoples bow before Him in intelligent and adoring praises and prayer? When men understand the God whom we worship and His

relation to the world we shall instinctively and inevitably make our Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9ff.) the petition of our souls. This we will do for two reasons: we shall feel that our God should be, and of right must be, revered and worshipped by all men; and we shall recognize that the Father of all misses the presence at His footstool of all His peoples who have not learned to call Him "Abba, Father." We shall, when the Spirit of our God fills our hearts, miss in our worship any of the children of men who have not come with us into the presence of the Father.

## II. MISSIONS IN THE PSALMS IN WHICH MEN WORSHIPPED.

That this idea entered vitally into the worship of the Hebrews we can see so soon as we study the Psalms. These were in part the hymns and songs used in the worship of the temples—Solomon's Temple and the rebuilt temple of Zerubbabel. It is not now possible to determine in some cases whether a given psalm belonged to the earlier or to the later time. Many we can locate with confidence. The missionary element is strong in both groups.

Again some psalms that were no part of the ritual but were poems of family worship and of personal devotion and petition manifest the same desire for the universal worship of Jehovah and call upon all men to share His goodness and His praise, and predict the recognition of His glorification in all the world.

1. *Psalm LXVII* is one of the best known of

## 48      The Bible a Missionary Message

these psalms of temple service. It is arranged for antiphonal singing, possibly with tenor, bass and unison parts. Study it carefully under the arrangement here given.

First voice, or group of voices—tenor :

God be merciful unto us, and bless us,  
And cause his face to shine upon us ;

Second voice, or group of voices—bass :

That thy way may be known upon the earth,  
Thy salvation among all nations.

All together :

Let the peoples praise thee, O God ;  
Let all the peoples praise thee.

Tenor :

O, let the nations be glad  
And sing for joy ;

Bass :

For thou wilt judge the peoples with equity,  
And lead (Hebrew, see margin) the nations upon earth.

All :

Let the peoples praise thee, O God ;  
Let all the peoples praise thee.

Tenor and bass :

The earth hath yielded its increase :  
God, ever our own God, will bless us.

All :

God will bless us ;  
And all the ends of the earth shall fear him.

Consider thoughtfully what impression must have

been made on those who sang these words and those who heard them. Notice especially the plurals: "peoples," "nations"; the collective, comprehensive terms, "upon earth," "ends of the earth"; the recurrent use of the emphatic "all," "among all nations," "all the peoples," "all the ends of the earth."

Especially significant is the main idea of the whole psalm, namely, that God's mercy and blessing upon His worshipping people have for their objective and result that "all the ends of the earth shall fear him."

2. In the same vein is *Psalm XCVI*, but expressing even more completely the missionary message. It begins with a call to worship, with "a new song":

Oh sing unto Jehovah a new song:  
Sing unto Jehovah, all the earth.  
Sing unto Jehovah, bless his name,  
Show forth his salvation from day to day.

Next we have a summons to those who worship, to proclaim the glory of their God among all peoples, because He alone is God and all their gods are mere vanities. His right and the world's need inspire God's worshippers to lead all men to acknowledge Him in grateful praise:

Declare his glory among the nations,  
His marvellous works among all the peoples.  
For great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised:  
He is to be feared above all gods.  
For all the gods of the peoples are nothings,  
(see margin)  
But Jehovah made the heavens.  
Honour and majesty are before him:  
Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

## 50      The Bible a Missionary Message

Because of the "majesty," "strength" and "beauty" of Jehovah "all the earth" is called upon to glorify Him.

Ascribe unto Jehovah, ye kindreds of the  
peoples,  
Ascribe unto Jehovah glory and strength ;  
Ascribe unto Jehovah the glory due unto  
his name :  
Bring an offering, and come into his courts.  
Oh worship Jehovah in holy array ;  
Tremble before him, all the earth.

Now again those who know the universal sovereignty of God are called upon to proclaim Him as the judge of all men :

Say among the nations, Jehovah reigneth :  
The world also is established that it cannot  
be moved :  
He will judge the peoples with equity.

By breaking the form of the poetical structure at that point the psalmist calls particular attention to the fact that Jehovah is ruler, sustainer and judge of the whole earth. He then proceeds to summon the entire world to joyful acceptance of God's righteous judgment and faithful rule :

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice ;  
Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof ;  
Let the field exult, and all that is therein ;  
Then shall all the trees of the wood sing for joy  
Before Jehovah ; for he cometh,  
For he cometh to judge the earth :  
He will judge the world with righteousness,  
And the peoples in his faithfulness (margin).

Is it possible to suppose that this psalm could be used in worship without stirring the expectation that God would receive universal praise among men? Would not the more spiritual and thoughtful worshippers have an impulse actually to lead other peoples to worship their glorious God? Would they not feel that God could never be satisfied, or rightly honoured until "all the ends of the earth" should "magnify his holy name"? Whatever the thoughts of Jewish worshippers, must not God have been using the psalmist in this hymn of praise to give a missionary message to mankind?

3. *The Second Psalm* has a structure more familiar to those accustomed to English poetry. While preserving the Hebrew "parallelism," stating an idea in two forms, or two closely related ideas in similar form, it also falls logically into four stanzas of about equal length. And here, also, our English arrangement corresponds to the thought development, three "verses" of the psalm constituting each stanza. In each stanza there is as definite idea and the viewpoint changes from one stanza to another. With these suggestions let us proceed to the reading, stanza by stanza. The psalmist first speaks, presenting a graphic picture of insolent rebellion against Jehovah and especially against "his anointed," the one whom He desires for king, and who would establish His ideals among men:

Why do the nations gather in raging tumult,  
And the peoples meditate a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,

## 52      The Bible a Missionary Message

Against Jehovah, and against his anointed,  
    saying,  
Let us break their bonds asunder,  
And cast away their cords from us.

Looking upon such a scene—the rulers and leaders of men in insolent revolt against the holy God, the Creator and Master of the universe—the psalmist feels a great sense of indignation and of contempt as he thinks of the futility and folly of such rebellion. He proceeds to express this feeling, saying how he thinks Jehovah may feel about it:

He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh:  
The Lord will have them in derision.  
Then will he speak unto them in his wrath,  
And vex them in his sore displeasure:

But in the midst of this expression by the poet of what seems to him God's attitude, God Himself checks the poet. While God might easily take this attitude, if He were thinking only of His own majesty and power as affronted by the puny opposition of ignorant men, when His holiness and love are taken account of He cannot be indifferent to these men. Their world, however insignificant, is His world, too. Their history is in part His history. He has a holy purpose and plan to fulfill in men, even in these rebellious men. So, the poet is not permitted to finish the stanza in the strain in which he set it, but God takes it from him and in the last two lines expresses His deep, true feeling and purpose:

Yet have I set my king  
Upon my holy hill of Zion.



God intends to establish a holy order in the world, among men. It is His King whom men shall recognize and serve. Here then, in the third stanza, Jehovah's King becomes the speaker, and outlines the divine attitude and purpose:

I will tell of the decree:  
Jehovah said unto me, Thou art my son;  
This day have I begotten thee.  
Ask of me, and I will give *thee* the nations  
for thine inheritance,  
And the uttermost parts of the earth for  
thy possession.  
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;  
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a pot-  
ter's vessel.

In view of God's unflinching purpose to establish His anointed King upon the hill of holiness, and of God's determination to use necessary force to destroy obstinate opposition to His Son and His rule, the psalmist now speaks again in the final stanza. His whole attitude has changed with the new viewpoint and he proclaims an invitation to all:

Now therefore be wise, O ye kings:  
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.  
Serve Jehovah with fear,  
And rejoice with trembling.  
Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye  
perish in the way,  
For his wrath will soon be kindled.  
Blessed are all they that take refuge in him.

Thus does God provide in His Son a refuge for His

## 54      The Bible a Missionary Message

raging enemies of the heathen nations and invite them to come with reverent joy into His holy kingdom.

4. *Psalm XLVII* is more from the Jewish standpoint, and perhaps the writer thought of all other peoples as subject to the Jews as God's people chosen to represent Him in ruling the world. But even so, the psalmist was looking beyond Israel to the ends of the earth as the range of Jehovah's blessing upon mankind. And as God's spokesman he was delivering a message of grace to all peoples:

O clap your hands, all ye peoples;  
Shout unto God with the voice of triumph,  
For Jehovah Most High is terrible:  
He is a great king over all the earth.  
He subdueth peoples under us,  
And nations under our feet,  
He chooseth our inheritance for us,  
The glory of Jacob whom he loved.  
God is gone up with a shout,  
Jehovah with the sound of a trumpet.

Sing praises to God, sing praises:  
Sing praises unto our King, sing praises.  
For God is the King of all the earth:  
Sing ye praises with understanding.  
God reigneth over the nations:  
God sitteth upon his holy throne.  
The princes of the peoples are gathered together  
To be the people of the God of Abraham;  
For the shields of the earth belong unto God:  
He is greatly exalted.

5. *Psalm XXII* is more quoted in the New Testament than any other. It gives the most graphic and detailed account of sacrificial suffering by the Serv-

ant of Jehovah of any passage in the Old Testament. While not more dramatic in description it is more detailed than even the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It was from this psalm that Jesus was quoting in His great cry of anguish on the cross. Twenty-one verses portray the sufferings and insults which are endured while the sufferer cries to God. Then four verses contain the testimony of this Servant to the faithfulness of His God. Finally six verses give Jehovah's assurance to the Servant of the value of His suffering and service; His work shall succeed:

The meek shall eat and be satisfied;  
They shall praise Jehovah that seek after  
him:

Let your heart live forever.  
All the ends of the earth shall remember  
And turn unto Jehovah;  
And all the kindreds of the nations  
Shall worship before thee.  
For the kingdom is Jehovah's;  
And he is the ruler over the nations.

All the fat ones of the earth shall eat and  
worship:

All they that go down into the dust shall  
bow before him,

Even he that cannot keep his soul alive.

A seed shall serve him;

It shall be counted unto the Lord as his  
race. (Cf. margin.)

They shall come and shall declare his  
righteousness

Unto a people that shall be born, that he  
hath done it.

6. *Other Psalms; a common principle.*

The psalms selected are those which most fully and clearly express God's will and purpose that all men shall know and worship and serve Him. They most distinctly invite all peoples to this worship and service; and most directly call upon such as do worship Him to declare His glory and His saving power to all others. But very many others have the same ideas, less prominently set forth but entering as a distinct feature. It is not to be wondered at that the Hebrews did not more often and more clearly grasp the equality of all peoples in the love and favour and plan of God. When we take account of the narrow nationalism of the ancient times, the race hatreds and antagonisms; the wonder is that these elements of universalism played so large a part in the ritual and the common worship of the people.

So far from wondering that Israel and the Jews so often dwelt upon the hope of their own exaltation and the subordination of other peoples to them, we must the rather see the revelation and inspiration of God in causing them so often to overleap these limiting barriers and catch the vision of one holy God ruling all and receiving the praises of all on terms of a common relation to God.

7. *Solomon's Psalm.* To close our studies in the Psalms let us look at certain parts of Psalm LXXII. It is entitled "The Reign of the Righteous King," and an ancient inscription designates it "A Psalm of Solomon." There are those who take it to be a prayer by Solomon, and a description of his reign. Others attribute it rather to David and account it a

prayer for, and prediction concerning, Solomon. Others treat it less seriously still. But when all allowance has been made for the hyperbole and honorific in which Orientals of all ages indulge so freely, it still seems impossible solely to seek to limit its application to any one human king, or to any one human kingdom. Besides, its concern for righteousness, mercy and truth takes us quite out of the atmosphere of mere temporal glory or mere human greatness.

It is because of this King's "righteousness," "justice," and "peace," because of His consideration for the "poor of the people" and "the children of the needy," because,

In his days shall the righteous flourish,  
And abundance of peace, till the moon be no more.

that

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,  
And from the river unto the ends of the earth.

His reign is marked by deliverance for the needy, pity for the poor, redemption for the oppressed and concern for the blood of the slain.

And men shall pray for him continually;  
They shall bless him all the day long.

\* \* \* \* \*

His name shall endure forever;  
His name shall be continued as long as the sun:  
And men shall be blessed in him;  
All nations shall call him happy.

The psalmist, therefore, closes with this universal call:

## 58      The Bible a Missionary Message

Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel,  
Who only doeth wondrous things:  
And blessed be his glorious name forever;  
And let the whole earth be filled with his glory.  
Amen, and Amen.

### III. THE SAME ELEMENT IN OTHER LITERATURE OF WORSHIP.

Nor is it in the Psalms alone that the expressions of Hebrew worship show God's missionary message. It would be possible for us to study an indefinite number of illustrations of this message from worshipful sections of the Prophets. These must be omitted from the present study. In their visions the interpretation of their God was such as that which came to Isaiah when in the temple he "saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts, the fullness of the whole earth is his glory" (6: 1-3).

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

What in the Bible shows God's interest in all men prior to the founding of the Hebrew nation?

What indications are there in the worship of the Tabernacle and in the dedication of the Temple of a spirit of universalism in the worship of Jehovah?

What use is made in the Scriptures of the idea

that God's house shall be a house of prayer for all nations?

How do the Scriptures suggest that all are to be brought to the acceptable worship of Jehovah?

Why can there be no perfect worship until all men worship?

What psalms especially teach the universal worship of the one, true God?

How were these psalms used in worship?

What is the significance of this spirit of universalism in Hebrew poetry of worship?

What aspects of missions are clearly seen in these psalms?

## IV

### PROPHECY PROVES THE BIBLE GOD'S MISSIONARY MESSAGE

WHAT is prophecy? It is prediction? This is one of the most persistent errors in common thought. It seems almost impossible to correct the common notion that to prophesy is to foretell future events. A prophet does sometimes predict events in the future. Usually he does not. A prophet is one who speaks by direct inspiration and interprets the presence and the will of God in the course of events. Usually he is a preacher of righteousness, usually also a reformer. In defining the ways of God and the will of God the prophet shows the course of history in its deeper principles and forces. Thus he has occasion to tell what will be the outcome of courses now being pursued by men or directed by God. If men give heed to him they avert evils predicted and help to accomplish the good that is promised. In interpreting the ways of God it may be given to the prophet to announce beforehand, even long beforehand, some person or event to be used of God in promoting His work and ordering His kingdom. Such being the function of the prophet it is to prophecy that we turn expecting to find God's fullest message and the



clearest indication of His nature, His will and His plans concerning men and the kingdom of God.

### I. MISSIONS IN THE CALL OF THE PROPHETS.

If we study some examples of the call of prophets to their work we shall find them suggesting the missionary attitude of God toward the human race. Besides the specific record of their call we may take account also of the scope of their actual ministry. We ask, then: To whom does the prophet understand his message to be sent? What is God's interest in the peoples to whom He sends the message?

1. *Jonah's Mission to Nineveh* has in it elements that mark it as especially fit to teach God's attitude.

Consider the situation when Israel was under "affliction that was very bitter" (2 Kings 14: 26), when Assyria was in the ascendant as the great world power and already threatening to sweep westward and absorb the smaller kingdoms. Fear and bitterness would be natural feelings of an Israelite. Jonah is sent at such a time to strengthen the heart and encourage the plans of the king whereby new power and prosperity came under the reign of Jeroboam. Thus was the border of Israel restored "from the entrance of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah, according to the word of Jehovah, the God of Israel, which he spake by his servant, Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of Gath-hepher." Would this success tend to promote pride along with the fear and the bitterness toward Nineveh? What would narrow national pride and prejudice suggest to Hebrews as the attitude of their God toward their

most dangerous enemy, especially in that age of the world when there was such a powerful tendency to think of gods as national and as localized in their people? What, then, is the teaching concerning God that is involved in His commanding Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against the sins of "that great city"? Jehovah assumes the responsibility of these heathen, of a race alien to the prophet. He is interested in them. He will warn them, and when they repent He will save them. The rebuke to the narrowness and exclusiveness of the Hebrews, the revelation of God's universalism and of His concern for moral conduct, His determination to send His message to sinning men, all these lessons stand out in this remarkable episode. Are these lessons at all involved in the questions of the date and literary character of the book?

2. We have already studied *the remarkable missionary career of Daniel*. Can there be any question of God's thus revealing Himself as seeking after all men? Is not such a God as "the God of Daniel" necessarily the God of all men, and a missionary God, one who will inevitably seek the redemption of all men? The "burden" of the whole book of Daniel is that Jehovah God is the righteous Judge of all the earth and will so control, lift up, and cast down the nations of men as to promote the ends, not of might, but of righteousness, until He shall rule the whole earth. All moves on to the time when 'the Ancient of Days shall come, and judgment be given unto the saints of the Most High, and the time when the saints possess the kingdom' (see 7:22).

3. *Jeremiah* in various statements declares that his prophetic call was "to the nations." (1) Of his original call we read: "Now the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying . . . I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. . . . To whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go. . . . Behold I have put my words in thy mouth; see, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (see 1:3-10). (2) A considerable section of his prophecies is devoted to judgments upon the nations for their sins, Judah and Israel being treated exactly as the rest. For this special line of messages there came a special call (see 25:15-38): "For thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, unto me: Take this cup of the wine of the wrath at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it." There is, first, a message of punishment for sins and of captivity because of idolatry and national iniquity. Then, to the other nations, even as to Israel and Judah, there is the assurance: "Afterward I will bring back the captivity of Moab," "of the children of Ammon," etc. (see 48:47; 49:6, 39, etc.). Already in the earlier message Jehovah had laid down the principle and purpose that as "his evil neighbours" learned His religion they should be "built up in the midst of Jehovah's people" (see 12:14-17). (3) The principle is that God is claiming and seeking all the peoples and sends His message to them all through His specially favoured people.

4. *In the case of Isaiah*, while no specific call to

## 64      The Bible a Missionary Message

the nations in general is recorded, (1) we find the spirit of universalism dominating nearly all his messages, and a block of some thirteen chapters deals with the "burdens" of the nations, both in a group and in separate prophecies concerning each nation (see chaps. 13-25).

(2) It is interesting to notice that in the arrangement of the prophecies that which immediately precedes this section dealing with the nations is a promise of a day of praise (chap. 12) in which Jehovah's people are to say: "Give thanks unto Jehovah, proclaim his name (margin), declare his doings among the peoples, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto Jehovah; for he hath done excellent things: let this be known in all the earth. Cry aloud and shout thou inhabitant of Zion; for great in the midst of thee is the Holy One of Israel."

(3) Then, after all the messages of judgment upon the nations for their sins, the great objective of Jehovah is set forth (chap. 25): "And in this mountain will Jehovah of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things. . . . And he will finally destroy in this mountain the face of the covering that covereth all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He hath swallowed up death forever; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the reproach of his people will he take away from off all the earth: for Jehovah hath spoken it."

(4) In the midst of this section of judgments upon the nations (chap. 19: 23-25), it is announced

that a day is coming when the two great, rival world kingdoms of the day, Egypt and Assyria, will freely mingle in peace and shall worship together. "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance."

Recalling again, now, the national hatreds and enmities, and having in mind that both Egypt and Assyria menaced the existence of Israel in that day, is it possible to think how Jehovah could have declared more unmistakably His interest in all men, or more distinctly have spoken a missionary message in such a period and at that stage of the religious and social development of mankind?

5. *Conclusions from these calls of prophets.*

Is it not evident that Israel existed in Jehovah's plan, as a prophetic people, as a witness of the true and living God "in the midst of the earth"?

It was with true spiritual insight that the writer of the CV psalm represented Jehovah as protecting the patriarchs as they

"Went about from nation to nation,  
From one kingdom to another people.  
He suffered no man to do them wrong;  
Yea, he reproved kings for their sakes,  
Saying, Touch not mine anointed ones,  
And do my prophets no harm" (verses 13-15).

For it was that they might be prophets that they

## 66      The Bible a Missionary Message

were raised up among men with their new and revolutionizing ideas of God and of religion.

### II. THE RELIGION OF THE PROPHETS WAS ESSENTIALLY A UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

They proclaim one God, supreme over all. He is spiritual and ethical both in His own character and in His relations to His worshippers. His demands upon men are ethical and moral; He calls for righteousness and justice, humility and mercy. His holiness is such that He cannot endure sin. He will punish sin, if need be, even to the destruction of His own chosen people. In the essential teachings, in the tone and temper and in the ideals of religion of the prophets there is nothing peculiarly national, or sectional. It is a religion that belongs to man as man and binds to the supreme God in bonds of truth, holiness and affection. Such a religion is essentially and inevitably universal in its application and in its appeal. The prophets are the great teachers and promoters of religion. They "speak-for" God. The prophets must, to be understood, be regarded as missionary messengers of the Almighty.

### III. EXAMPLES OF THE MISSIONARY TEACHING IN THE PROPHETS.

It would be possible, but for making this study too full, to show this universal, and missionary, feature in the teaching of all the prophets. In selecting some examples we may well begin with some that are especially so interpreted for us in the New Testament. We omit for the present Jesus' use of the prophets.

1. *The first Gospel sermon on Pentecost began with a prophecy from Joel (2:28-32. Cf. Acts 2:17-21).*

All classes shall be filled with the Holy Spirit and thus called and empowered to speak the word of God: "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids (slaves of both genders) in those days will I pour out my Spirit."

Manifestations of supernatural power will attend these Spirit-filled prophets of the Lord: "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth; blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of Jehovah cometh."

In the day of this general testimony of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit and of the working of God "it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved." The offer of salvation shall be universal.

2. *Amos used by James.*

When the heathen had begun to receive the Gospel in large numbers and the missionary work had formally begun, it became necessary to settle the question whether Gentiles might have the right, without accepting Judaism as well, to become Christians. In reaching an agreement in this vitally important matter at Jerusalem, Peter told of his experience with Cornelius and his friends and of what could be

## 68      The Bible a Missionary Message

learned from this incident. Next Barnabas and Paul, the two great missionaries, told "what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them," thus manifesting His approval of their work and its converts. Then James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, brought forward a passage from Amos (9:11f.) to show that God's plan all along contemplated the saving of Gentiles, of men regardless of race. The passage reads:

"After these things I will return,  
And I will build again the tabernacle of  
David, which is fallen;  
And I will build again the ruins thereof,  
And I will set it up:  
That the residue of men may seek after the  
Lord,  
And all the Gentiles upon whom my name is  
called,  
Saith the Lord who doeth this which was  
known from of old." (See margin.)

Amos had begun his prophetic career with a series of bold messages to (or concerning) all the nations at the time in and adjacent to Palestine. He represented Jehovah as in command of all alike and about to punish all alike "for three transgressions, yea, for four." All the sins denounced are moral, social and spiritual. All peoples are on just the same footing before Jehovah. If Israel sins she will be treated like others: "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jehovah. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of



Egypt and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?"

If Jehovah had guided and located the Philistines, Israel's ancient enemies; and the Syrians, the dangerous enemies of Israel at the very moment Amos was preaching, then surely all peoples are under His control. And if He will not tolerate Israel as "a sinful kingdom," then surely He is the God of holiness. It is immediately following this threat of dire punishment of Israel that the promise comes of restoration. But in the day of restoration the invitation to be saved shall be made universal, even as it has been planned "from of old." James, in the apostolic conference, announced that in the missionary gospel as preached by Barnabas and Paul this ancient word of God was finding fulfillment.

3. *Paul also in his time thinks of the prophets as having a missionary message from God.*

Repeatedly he places these teachings underneath his own plans and practices as a sure foundation. Explaining God's plan with Jews and Gentiles he claims that the Christians, who in Paul's time God had "called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles" were "vessels of mercy which he afore prepared unto glory," "that he might make known the riches of his glory." In this new order of men in the Christian Church, made up of those redeemed from different national and religious groups, God was carrying to the world the knowledge of Himself. Thus were they "vessels of glory." And this is "as he saith also in Hosea:

I will call that my people, which was not my  
 people;  
 And her beloved, that was not beloved.  
 And it shall be that in the place where it was  
 said unto them, Ye are not my people,  
 There shall they be called sons of the living  
 God."  
 (Rom. 9: 23-26, quoting Hos. 2: 23, 1: 10.)

God's attitude was the same in Hosea's day that it was in Paul's day, was the same before Christ that it is now, after Christ. The difference is that then God was able to make known to a few His attitude and plan and for the most part they waited for God to carry out His own plans by His supernatural power, whereas now His Christian servants are expected to read His plans and proceed, in the power of His Spirit, to carry them out. We must now be the "vessels of his mercy," carrying it to all men. In this way Paul finds that another prophecy, Isaiah 65: 1, gets its fulfillment: "I was found of them that sought me not; I became manifest to them that asked not after me." Paul tells us again that he set himself, "made it his ambition," to fulfill God's plan as announced in Isaiah 52: 15:

"They shall see, to whom no tidings of him  
 came,  
 And they who have not heard shall under-  
 stand" (Rom. 15: 20f.).

To the great missionary apostle prophecy meant, as it should mean to all who love God, not just prediction of what God will cause to come to pass, but

revelation of what God desires to be done, and a call to effort to accomplish this desire. Prophecy is direction for service far more than prediction of providence.

So Paul insists that the Christ is sent "that the nations (Gentiles) might glorify God for his mercy," because he finds that it is written, in Psalm 18:49:

"Therefore will I give praise unto thee  
among the nations  
And sing unto thy name";

And again, in Deuteronomy 32:43:

"Rejoice, ye nations, with his people";

And again, in Psalm 117:1:

"Praise the Lord, all ye nations;  
And let all the peoples praise him";

And again, Isaiah saith (11:10):

"There shall be the root of Jesse,  
And he that ariseth to rule over the na-  
tions;  
On him shall the nations hope."

Paul then prays that "the God of hope," who had cherished such a plan and persevered in it through the centuries, would "fill" the readers "with all joy and peace in believing" in such a universal Christ, "that ye may abound in hope" of the wide reach of the Gospel, for it goes forth to accomplish this di-

vine programme "in the power of the Holy Spirit" (see Rom. 15:8-13).

Was Paul too generous in his interpretation of prophecy? Or has he shown us rather the true mind of God, struggling for expression in the limited vision and sympathy of the best men of ancient times? By these incomplete, but clear and suggestive, declarations of His will God was preparing the way for the better understanding of Himself and of His attitude toward all men when the Christ should come. Could the missionary enterprise ever have been inaugurated but for this insight through which the Prophets prepared for it in the days when most men knew so little of the true character of the good God?

#### IV. SPECIAL TEACHINGS OF THE GREAT EVANGELICAL PROPHET.

As Isaiah is preëminently the evangelical prophet, who more consistently and more persistently than any other proclaimed the "wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea," we may well give special attention to some especially significant sections of his oracles.

##### I. *Oracle of the Prince of Peace.*

It was a vision quite wonderful in its range and idealism which is found in 9:6-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity (margin), Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall

be no end upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this." This wonderful description of the promised Prince of Peace is set over against a picture of depression and gloom, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (verse 2).

2. *The Shoot of the Stock of Jesse.*

It is of the same time and in the same connection that we have the oracle of chapter eleven. The broken and destroyed Israel shall not mark the failure of Jehovah's plans: "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch of his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah. And his discernment of the fear of Jehovah shall be keen; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither decide after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins."

Whatever others may have measurably met this description can it be questioned that Jesus supremely

meets its conditions? Note how many of its phrases perfectly describe qualities of His personality, facts of His teaching and work, functions of His ministry. Can we not in certain words of Jesus clearly discern His own application of certain of the expressions in this paragraph to Himself?

In the next paragraph we have the well-known description of universal peacefulness under the figure of all the animals living in harmony and children freely handling them. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."

How this is to be brought about is told next: "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek: and his resting-place shall be glorious." This may well be the basis for that expression of Jesus at the close of His ministry: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John 12:33). Like a banner of deliverance and freedom He is to be seen and sought by all the nations. And He will not cease to work and to win until glorious success has been achieved. "His resting-place," when He pauses with His work completed, will be, in the emphatic Hebrew, "glory"—not merely glorious, but so perfectly glorious as to be described only by the noun, "glory."

### 3. *The Servant with the Spirit of Jehovah.*

In describing His supreme Servant and His work

Jehovah, again, says of Him: "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.

"He will not cry, nor lift up his voice, nor cause it to be heard in the street. A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth.

"He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law" (42: 1-4).

The next paragraph turns from description of the Servant to promise to Him. Jehovah describes Himself as creator of all things and sustainer of all, so that He has the right and the power to bestow it. Then He says to His Servant: "I, Jehovah, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold my hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in the darkness out of the prison house. I am Jehovah, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise unto graven images" (5-8). Thus it is made clear that Jehovah purposes a campaign that will deliver all from ignorance, superstition and idolatry: that will bring justice and righteousness to all the world, even to the remotest islands: that will make His glory universal.

Another paragraph follows calling upon various sections of the world to sing in joyous expectation of this deliverance, and announcing that the might

## 76      The Bible a Missionary Message

and zeal of Jehovah are pledged to bringing this to pass (10-13).

### 4. *The witness in the face of heathen need.*

The need of the idolatrous heathen nations is set forth in chapter 44 in a picture which for sympathetic earnestness, dramatic vividness, and pathetic appeal has no superior in any literature. (1) The first paragraph (1-5) is a reassuring word to Jehovah's spiritual Servant promising protection, His Spirit, and a turning to His people of various peoples.

(2) Another paragraph (6-8) declares that Jehovah alone is God, calls for some one to declare for Him His character and His dealings; exhorts to courage in facing all who have other gods; declares to His people that they are His witnesses.

(3) Next the folly and futility of heathen worship are declared and it is shown that it will be easy to make manifest this folly (9-11).

(4) Then follows (12-20) a heart-breaking picture of the eagerness and earnestness with which the idolater makes and worships his god, putting his religion before all else. "They know not, neither do they consider; for their eyes hath been daubed (correct reading) that they cannot see; and their hearts that they cannot understand." "He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath led him astray; and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say: Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

(5) Finally, in this section, Jehovah turns to His own people and calls upon them to lay to heart and



keep before them this terrible condition of the heathen. He shows that His gracious and wonderful forgiveness and salvation of them was intended as a means by which He will glorify Himself, obviously meaning that through Israel, through His redeemed people, He will take away the blindness and curse of heathenism and establish instead the glory of His own worship: "Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel: for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Because Jehovah has such a servant-people and in them has begun such a redemption there is joyous hope for all the earth: "Sing, O ye heavens, for Jehovah hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for Jehovah hath redeemed Jacob, and will glorify himself in Israel" (21-23).

##### 5. *Promise to the discouraged Servant.*

The forty-ninth chapter has a description of the Servant of Jehovah and of His experiences in His ministry that correspond perfectly to the course of Jesus, the Redeemer.

(1) First the Servant speaks and tells all the earth of Jehovah's glorious plan for Him (1-3): "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken ye peoples, from far: Jehovah hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my

## 78      The Bible a Missionary Message

name." Recall the words of the angel to Joseph, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for it is he that shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). The Servant continues: "and he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me: and he hath made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he kept me close; and he said unto me, Thou art my servant; Prince of God (translation of Israel), in whom I will be glorified."

(2) But instead of realizing this description and accomplishing the results suggested by it, the Servant laments His failure, yet falls back on the consciousness of His faithfulness and on the integrity of His God (verse 4): "But I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for naught and vanity: yet surely the justice *due* to me is with Jehovah, and my recompense with my God." How well this fits the position of Jesus Christ, and the relative failure of His personal ministry! What insignificant results He had at the end, compared with His personality, His devotion and His desire for redeeming the world.

(3) To this lament of failure Jehovah replies in the next paragraph (5-7): "And now saith Jehovah that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him and that Israel be gathered unto him (for I am honourable in the eyes of Jehovah, and my God is become my strength); yea, he saith, It is too light (too small) a thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will

also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Thus saith Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the (his own) nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise: princes and they shall worship; because of Jehovah that is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee."

The paragraph continues, to tell how an age of salvation is to see the peoples coming from all quarters of the earth unto the Redeemer.

#### 6. *The Redeemer and His Seed.*

One other oracle of Isaiah turns from a graphic picture of Israel's moral and spiritual failure to respond to Jehovah, to a larger revelation of God's unfailing purpose to win the world. He will by "his own arm" and in "his own righteousness" bring salvation. "So shall they fear the name of Jehovah from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun." The method of accomplishing this is then outlined (59:20-60:4): "And a Redeemer will come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith Jehovah. And as for me, this is my covenant with them (Redeemer and redeemed), saith Jehovah; my Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and forever."

Because of this message and this Holy Spirit the

redeemed are prepared to bless the world and to glorify God. They are summoned to faithful effort in view of a very great need and are promised full success: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but Jehovah will arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: they all gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far and thy daughters shall be carried in the arms."

7. *The mountain of Jehovah's house.*

We may close our study of the missionary message through the Prophets with a passage from Micah (4:1-5), found also in part in Isaiah (2:2-4): "But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established at the head of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow into it." The religion of Jehovah shall be recognized as the supreme religion, shall come to be recognized as the head of them all. "And many nations shall go (bestir themselves) and say, Come let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths."

The reason for this eager interest and turning to the religion of Jehovah is, "For out of Zion shall go forth instruction (margin), and the word of Jehovah

from Jerusalem; and he will judge among many peoples and will decide concerning strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath spoken it." The need for such a redemption and the call to faithfulness in the people who know Jehovah is seen in this: "For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his god: and we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God for ever and ever."

With a God such as these prophets proclaim, with purposes of grace and mercy such as they announce, was not Christianity inevitable and the missionary enterprise a moral necessity?

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

What is prophecy, and what its purpose?

How does Jonah especially teach the wider love of God?

To whom was Daniel a prophet?

What did Daniel accomplish?

What are the words that record Jeremiah's call?

What principle underlies his call and his messages?

To what extent, and in what ways, was Isaiah a messenger of God to Gentile peoples?

## 82      The Bible a Missionary Message

What do these prophecies and the words of Psalm CV show as to God's purpose in Israel?

Point out elements of universalism in the religion of the prophets.

What prophecy was used by Peter on Pentecost?

How does Amos agree with the progress of the Gospel as preached by Barnabas and Paul?

Show how Paul used the prophecies to support his work.

What use did Paul make of prophecy for determining his own ambition?

Name the seven oracles of Isaiah (including one found also in Micah) that show God's missionary purpose.

## V

### THE CHRIST GOD'S MISSIONARY MESSAGE

I. GOD REVEALING HIMSELF IN CHRIST AS THE SAVIOUR OF ALL.

1. *Four fundamental passages.*

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19).

"God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in *his* Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the ages (margin); who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Heb. 1:1-3).

"It was the good pleasure *of God* that in him should all the fullness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, *I say*, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens" (Col. 2:19-30).

## 84 The Bible a Missionary Message

Think carefully through these four Scripture quotations and see what they tell us about God's idea and objective in the Christ, in His incarnation, and in His atonement. Then recall, from 1 Timothy 2:1-7, Paul's plea "that supplications, prayers and intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men," which is declared to be "good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" because He "would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." With such a desire God sent the "one mediator . . . Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all." The wish and plan of God are such as produced in Paul the conviction that he was himself "appointed a preacher and an apostle (a Greek word, the Latin-English equivalent of which is *missionary*), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth." Note carefully the various items in the philosophy of Missions that are contained in this statement of Paul.

### 2. *John's Prologue interpreting the Incarnation.*

Now, the teachings of all these Scriptures are condensed and powerfully stated in the "Prologue" of the Gospel of John (1:1-18). (1) The term *Word* there used as a name for the Christ means the expression of God, the medium through which God makes known His nature and His will. Words are the means by which communication is carried on, by which personality declares itself and communicates its thought, will and emotion. The spiritual, invisible God could make Himself known to men, in His nature and will, only through some form, or forms of human apprehension and expression. Inasmuch



as words are our most usual and effective way of expressing ourselves, when God would communicate with men in definitely understandable terms He naturally, we may say necessarily, employed human speech. This He did through men so at one with God in some matters or for some occasions that they could speak as God's voice. These men were prophets—men who spoke-for God. Hence the standard expressions, "the word of the Lord which came unto the prophet," "the word of the Lord by (or through) the prophet," etc. Then, by a normal development the term "word of God" was applied to any idea and to all ideas and ideals concerning which the conviction had been produced that they represented God's will with reference to man.

The definite, deep, comprehensive will of God could be expressed only by one, unitary personality, who combining in Himself all aspects of God's personal relation to men and plan for men would be, in a unique sense, above that which could apply to any other, God's Prophet. He would combine in His message all the essential features of all the messages of prophets of God, thus unifying and concentrating God's word to men. He would not only speak God's mind and heart but would be the mind and heart of God, speaking in life and teaching, in all His experiences. He would be God's counterpart in such sense that *Son of God* would be the only term of human speech in which to define Him in His relation to God and in His representation of God to men. He would be able to say: "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know

him, and have seen him" (John 14:7); "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9); "He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me. I am come a light unto the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness. . . . I come, not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word which I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:44-48). He could desire that men "know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:38). Of Him the Father God could say: "This is my Son, my chosen; hear ye him" (Luke 9:37).

So completely and unfailingly does He represent God that He is God's full and final Word. He who was in a definite time and place the perfect Word of God was necessarily also always the Word of God. The Christ is eternal. Jesus of Nazareth was His definite, concrete, human experience. In that human Jesus we know the eternal, spiritual Christ, and in Jesus, therefore, we know God in His attitude and purpose and work with reference to the human race. Such is John's teaching in this Prologue.

(2) This attitude of God is inherent and abiding. It is not an afterthought. For "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God (face to face, as a counterpart, a counter-personality), and the Word was God." Whatever the Word is found to be, that God is. So fundamental in the nature and plan of God is that which He will later express clearly in

His Son incarnate, that the very world making was done in Him: "All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made." God thus made the Christ the foundation and the producing agency of men and of man's world.

"In him was life: and the life was the light of men." As the Light of mankind, even in the days of spiritual darkness, He was present, and although not apprehended and appreciated, still He was never suppressed. Something of His light shined upon every man: "And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not." For this reason God provided men to call attention to the Light that men might give heed to, and walk in, His light. Of such witnesses John the Baptist was preëminent, just preceding the full shining in the incarnation: "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all men might believe through him. He was not the light, but *came* that he might bear witness of the Light. There was the true light, which lighteth every man, coming into the world."

(3) This light is thus represented as being universal. It was the desire that all men believe Him, even as He in some measure, at least, shined for every man in the world. All through the ages "he was in the world, and the world was made through him," so intimate was His relation to the world, so close was He to it. Yet "the world knew him not," failed to recognize Him. "He came unto that

which was his own" (see margin), which therefore ought to have recognized Him and received Him, but such was their blindness that "they which were his own did not receive him."

Yet even in those dark, unapprehending days He was not wholly failing. Some did see and believe. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." This process was going on through all the ages. But it was too slow a process to satisfy God. His plan provided a better way. It was at fearful cost, but God in Christ was ready to pay the price. Man was too blind to see save through the physical eye. Man was too sinful to grasp the idea of atonement until his sins were washed away in blood. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth."

(4) It was to announce His coming that John the Baptist came. "John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, he that cometh after me is become before me: for he was supreme with reference to me" (cf. margin). All who came to know Him felt His supremacy, His full revelation, His satisfying grace. "For of his fullness we all received and grace upon grace (margin). For the law was given through Moses: grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." The difference is significant. The law was given; Moses could bring

that. It was temporary and preparatory. Grace and truth were permanent and were not just gifts from God, but through Jesus Christ *grace and truth came* to take possession of men, to master them. So God has come within the range of man's power to grasp, to understand, to believe, to appreciate. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Thus the Christ of all the ages became Christ Jesus in one particular age, that we might know Him, and knowing Him might know God, and become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (cf. John 20: 31).

## II. THE SPIRIT OF UNIVERSALISM, IN THE CIRCLE OF JESUS IN HIS CHILDHOOD.

In the circle into which Jesus came at birth and in which His childhood moved it is interesting and very significant to find the spirit of universalism stirring the hearts and ideals. It was a small circle and not one exerting any wide influence over the thought of the time. It would, however, influence the ideas of the growing Jesus. It was a circle dominated by the Holy Spirit, a circle prepared for the reception of the Messiah. Their insight into the nature of the Messianic work and the scope of Messiah's mission cannot but have been used by the Spirit to guide the ideals which Jesus would very early begin to cherish. It would be impossible now to determine the measure of universalism in the concepts of Mary and Joseph, of Zacharias and Simeon. They may have realized but little of the world-wide scope of the mission of

the Child with whom they were all connected. We cannot suppose that they attained unto any adequate idea of a free gospel for all men. That was not necessary. It was hardly possible in their environment. They would expect the Jews to be at the head of any movement which He might originate and perfect. What is significant is that they went to their Bible—the Old Testament—for their religious instruction and for terms to express their insights and emotions, and that they recognized that God was dealing with them, through angels, visions, and His Holy Spirit, to bring to consummation the great promises and purposes of the God of Abraham and of David. The Scriptures which we find them quoting are those which will earliest influence the reading and the ideas of Jesus of Nazareth. When we examine these Scriptures we find them such as will place Him in the midst of the spiritual, human, universal aspect of the religion of His fathers, the revelation of His heavenly Father.

1. To *Zacharias* it was made known by Gabriel that his son would be the cause of rejoicing by many, would be great in the sight of Jehovah, would be filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, would go before the face of the coming Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, would teach the wisdom of justice and would prepare a people for the Lord (see Luke 1: 13-20). We should note that it is the religion of righteousness that John would—and did—preach, the religion of the prophets. No word is said of the exaltation of the Jews, nor of political and material glory. It is all spiritual and ethical.

When John was born and Zacharias was released from his dumbness he "was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied." He dwelt upon the covenant and promises to Abraham and to David, and he quoted in thought from Isaiah 9, one of the most marked of the universal Messianic oracles. It was holiness and righteousness, in the service of their God, that the new order of John and the Lord would bring in. John was to make ready the ways of the Lord, "to give knowledge of salvation" and "remission of sins." And it was all, "Because of the heart of mercy (margin) of our God,

Whereby the day-spring from on high shall visit us.  
To shine upon them that sit in darkness;  
To guide our feet into the way of peace" (see Luke 1:67-79).

There is in the entire prophecy no word of political and material greatness, save only deliverance from oppression and hatred so that the people would be free to worship and to realize the righteousness demanded by God. The blessings were just such as all men needed and such as all men could receive.

2. *Joseph* was instructed to have no fear concerning his relation to Mary, but to take her and to call her child by the name of Jesus, which means Saviour, "for he it is that shall save his people from their sins." No word here of political deliverance, nor of ceremonial freedom. It is "from sins" that Jesus is to be Saviour, and such is a human, not a national or class, need (see Matt. 1:20-21).

3. *Mary's Psalm*, in response to Elizabeth's greeting, is rich in suggestion because it shows us the atmosphere of thought and emotion in which she will rear her Holy Spirit-given Son (see Luke 1:46-55). She thinks of God as Saviour, as faithful and merciful, as concerned for those who most need Him and as now about to "remember mercy" "toward Abraham and his seed forever," mercy which, as we saw, in Chapter II, was to use Abraham and his seed as instruments to bless all the families of the earth.

4. When *the angels* announced to the shepherds of Bethlehem field the birth of "a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord," and sang of "peace on earth," it was "glad tidings of great joy" not only to "all the people" of Israel, but "to all the people" of the entire world (Luke 2:8-14).

5. When the infant Jesus was brought to the temple and met by *Simeon*, upon whom was the Holy Spirit, to whom it "had been revealed by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ," we probably face the man who of all in his day had most deeply studied the Messianic ideal. He expresses this ideal in a beautiful hymn, the "Nunc Dimittis" (Luke 2:25-32).

Now, Master, dost thou permit thy servant to de-  
part

In peace according to thy promise,

For mine eyes have looked upon thy salvation

Which thou hast prepared before the face of all the  
peoples;

A light to shine through the veil of the Gentiles

And the glory of thy people Israel.

(Translation by the author.)



Simeon quotes directly Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, save that he reverses Isaiah's order, so as to place the illumination of the Gentile peoples first and to make the glory of Israel to consist in this world-wide salvation. He reflects Psalm 98 very closely, and in general shows that he is saturated with the idea of a Saviour of mankind. He apprehends that such a mission on the part of Jesus will bring opposition and produce a religious revolution among the Jews. Mary's heart is to be pierced by the experiences through which her Son will fulfill such a mission (Luke 2:34-35). We are definitely told that this incident with Simeon made a great impression on both Joseph and Mary (v. 33). It would in turn influence Jesus. We may know from such passages as these the circle of ideas within which Jesus would begin His religious thinking, and the principles which would guide His first steps in self-interpretation.

6. Among the incidents of His infancy and the stories which would excite His boyish imagination when narrated to Him none is more full of fruitful suggestion than *the homage of the wise men* whose long pilgrimage "from the east" brought them so opportunely to His infant feet with gifts of gratitude and hopeful expectation (Matt. 2: iff.).

It is probably because such features as are found in these first two chapters of each of the First and Third Gospels were known to be so consonant with Jesus' own interpretation of His mission and with the attitude which He ultimately inspired in His followers that they found place in the records of His nativity.

## III. The UNIVERSALISM OF JESUS IN HIS CONCEPTION OF MESSIAHSHIP.

That Jesus interpreted Himself as being His Father's message of love and redemption to man as man, and therefore to all men, is evidenced in the whole tenor of His teaching and of His bearing toward men. We have seen with what sort of prophecies and psalms He nurtured His spirit and schooled His soul.

1. *In the Old Testament there are two ideals of the Messiah and of the Messianic age.* One magnifies Israel and looks to her exaltation and honour; makes the Messiah a glorious ruler with widening realm, bringing other peoples, even all other peoples, to subordination or to inclusion within the kingdom of the chosen People of Jehovah. Even in this ideal, righteousness and mercy, peace and fraternity usually play a large part. The other ideal makes of the Messiah a great sufferer, pictures Him in humiliation and death. And always His great motives are to vindicate the honour and the justice of Jehovah and to redeem His people from their sins. With this conception there is interwoven also the principle of universalism. The Messianic blessings are to reach all peoples. His kingdom is to be over all, but it is a kingdom of right, founded on grateful love. These two ideals are strangely interwoven in the records of Israel's religion.

2. *Jesus and the Jews took different directions.*

The Jews of Jesus' day, as indeed the vast majority of Hebrews of all days, selected the promises of political greatness and of material grandeur. In

nothing is His genius so remarkable as in the manner in which Jesus analyzed these superficially inconsistent ideals and constructed His own personal ideal in terms of service and suffering, of redemption and spiritual reconstruction. He either postponed all the promises of glory and exaltation, to come as reward and achievement through sacrificial service and redeeming helpfulness; or He gave them a spiritual and moral meaning which not only postponed their fulfillment, to follow an age of redemption through the Gospel, but inevitably made the Messiah's reign to be one in which grace and character, not pride and privilege, were to be the marks of worthiness, and in which the power of control would be love and truth and not might and external authority.

It was not without deep meaning that both John and Jesus began their work, and continued it to the end, without in any organic way connecting it with the authority and the forms of Jewish religious organization of the day. The kingdom which they constantly preached was that which Jehovah had promised and planned, but it was never entangled or corrupted with political elements or material ambitions. This kingdom idea was the central, the dominating, the constructive idea in all the teaching, work and hope of Jesus. He succeeded only a little while before His death in making even His followers understand that He was concerned with righteousness and redemption, not with power and world rule. Then most of His followers left Him, while He held unfalteringly to His ideal, and to His course, "steadfastly setting his face to go to Jerusalem."

It was not just because His Messianic ideal so contradicted that which the Jewish authorities cherished and demanded that they turned upon Him with rage and dragged Him to the cross. They could have allowed Him to go on with His fine idealism to lose His following and fail as many an impractical idealist has failed to found any permanent enterprise. Jesus constantly declared Himself God's representative, God's very Son, and made His teaching and His person the divine standard of judgment, not of His followers alone, not even of His own nation alone, but of all men. He grew bold to denounce the constituted authorities in religious as in civil affairs, as blind guides, hypocritical hinderers of God's will. He announced that the kingdom would be taken away from them and given to another people who would honour God with the fruits of His kingdom. If He were right their scriptures, as understood by them, were false, their hope was gone, and their God was turning from them to become the God of sinners and outcasts. He was profane, blasphemous, despicable in their eyes. They slew Him and buried Him. The resurrection was God's verdict in favour of Jesus against the Pharisees, in favour of His interpretation of God as against theirs. He was the only true Son of God. God's attitude toward men had been revealed in Him. He was God's message to mankind.

#### IV. JESUS' DESIGNATIONS OF HIMSELF SHOW HIS UNIVERSAL LOVE AND IDEALS.

What interpretation of Himself Jesus gave is

indicated by the designations of Himself which He most used and most approved.

1. On the one side He was "*the Son of Man.*" More than all else He used this phrase to designate Himself. If it was a recognized term for the Messiah, which by no means is certain, still it was a highly significant term. It identified Him with human nature, defined Him as one with all mankind. No other designation so well fitted His sympathies, expressed His consciousness of a mission to all and His longing for all. In the Synoptic Gospels, where we find the course of His teaching, this is much the commonest term employed by Him.

2. In His followers He encouraged the constant use of the title "Teacher." There is no need to cite examples. The word "Master" in our translations is almost everywhere the word for teacher, school-master.

3. While we do not find Jesus often reported as naming Himself "the Son of God" we do find Him persistently calling God His Father. When censured for this He held to it and defended it and went on to say that all judgment had been committed to the Son and that the dead would hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth to judgment (cf. John 5:17-27). He allowed the term in private by His disciples (see John 1:49, 9:35; Matt. 14:33, 16:16).

When the devil came to tempt Him in the wilderness he assailed Him in the deepest consciousness and feeling of His relation to God by saying repeatedly, "If thou art the Son of God." The form

of condition there employed is one of assuming a truth and drawing an inference. Satan used this term because it was in this term that Jesus was defining for Himself His relation to God, even as He had been doing since He was twelve years old (Luke 2:49).

Repeatedly it is represented that the demons applied this name to Jesus. He rebuked them and commanded them not to tell who He was, but at no time questioned the truth of their identification (cf. Luke 4:41, 8:28, etc.). His enemies interpreted His constant references to God as His Father as involving a claim of Sonship and this He never denied. When it became necessary to affirm or deny, at the end, He frankly made the claim (Matt. 26:63).

Connect these three designations, and what do they involve? Son of God, Son of Man, Teacher. He had come as God's Son to be the Son of Man in order that man might learn God. This was His way of giving life to the world.

#### V. TEACHING OF THE GREAT PRAYER OF JESUS.

In His final prayer with His eleven at the gate of Gethsemane, closing His ministry and going to His agony, our Lord reveals Himself as God's personal message to win a lost world in a depth of emotion and a poise of purpose which we can indicate only, in a brief study of John 17. For the fullest appreciation the prayer should be studied in the light of the entire "Upper Room Discourse" (John

13-17). The prayer readily divides into three sections.

1. *In the first Jesus presents Himself and His completed life-work to His Father* and asks to receive again the glory which He had shared with the Father before the world was. This is in order that the Son may glorify the Father in full measure, whom already He has glorified on the earth by finishing the work assigned by the Father for Him to do. God has given to Him "authority over all flesh" and intended for Him to impart eternal life, in His own person and ministry, to all whom the Father had given Him. This brings Jesus to define eternal life. It consists in knowing the only true God through Jesus Christ whom God had sent to make Him known (vs. 1-8).

There stand out in this paragraph these points:

(1) Men must know God in Christ to be saved.

(2) To the Christ God has committed all flesh.

(3) His plan has been to gather a limited, assigned group and to make them understand the "name," *i. e.*, the nature and purpose, of the Father.

(4) These men have come to know God's word in Christ and have adopted it as from God. The work has got a definite beginning.

(5) In the Christ and in His work, now begun, God is to be glorified on earth.

2. In the second section of the prayer (vs. 9-19) *Jesus prays for this group of men in whom He has begun the work of making God known to man.* In a very special sense they belong to God. They are no longer "of the world" but constitute "in the

world" a new, special type of life, God's people in a new sense. They must be kept pure in the world, genuinely set apart for God ("sanctified") because they are taking the Christ's place in the world: "As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world." The saving work, begun in Jesus, is to continue in these men, and in men like them.

3. *Finally the Lord prays for all "them also that believe on me through their word" (vs. 20-26).* It is in this section that we come to the great objective of all the prayer, as of the whole mission of the Master.

(1) There is the passionate, repeated and urgent longing that all believers may be one. This probably means one in spirit, purpose, fellowship, work. It cannot mean organization, for Jesus did not plan any centralized organization, and the spirit of His religion is averse to any such organic unification. But unity of spirit, oneness with Himself, and with the Father in world work was an unutterable desire of His soul.

(2) The objective which lay out beyond this unity of believers in Christ and in God is 'that the world may believe that God had sent Jesus.' A second time He adds: "that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them even as thou lovedst me."

(3) This desire for the world to know is the explanation of the whole process, incarnation, work, calling and sending out of these men. The world did not know the righteous Father. The Son knew



Him. Hence He must come, to make the world know. These men have now come to know. They constitute a beginning through which the world will know "the name" of God. In these men God's love will abide. In them the Christ Himself will continue in the world. With this passionate prayer for reaching the world through the missionary enterprise the Lord went to Gethsemane, to Calvary, to the Mount of Ascension. We should ponder carefully as we now read this last section of the prayer.

"Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me.

"And the glory which thou hast given unto me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we *are* one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me.

"Father, that (consummation) which thou hast given me I desire; that where I am they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. (See margin for this sentence.)

"O righteous Father, the world did not know thee, but I knew thee; and these knew (came to know) that thou didst send me: and I made known unto them thy name (*i. e.*, true nature), and will make it known; that the love wherewith thou lovedst me may be in them, and I in them."

## 102 The Bible a Missionary Message

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

Give the substance of the four passages cited to show God's purpose and motive in Christ.

What is the significance of the use of the term "Word" applied to Jesus?

Point out in John's Prologue the evidence that the Christ is for all the world.

Was God's attitude changed by the coming of the Christ in Jesus?

What influences on the childhood of Jesus would lead Him to think in terms of the whole race?

What two ideals of Messiah and the Messianic Kingdom are found in the Old Testament?

How did Jesus show His spirit of universal interest in constructing His Messianic idea and plan?

What were the names which Jesus used and accepted for Himself? What do they teach?

What are the three divisions of the great prayer of Jesus?

What would you say was uppermost in His heart in that prayer?

What relation have we to this prayer?

## VI

### JESUS, GOD'S SON, FOUNDS THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

#### I. JESUS' WORK WAS TO BEGIN AN ENTERPRISE.

##### 1. *Luke's Testimony.*

"The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles (missionaries) whom he had chosen:". This clause with which Luke opens Acts is left without having its counterpart stated in any corresponding terms. His thought clearly is: This second treatise I make of what Jesus continued to do through His followers by the Power of the Holy Spirit after He was received up. Jesus did not win the world: the Christ is winning the world.

##### 2. *How Jesus Himself emphasizes this.*

(1) In the Upper Room Talk, the night of the betrayal, Jesus said: "The words that I say unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto the Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you love me ye will keep my commandments" (John 14: 10-15).

Is it not clear from this that Jesus regards Himself as the channel of God for undertaking a divine enterprise; that He thinks of Himself as originating that enterprise; that the development of it, the "greater works" of it, must be done by others; that love for Him will cause these others to guard and to put into effect His words, meaning, of course, His programme and enterprise; that He will be able to work more effectively by "going unto the Father" and meeting all the needs of His work among His followers, as they carry on His work?

(2) What is the meaning of the unlimited promise to supply anything His believers, and loving followers may ask for "in his name"?

What is it to ask in His name? Surely He does not encourage any thought of magical power in the use of His name. It must be equally clear that He does not intend to suggest that God's power may be made subject to human will by use of the mere name of even the Son of God.

They are to do business in His name, as His representatives, His agents. His enterprise is to be administered and extended, developed and carried onward by them. The power in this enterprise has been divine power and must continue to be divine power.

Through prayer Jesus had kept Himself, first of all, always in perfect harmony with the will of His heavenly Father, able always to say: "He that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him" (John 8:29).

His food was to do the will of Him that sent Him and to accomplish His work (John 4:34). Being thus always about His Father's business He had in prayer constantly drawn on the infinite resources of wisdom and authority for doing His work of founding this enterprise of redemption. Now He offers the same source of wisdom and power to His followers, who are to engage in the same enterprise. In His name they work, as His representatives they will draw on the infinite resources of God to meet the needs of the work. Is it not very easy to misinterpret this direction of the Lord? Is it possible to be unfaithful, disloyal and selfish in the discharge of this trust? Will the prayer drafts of Christians for heavenly resources be honoured if presented for any other use than that of carrying on the work of the Saviour? Can asking in His name properly mean anything else than that as His agents, doing His work, we need this or that?

### II. THE NATURE OF THE ENTERPRISE MAKES IT MISSIONARY.

I. *The enterprise of Jesus was spiritual, ethical, redemptive.*

His kingdom was "the kingdom of God," "the kingdom of heaven." Luke uses the first term because he is writing for the Greek-reading, Greek-thinking world for whom "God" was the supreme term to express the ideas of spirituality and morality. Jews thought of the term "God" in an exalted personal sense and did not sufficiently feel the demand of God that worship of Him involved likeness to

Him; they did not appreciate the need of making earth heavenly; they did not understand that the kingdom God planned on earth was like unto the kingdom in heaven—was indeed part of that kingdom. With a conception of God that exalted Him too much out of relation to the common life of man, they used His name with reserve and usually substituted some other term. One of the most frequent terms was “heaven” or, “the heavens.” For these somewhat complex reasons Matthew, who wrote first of all for Jews, speaks constantly of “the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus Himself probably employed both terms at will, but would use the designation “kingdom of heaven” usually. At all events this was the great theme of all His preaching and teaching, and He was ever emphasizing its spiritual and ethical qualities. One could get into it and share its glories only if made fit for it in character, in ideals, in conduct. No formal, ceremonial, racial, ancestral claim was of any account. Not even the use of the name of Jesus to work miracles of healing and helpfulness would mark one as a member of this kingdom unless he did the will of the Father who is in heaven (see Matt. 7: 15–27, especially 21–23). The standard of personal morals and of social ethics for the kingdom He preached was the perfection of God (Matt. 5:48). Not that any man could presently attain to that perfection, but that men must set before themselves the character and behaviour of God as an ideal and must earnestly seek to be, in their own behaviour, “sons of the Father who is in heaven.”

It was into the kingdom of heaven that Jesus was

ever inviting and persuading men, not heaven itself, some distant realm to be reached in another life. The kingdom of God was not to be sought here, there or yonder. "Being asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God cometh, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17: 20-21).

2. *The worship taught by Jesus involves this.* <sup>v</sup>

Even in its worship it is not a question of holy place, or sacred season. With Jesus came the hour when neither in the Samaritan's sacred mountain of Gerizim, nor in the holy Hebrew city of Jerusalem should men in any peculiar sense worship the Father. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4: 21-24).

The repeated suggestion of Jesus that worship of God was to be the worship of a divine Father was largely new, practically entirely new, even among Samaritans and Jews in His day. It would be wholly new to far more than half the world to-day. What implications as to the character of worship and the character of worshippers does this idea of worshipping a divine Father imply?

Again, Jesus says the Father is seeking for worshippers. Does that not introduce the very deepest idea of missions into our conception of God? Again,

if both Jerusalem and Samaria, the two national centers of worship of Jehovah, the holy places of the only two monotheistic religions in the world were to lose their significance, because place worship and form worship were to pass away, would that not necessarily make true worship a matter of direct relation to God of any soul, anywhere? And if because God is Spirit acceptable worship must be "in spirit and in truth" is not the religion of Jesus at once proclaimed as being universal in ideal and as demanding that character—"truth"—shall correspond to soul harmony with the God who is worshipped? When Jesus made this declaration in a Samaritan region, to a sinful woman, was He not then and there announcing that He was inaugurating the enterprise of true worship for all men?

3. *The idea of atonement confirms this.*

The aim of the enterprise of Christianity is to make good men on the basis of their worship of a spiritual Father-God. But Jesus never lost sight of the fact that good men must be men made good. And their making must be at a great price. His enterprise must be a redeeming enterprise. The best men of His day, by the standards of the best religion of His day, never agreed with Him. His breach with them was widening always into a great gulf, for the reason that spiritual worship, calling for truth in the worshippers, made no appeal to the self-righteous leaders and guardians of the accepted religion of the day. Publicans and harlots entered the kingdom at the call of Jesus while Pharisees and Scribes denounced and opposed, because, said Jesus: "John



came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye, when ye saw it, did not even repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him" (see Matt. 21:31-32). Only through the double door of repentance and faith could men enter the kingdom, but that door was open for all. He knew the need of men and "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10); "came to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28); came that His blood might be "poured out for many unto remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28), thus entering into "a new covenant in his blood" with the human race. For "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:2). He knows that He will glorify His Father in His death because He is convinced of Himself that "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself" (John 12:28, 32). Is there not meaning in the fact that these words of Jesus were prompted by Greeks coming to meet Him in the Temple court at Jerusalem, on the last day of His appearance?

III. THE MOTIVES OF JESUS IN FOUNDING THE CHRISTIAN, THE MISSIONARY, ENTERPRISE ARE TWO, TO GLORIFY GOD, AND TO SAVE MEN.

A lost world is a hurt to God, a sinful world a breach in the reign of the Father. Lost men are a burden that love cannot bear while any possible effort is untried to redeem them. These two passions,

for God and for men, we see at every turn in the life of Jesus. He is always the true Son of God, always the full Son of Man. From God He comes to man to call him to honour His Father; from distressed man He goes to pray to the Father. A stressful day with the multitudes of needy men is followed by a night of prayer in the solitary mountain; a night with the Father in the Mount of Transfiguration sends Him down to strenuous struggle with demon-ridden men who need faith and prayer to draw them out of the ruin of their perversity (see Luke 9: 28-43; John 6: 15).

1. *Passion for the glory of God.*

Jesus had read in His Isaiah, and applied to Himself and His mission: "Thou art my servant, Prince of God, in whom I will be glorified" (49: 5); and, "I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come to pass that I will gather all nations and tongues: and they shall see my glory" (66: 18).

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus calls upon all men of the kingdom to let their lights shine before men like that of a city set upon a hill so that it cannot be hid, or like a lamp upon a lamp-stand in order "that men may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 13-16).

When, in the same Sermon He teaches prayer, the first petition is: "May thy name be held holy" (6: 9).

In assuring His followers that whatever they may ask in His name He will do it, it is in order that His "Father may be glorified in his Son" (John 14: 13). He urges them to faithfulness and effect-

iveness, because "herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit" (John 15:8). Facing the fact of rejection and crucifixion, on His last appearance as Teacher in the Temple, realizing that all who would serve Him must follow Him in suffering and sacrificing, Jesus cries out, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:26-28).

All through the eventful evening in the Upper Room, when the end had come, recurring again and again the thought runs of glorifying His Father through death, through suffering, through His followers, through His enterprise. When Judas left the room and the tragedy must soon follow Jesus spoke of it in this way: "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him" (John 13:32). In the prayer with which the interview (chap. 17), and His work, ended He keeps to this thought all the way through. He begins, "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee" (v. 1). Then, "I glorified thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which thou hast given me to do" (v. 4). He was glorified in what belonged to His Father, especially in these men whom God had given Him (v. 10). He desires all His people to share the glory of His Father which had been given to Him and would be

restored to Him (v. 24). Jesus longed to see all men honouring His God and Father as their Father and God also.

2. *The compassionate yearning for lost men* was the counterpart in the heart of Jesus to His jealousy for the rights, the honour and the worship of His Father. He had come that men "might have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). How earnestly and with what strong pleading did He constantly present Himself as the light, the life, the water of life, the way, the truth!

Matthew gives us a picture of Jesus in His relation to the need of men that reveals the depth of His soul (9:35-10:8). The first verses of the paragraph present a vivid glimpse of the wonderfully extensive work of Jesus as He "went about all the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the glad tidings of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness." Yet was the need far beyond even His powers. And these crowds in Galilee were but typical of multitudes not only in all Palestine, but in all lands. "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd." He saw them not as a mass, conglomerate and undefined, but as multitudes (note the plural), multitudes of individual personalities, each needing God and redemption, and guidance and strength. He turned to His disciples and spoke of the multitudes as of a harvest, plenteous indeed, but with few labourers to gather in its golden worth. He urged them to

prayer to "the Lord of the harvest, that he thrust forth labourers into his harvest." Then the Master selects a dozen men, after a full night in prayerful meditation over their selection, to help Him in reaching these needy multitudes. He chose them indeed to be the file-leaders and founders in an enterprise through which the ministry of human compassion should bring glad tidings to the weary and distressed the world over.

#### IV. THE METHOD OF JESUS REQUIRES MISSIONS.

The method of the enterprise of Jesus was characterized by the wisdom of the utmost simplicity. It was a great undertaking. Humanity must be made over, recreated. He would impart the life He came to give to such men as He might; and they would extend it to others by contagion and by attraction, by energetic proclamation and by resistless spiritual conquest. Such was the method He found outlined, as we have seen, in His Hebrew Bible. Such was the method suggested by the nature of the human soul and by the experience of human history. Such was the plan of the Holy Spirit, with whom always He worked. He went about winning the men whom the Father had "given him out of the world." He went about the work of making them know whence and why He came. He would make them understand that all things whatsoever God had given His Son were really from God. The words which were given Him He gave to them and caused them to know them until they really, vitally knew that He had come from God and had come because sent of God (see John 17:6-8).

By this process He separated these men from the world and made them in a very special sense His and God's. Now that they no longer belonged to the world but belonged to God and to His Christ He would do with them just what God had done with His "only begotten Son": He would give them to the world which He so loved that nothing could be held back in the effort to save it. By means of redeemed, dedicated men He would go on giving the world a compelling opportunity to believe in Him and have everlasting life. This is Missions. This is "the divine enterprise of Missions."

#### V. CRITICAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS EMPHASIZE THIS PURPOSE.

A series of self-revealing incidents in the experiences of Jesus emphasize this missionary programme of His. Among them are those several occasions when He gave the universal commission in its various forms. A brief study of some of these incidents is all that can be crowded into this study.

##### 1. *His burden of responsibility for all men.*

It was when He turned away from the tremendous, but superficial popularity in Galilee, that marked the end of His second year of ministry there, that Jesus stood in sober soliloquy and faced the failure to win the multitudes to any true spiritual insight and to any profoundly religious, ethical life. Not that He was surprised or deceived. He was simply facing the fact that most men were too sinful and too shallow to understand God and accept Him. There were some with the frank simplicity of chil-

dren who saw and accepted. For them Jesus thanks His Father and accepts the plan of the Father, for so it was well-pleasing in His sight (see the passage in Matt. 11: 25-30).

Yet the terrible weight of the moral burden of the shallow, lost world presses upon Him. He speaks in deep sighs of His responsibility: "All things have been committed unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth (is willing) to reveal him." The loneliness, the isolation, the infinite responsibility of His position were almost more than He could bear. To be in a world that must know God or be forever lost, to have lived for them and laboured with them as He had done for two and a half years, and as only He could live and labour; then to know that not a man in all the world as yet really knew God or at all adequately understood Him as sent by God; truly here was a burden no merely human heart could feel, or feeling could bear. None of all this world could know His Father unless He, the Son of God, was willing to make Him known. Yes, He would do it, at any price He would do it. At once He turns His face and His heart out toward the lost world and calls: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

### 2. *His Church and the keys of the Kingdom.*

It was not long after this, two or three months, it may be, when He asked His disciples what men thought of Him (see Matt. 16: 13-20). He went on to ask what they themselves had found Him to be.

Peter declared the definite conviction that Jesus was "the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter knew, now what Jesus had a while before been lamenting, that no one knew. It stirred Jesus profoundly to have this confession of insight imparted by the revealing God in the gradual discovery of Peter and of the rest. Here in this man with this experience was a "living stone" that could be built upon the foundation of divine experience in men into the Church of the living God, the new order of life among men. Jesus felt that now His work had a permanent rooting in human nature. Now He felt that success was assured. As Paul would later express it: "If any man is in Christ Jesus—any individual—there is a new creation," the race can be remade (see 2 Cor. 5:17 margin). From this several things follow: (1) Jesus will now be able to build His permanent work in the world. On this basal fact of God revealing Jesus as His Christ in a man and making him a new man, on this as a foundation rock He will build this Church with such living stones as Peter (see 1 Pet. 2:5), and the power of the world of the departed shall not prevail against it. (2) To such as Peter Jesus will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven. They have in their knowledge and experience of Him the Gospel that can save the world. They must now share with Him the responsibility for the world bound in sin, ignorance and death. Whatever they shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatever they shall loose shall be loosed in heaven. (3) As the Son of God Jesus will now go on to Jerusalem and complete His work in death



and resurrection. To be sure Peter and his fellow apostles are not yet ready for this idea. Jesus will teach it to them in the months that lie ahead before the climax. They are not prepared to speak of Him as the Christ until they learn the place of His sufferings in His atonement. But the foundation is laid. He can feel secure now. His world mission will succeed.

3. *Responsibility and resources of His followers.*

A little later, in connection with the answer to a question of His disciples about greatness in His kingdom He said (Matt. 18: 18-20): "Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." With such awful responsibility placed upon His followers Jesus relieves the burden by adding: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree in earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be brought to pass for them of my Father who is in heaven: for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Jesus here contemplates carrying on His work through men who represent Him. With their great responsibility they will come together representing Him, and He will meet with them. This responsibility will be shared by all believers and the Holy Spirit. The work of the Spirit we shall study in Chapter VII.

VI. THE GREAT COMMISSIONS.

The founding of the missionary enterprise by Jesus was the work of His entire life and of all His

## 118 The Bible a Missionary Message

ministry. He never tried to see how many converts He could win. He aimed rather at inaugurating a movement, freeing a force, projecting a type of life that would grow and increase and fill the earth. He reached the climax of this purpose in the various forms of the Great Commission which He gave after His resurrection. Whenever He met His disciples during the forty days, and when He appeared to some of them in visions after the ascension He was talking to them of His great enterprise, of which He made them the agents and witnesses. We will look briefly at these commissions.

1. The first one was *on the evening of the day He arose from the grave.*

There are two accounts of it; a brief one in John 20:19-23, and a somewhat fuller one in Luke 24:36-49. A group of disciples were together, probably in the same upper room where the Twelve had met with Him before the betrayal. Ten of the twelve were now present in the group. Several reports had been made of His having been seen. Peter had seen Him and while the excitement over this was on the two who had walked and talked with Him on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-34) returned and were just telling their wonderful story when Jesus Himself appeared in their midst. He spoke "Peace" to them, showed them His hands and side, talked with them and ate before them until they were convinced and calmed. He then said: "Peace *be* unto you: as the Father hath sent me, even so send I you." This is His first resurrection message to these believers. He then breathed upon them and said:

## Jesus Finds the Missionary Enterprise 119

“Receive ye the Holy Spirit,” or, as Luke expresses it, “He opened their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures,” while He convinced them that His experiences were such as He had told them of, such as were “written of him in the law of Moses, and the prophets and the psalms.” No doubt He showed them from the very scriptures, with detailed explanations, emphasized by the pierced hands that handled the scrolls of the writings. Through the fleeting hours of this thrilling night He taught them. At length He paused and said: “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things; whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain they are retained” (this last clause inserted from John 20:23). “And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.” Thus He most impressively and solemnly takes them into the responsibility and work which He bore in the world.

2. *Some two or three weeks later*, having sent messages on before, He met a group of more than five hundred *on the mountain in Galilee* (1 Cor. 15:6 in connection with Matt. 28:16-20). The eleven apostles were in this group when “Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.” Recall His soliloquy in Matthew 11 when He

seemed to be bearing all this quite alone. Now He takes all these disciples into the responsibility with Him, commanding them: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you all the days unto the consummation of the age" (margin). Thus He came to a clear statement of the method by which His age plan is to be completed. He will continue His presence and work in the world by spiritual association with His workers as they make disciples of all nations.

3. Besides a personal commission to Peter (John 21:15ff.), at the time of the ascension the Lord again lays His world enterprise on His followers. This time there are a hundred and twenty of them. They have returned to Jerusalem, because He has told them that there their work must begin. We get *the story of this final commission* only in Acts 1:6-11 (and see v. 15). When He met them on this occasion they sought to know from Him whether the kingdom was to be restored to Israel at this time. They had learned to put that in second place, at least when talking with Him. Now He tells them to leave that question wholly alone, for the Father to attend to. They have now one, single great responsibility: "But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

## Jesus Founds the Missionary Enterprise 121

His work was done. His enterprise was begun, and was in the hands, and in the hearts, of these one hundred and twenty men and women; to pass from them to the hands and hearts of all who should come to know the power of this Saviour, and who in their turn must become His missionaries. "And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God" (Luke 24: 52).

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

What was the greatest work of Jesus? Was it what He did or what He began?

In what sense do believers in Jesus do greater works than He?

By what means can believers do this greater work?

What is the nature of the kingdom Jesus preached and founded?

How does Jesus' teaching concerning worship involve a universal gospel?

Why does Jesus die, according to His teaching?

What were the two controlling motives of Jesus in His work?

How did the crowds affect Jesus?

What in the method of Jesus teaches missions?

Trace the three steps in missionary progress in the self-revealing speeches of Jesus, under V.

How many commissions did Jesus give after His resurrection?

Give the circumstances and content of each.

## VII

### ACTS THE GOSPEL OF THE MISSIONARY POWER

#### I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE LIFE AND PLAN OF JESUS.

I. *His dependence on the Spirit for the success of His mission.*

“Ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses” (Acts 1:8). “Ye are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:48f.). We have, in Chapter VI, studied Jesus inaugurating the missionary enterprise. He accounted Himself as only making a beginning, a very secure and powerful beginning, but still only a beginning. For the continuance and perfecting of His work He depended upon two forces—two that were to coöperate as if one force. He would depend upon renewed men, impelled to the work of redeeming men by the principle of the life that had arisen in them; and upon the Holy Spirit, coming upon these renewed and consecrated men with a wisdom, an energy, and a convincing might that would be resistless.

In His own person men had “both seen and hated both Jesus and his Father.” This had been foreseen and predicted in two psalms (25:19, 69:41).

“They hated me without a cause.” “But,” Jesus proceeds to indicate that He does not give up and that there is an even more effective method of appeal than that of His own person, “But when the Paraclete is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me; and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning” (John 15: 24-27). Does not Jesus mean to say that the united testimony of the Holy Spirit and of men who had knowledge of Him through personal experience would be more successful in convincing and saving men than the personal presence of Jesus had proved?

2. *His great dependence on His followers inseparably connected with the Holy Spirit.*

We have seen at length how much, and how fully, Jesus counted on His believing followers to make His incarnation a success in human life. The intimacy and the extent of this dependence He expressed in the illustration of the vine and the branches (John 14: 10-16): “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman;” “I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing;” “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, and ye shall be disciples of me,” *i. e.*, learning from me how to bear fruit; “These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be made full,” their fruit-bearing rejoicing both the Lord and His servants; “I have called you friends; for all things that I heard from

my Father I have made known unto you, . . . I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." In these expressions Jesus declares as strongly as possible that He is seeking to build up in His followers such faithful and true representatives of Himself as will enable God to take them as His very self, extended in them, and to work through them as completely as, and more extensively than, through Jesus Himself.

3. *His eagerness to commit the work to the Spirit and His followers.*

With something akin to eagerness Jesus seems to look forward to this consummation of His own labours and to this new form of working through others. Within the latter months of His ministry He one day exclaimed, and it was just after His parable of faithful and unfaithful stewardship: "I came to cast a fire upon the earth; and how I would that it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with: and how I am straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:49-50, of margin). So in His Upper Room talk with the Twelve, in which Jesus most fully sets forth "the promise of his Father" to send the Holy Spirit, He says: "Ye heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come unto you. If you loved me ye would have rejoiced, because I go unto the Father: for the Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). A little later in the talk He says: "Now I go unto him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, whither goest thou? But because I have



spoken these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your hearts." He seems to chide them for not giving Him an opportunity to explain, for not trusting His wisdom and care but assuming that His going was a misfortune. Even though they have not invited an explanation He goes on, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away the Paraclete will not come unto you; but if I go I will send him unto you. And he, when he is come, will convict the world" (16: 5-8). The Holy Spirit with and in these, and similar, believers would so extend the power and so carry out the purpose of Jesus that it was better for His followers to be without the physical presence of the Christ and to be empowered by His spiritual presence and by the energy of His Holy Spirit, working with them.

4. *What the work of the Holy Spirit would be Jesus announced also.*

He had already told them twice before this night that they would be arraigned before courts, councils, rulers, kings for His sake. They were not to be "anxious how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say; for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say" (Luke 12: 11-12). The reason for this procedure is that when thus arraigned the Lord's witnesses are not to be concerned for personal safety or acquittal but are to use such occasions "for a testimony unto them," unto men who would not otherwise hear the Gospel. And "this gospel must first be preached unto all the nations." Hence, "when they shall lead you *to judgment*, and deliver you up, be not anxious beforehand

what ye shall speak; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit" (Mark 13:9-11).

Now Jesus explains further: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth: for he will not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, shall he speak; and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you" (John 16:13-14). In such terms Jesus links up His followers and the Holy Spirit as joint continuators of the work He is beginning in His ministry, founding in His death and glorifying in His resurrection.

5. "*The promise of my Father*" meant to Jesus not alone the promise that the Holy Spirit would take up His work and carry it on to completion. The promise had first of all been a promise to Himself and had a faithful fulfillment in His experience.

He had read in His Isaiah that the Shoot out of the stock of Jesse that would become a fruitful Branch for the glory of Jehovah, should have resting upon Him the Spirit of Jehovah, giving wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, reverence, keen spiritual insight, faithfulness, righteousness, and authority in judgment. Because of these gifts of the Spirit He should become the rallying point of the nations which would turn to Him and the completion of His work would be glorious (see again Isa. 11:1-10). Again Jehovah had pointed to His special "Servant, whom I uphold my chosen in whom my soul delighteth; I will put my Spirit upon

him; and he will bring forth justice to the nations" (Isa. 42: 1). In Isaiah 48: 16 the Servant of Jehovah, in forecasting His work, is represented as saying, "Now Jehovah hath sent me, and his Spirit," and the fuller statement of the way His work is to be accomplished is forecast in 59: 20-21, where a covenant is made with the Redeemer who comes to Zion; "My Spirit which is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and forever." Do we not find Jesus drawing on just this assurance when He uses such expressions as the following: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" (John 14: 21); "If a man love me he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him . . . and the word which ye hear is not mine but the Father's which sent me. . . . The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you" (John 14: 23-26); "The words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them" (John 17: 8; cf. verses 14, 26).

6. *How intimate and constant a part the Holy Spirit had played in Jesus' own life* is not generally appreciated. His origin is attributed to the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1: 18; Luke 1: 35). At His baptism

the Holy Spirit came to abide upon Him (Matt. 3:16f., Luke 3:31f.), by reason of which John recognized Him as Messiah. In His principle-fixing experience with Satan in the beginning of His ministry He was led into it by the Holy Spirit and from it returned in the power of the Spirit to His work in Galilee (Luke 4:1, 14). At His home town, Nazareth, He early preached from the text of Isaiah 61:1, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach, etc." John, or more probably Jesus Himself as reported by John, explains the power and influence of Jesus on the ground that "God giveth not his Spirit by measure" (3:34). It was "in the Spirit of God that he cast out demons" (Matt. 12:28). Peter tells us that it was part of the common tradition concerning Jesus that the explanation of His going about "doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" was that "God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with Power." In this way "God was with him" (Acts 10:38). Paul says that it was by "the Spirit of Holiness" that Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God in power, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:4), thus attributing the resurrection of Jesus to the Holy Spirit. Luke affirms that even after His resurrection Jesus gave commandments to His chosen apostles through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2).

## II. LUKE'S TWO GOSPELS.

1. *The Gospel of the Spirit completes the Gospel of the Son.*

## Acts the Gospel of the Missionary Power 129

Luke conceived the Gospel in two parts and gave us two treatises, one to set forth each part of the Gospel. God's enterprise with the human race calls for divine sacrifice and divine energy. How, "when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, and that we might receive the adoption, of sons" (Gal. 4:4b), this Luke recounts in his Gospel. How "God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:5), this Luke tells in Acts, which is as truly his Gospel of the Holy Spirit as is "the former treatise" his Gospel of the Son of God. In order to make the Gospel and to begin His work of reconciliation God came in His Son Jesus Christ. In order to proclaim the Gospel and to carry through the reconciliation to the ends of the earth God came in the Holy Spirit. For the enterprise of the Gospel both these comings of God into the life of humanity are equally necessary. The saving of the world, or the saving of any one man in the world, is a divine work. It proceeds only when God works in and through men.

Luke thus presents his Gospel in two parts. What Jesus "began" in His own person He continues in the person of His Holy Spirit working through His Church and His churches, on through the course of redemption.

### 2. *The urgent need of the Spirit.*

The birth of Jesus (Luke 2) and the advent of the Spirit (Acts 2) are the two events coördinate in importance for the plan and work of redeeming the

world. The first chapter of Acts tells of the promise of the Holy Spirit by Jesus and of the emphasis which He placed upon the Spirit's coming and His work; then of the preparation which the disciples of Jesus made for the coming of the Spirit. He urged the disciples not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the promised Spirit, promised of old by the Father, promised more recently by the Lord Himself, and now promised by Him again. He contrasts the water baptism of John with the Spirit baptism which He now emphasizes (v. 5). The disciple who will be a worker together with the Lord must be more than a repentant, believing, baptized man. He must have also that divine wisdom and power in service which can come only when the Holy Spirit "clothes himself with" the disciple's personality and works and witnesses through this empowered personality. Before the ascension, and just before, Jesus sharply turns the attention of His faithful followers away from all secondary questions about even the kingdom itself and commands them to be concerned only about the power which they are to receive by the coming upon them of the Holy Spirit and about the witness which they are to bear to their Lord, with the Holy Spirit upon them, unto the uttermost part of the earth (vs. 6-8).

In obedience to this command the group of "about a hundred and twenty" remained in Jerusalem and for ten days, until the promise was fulfilled, gave themselves to preparation for Him and for their work of witnessing when He should come. This preparation consisted in united prayer and in the

selection of Matthias to supply the place of Judas in the apostolic group of authoritative witnesses to the words and works of the Master.

3. *Chapter II tells how the Spirit came.*

That His coming was for the purpose of giving the Gospel of Jesus to all men was emphasized by the time of His coming, at Pentecost, when pious Jews and God-fearing Gentiles were in Jerusalem from the ends of the earth. No fewer than fourteen racial or territorial sections of the race are named as being represented in the throngs then present. Again the method of the Spirit is indicated by the symbol of His presence as fire, a sheet of flame coming into the room and dividing up into a hundred and twenty tongues of flame, one resting on the head of each disciple there waiting and now made a powerful witness to the Saviour. The "sound as of a rushing, mighty wind" suggests also the renovating shaking of the world which is to be effected by the messengers of Jesus in the world.

\*4. *All believers should receive the Spirit.*

When the wonderful events had attracted the great crowds and when the preaching had brought thousands to inquire what they should do, Peter tells them how they may be saved and also what they must do as saved men (vs. 38-40). Besides repenting and confessing Jesus Christ in baptism they were all to receive the Holy Spirit and thus all become witnesses to Jesus, missionaries of the Gospel even as the hundred and twenty were. This is God's plan and wish for all, "as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him."

## III. THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT IN ACTS.

I. *General facts in the story.*

Jesus had said, in His parting commission (1:8-10), that the Holy Spirit and the followers of Jesus should bear witness to Him, first, in Jerusalem; second, in all Judea and Samaria, *i. e.*, in Palestine, their homeland; third, unto the uttermost part of the earth. Luke tells the story of this witness of the Spirit through Christian men and women in three sections, corresponding exactly to these three divisions in the programme of Jesus. From chapter 2 to 8:1 the witness is all in the City of Jerusalem. Chapters 8 to 12 tell how the witness was borne in Judea and Samaria and gradually and progressively got out into Syria even beyond Palestine. Then at chapter 13 there was the definite undertaking, under the command of the Holy Spirit, to go out into the world beyond the homeland of the first Christians. What we call foreign missions were definitely undertaken, and all the remaining chapters of Acts tell how the messengers, the missionaries, of the Christ, were guided, sustained, empowered while they went into all the world with the Gospel, and planted great churches in the great city centers.

It is important to notice how Luke all the way through sticks to his viewpoint, that it is the Holy Spirit whose work he is recording. Men are His instruments and work with Him. But always it is primarily His work. Men are subordinate to Him. Every new stage of expansion, each new feature of organization, every new racial group included in the blessings of the Gospel, all are by the Spirit's con-



trol and in some way His presence and power are expressly shown in the event and testified to in the record.

2. *The witness in Jerusalem.*

(1) When Peter and John, in the name of Jesus, had healed the man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, they used the occasion to witness to Jesus in such a way that "many of them that heard the word believed." Then they were haled before the grand Jewish Court. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit" (4:8) bore his testimony to Jesus to these rulers. When dismissed under severe threats they went to their own company and reported the matter. Then recognizing the plan of the Holy Spirit (4:25) they all fell to praying for courage and faithfulness. The answer of God was that "the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together: and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (4:31).

(2) When a serious need arose by reason of the poverty of so many of the Christians it was met by adopting the principle of stewardship of material goods. Thus many sold their possessions and devoted the proceeds to an apostolic treasury. That the Holy Spirit was in all this Luke shows by telling how Peter declared to Ananias and to Sapphira that they were lying to God in the Holy Spirit (see 4:32, 5:16). Again there followed remarkable numbers of conversions.

(3) Persecution of the apostles was renewed (5:17-42). This gave another occasion for bold,

forceful preaching to the Sanhedrin concerning Jesus as God's "prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins." Then Peter declares: "We are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him" (v. 32).

(4) To meet the disturbance which arose over the distribution of food for the poor (chap. 6), "seven men of good report, and full of the Spirit and of wisdom" were designated to attend to this business in the church. The outcome was fresh conquests so that the number of the disciples multiplied exceedingly and came to include even a great company of Jewish priests (v. 7).

(5) One of these seven was "Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit" (v. 5). He met the Jewish rabbis in their own synagogues and "They were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke." To him came the first crown of martyrdom. To him it was given to see the Lord Jesus standing to receive him into glory. Thus he "fell asleep" bearing his witness in a way that Saul could never forget (see 7: 58, 8: 1).

### 3. *Witness in Judea and Samaria.*

In the second division of Acts, chapters 8-12 as above, we have examples of how "those that were scattered abroad" by the persecution that began with the stoning of Stephen, "went about preaching the word."

(1) Chapter 8 tells of the exploits of Philip. The Holy Spirit enabled him to perform miracles in Samaria and caused "the multitudes to give heed

with one accord" to his Gospel. Then came Peter and John under whose hands the Holy Spirit set His seal of approval on this reception of Samaritans into the Lord's church (v. 15). The angel of the Lord now sent Philip toward Gaza and the Spirit told him to go and join himself to the chariot of the Ethiopian treasurer. When he had led the Eunuch to accept Jesus and had baptized him "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip" and sent him on to "preach the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea" (see vs. 26, 29, 39-40).

(2) Both the Lord Jesus, in the visions to Saul and to Ananias, and the Holy Spirit took part in converting, calling and equipping Saul, and in sending him back at length to his Tarsus home where he began a blessed ministry in his native province (chap. 9).

The outcome of Saul's conversion was peace to the church which, still walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, continued also to be multiplied (v. 31).

(3) Next this Gospel of the Holy Spirit tells how Peter was used to "open the door of faith to the Gentiles" of the house of Cornelius, and to convince even the rigidly Jewish Christians that "to Gentiles also God hath granted repentance unto life" (9: 32, 11: 18). The divine presence pervades the entire story. The specific statements which show the Spirit's part in it may be seen in 9: 40, 10: 3-6, 9, 19, 28, 38, 44-46, 11: 12, 13-16.

This admission for the first time of Romans to the salvation of the Gospel was marked by the miracle-

## 136     The Bible a Missionary Message

working powers of the Holy Spirit (10:44), just as had the first Samaritan believers been thus approved (8:15-18).

(4) The boldest step of all in this giving the Gospel to heathen was taken by certain private disciples at Antioch (11:19-25). These preached the simple gospel of the Lord Jesus to Greeks, with no Jewish requirements. "And the hand of the Lord was with them and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." When Barnabas came to see about this new departure he heartily approved it, being able to "see the grace of God," "for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." The Holy Spirit used the prophet Agabus to lead the believers at Antioch to bind their Jerusalem brethren to them by means of a contribution of money to relieve distress in the Jewish church in a time of famine (11:27-30).

(5) Chapter 12 records one more striking experience of the Lord's use of an "angel" in a crisis to save Peter for his work in the Gospel. Thus we complete the second stage of the expansion of the Gospel under the joint witness of disciples and the Spirit.

### 4. *Inaugurating the campaign for all the world.*

The time has come now in a definite, systematic way to universalize the Gospel. The Holy Spirit has thus far followed a very definite plan but the plan has not been revealed to the men whom He has used. They have merely been able to see how in disconnected events they must work with the Spirit.

## Acts the Gospel of the Missionary Power 137

(1) Now the plan is to be unfolded. The world must be included in the programme of the missionaries. It is a very brief, very simple story of the epochal movement we have in Acts 13: 1-4: "Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there*, prophets and teachers. . . . And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. Then when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia (the port of Antioch); and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." The Holy Spirit has now definitely begun a work He will never end until He reaches the last man in the world. He does not leave these men. In all the sixteen chapters that trace the work all the way from Antioch through Asia Minor, and Macedonia and Greece, even to Rome, and with eager longing for the farthest west in Spain, at every new development, at every critical stage the Holy Spirit is present and is in control.

(2) Many evidences of this meet us on the first missionary journey (chaps. 13-14), for at each new city as they preached God wrought signs and wonders through the missionaries, both to win, and to set His seal upon, the converts (cf. 15: 12).

(3) Then arose the question whether the Gospel for mankind was to be interpreted simply and freely in the atonement of Jesus Christ, or must be cast in the forms of Jewish ceremonial. To settle this question once for all a notable conference was held

## 138 The Bible a Missionary Message

in Jerusalem. To this Paul went up by revelation and unflinchingly contended against any limitations, "that the truth of the gospel might continue" for all men (Gal. 2:2, 5). The record of this epochal meeting is in Acts 15, where we read that the conclusion is declared to be that of "the apostles and the elders with the whole church" and of "the Holy Spirit" (verses 22, 28). Thus again in this crisis we have the Holy Spirit and the believers united in giving Jesus Christ to the world as the Saviour of all men.

(4) In the subsequent story of the second journey (15:36-18:22); the third journey (18:23-21:17); the arrest and imprisonment experiences of Paul, the chief missionary (21:18-28:31), we see the Spirit of Jesus always controlling, directing, restraining, empowering, warning, encouraging, in all ways, introducing "the glorious gospel of the blessed God" into the life of men to redeem and to reorganize the life of mankind. In all this section, as in the earlier sections of the book, every chapter is marked by some evidence of the Holy Spirit, whose presence and power pervade the whole story. Sometimes He is opening the hearts of hearers to give heed to the words of the missionaries (16:14); or He gives visions to direct the missionaries in their work (16:9f., 18:9, 23:11, 27:23); restrains them from going to regions not yet in His plan (16:6-7); confirms the faith of new groups of converts (19:6); heals and casts out evil spirits through the missionaries (16:18, 19:11f.); designates elders in the churches to be "overseers and to feed the churches

## Acts the Gospel of the Missionary Power 139

of the Lord" (20:28); prepares the missionaries for their persecutions (20:23, 21:11, 14).

In it all He is with the missionaries in winning converts, organizing and developing the churches, introducing a new force into the world and interpreting it through the Epistles which were written by His inspiration.

5. *The Holy Spirit came on Pentecost to be the permanent source of direction and power in the missionary enterprise.*

And always when He has been recognized and received by the churches of Christ He has made the followers of Christ active and successful in extending and establishing the work of Christ in the world. His work remains the same through all the centuries. The modern missionary enterprise is made up of a new series of "Acts of the Holy Spirit." As in the first century so in the twentieth He calls out the missionaries, inspires the churches with enthusiasm and purpose, gives wisdom in plans and methods, and power in the witness in all the ends of the earth.

### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

On what two forces was Jesus depending for the continuance and large success of His work?

Why does Jesus seem eager to complete His own work?

What did Jesus mean by the phrase "The promise of my Father" in referring to the Holy Spirit?

What part had the Holy Spirit played in the life and ministry of Jesus?

## 140 The Bible a Missionary Message

What is the relation between Luke's Gospel and Acts?

What other names might we apply to this book besides Acts of the Apostles?

What name would best describe it?

What are the three divisions of Acts?

Recall as many instances in Acts as you can where the Holy Spirit is named as taking leading part.

What different activities are ascribed to the Holy Spirit in Acts?

Does the Holy Spirit still take part in the work of Missions as in the first century?

What relation do you find between prayer and the manifestations of the Holy Spirit?



## VIII

### PAUL THE INTERPRETER OF THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE

#### I. PAUL PECULIARLY THE INTERPRETER OF THE CHRIST.

Luke and Paul were used to write fifteen of the twenty-seven books of our New Testament. As Luke is preëminently the historian of the Gospel of the Saviour of the world, so Paul is more than any other the divinely inspired interpreter of the Christ as the world's Saviour. He wrote always as the missionary statesman.

1. *He teaches the nature of the Christian life and hope.*

His earliest writings, to the Thessalonians, were to interpret to these Macedonian Christians, so recently out of heathenism, the nature of the Christian life and the character of the Christian hope, to show missionary converts what manner of life they had come into. This element is part of every writing of his.

2. *He states the principles of the religion of Jesus Christ and shows how to apply them.*

The Corinthian letters are to a church in the greatest center of heathen vices and abominations in the Roman world. The converts were very numerous. No end of questions arose as to organization, discipline, doctrine, relations to unconverted heathen,

apostolic authority. To guide such a great group of converts, in such delicate and complicated circumstances, called for at least three visits by Paul and several by some of Paul's associates and helpers, as also for written messages. In dealing with these problems as they presented themselves in this large and typical church in a heathen community the great missionary stated the principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and showed how to apply them. He showed in his own spirit the true character of an ideal missionary.

3. *The great doctrines of Christianity took form in the great missionary's mind* as he grew in experience of the Christ and as he saw the meaning of his Saviour for the whole human race.

(1) Against the background of the world empire of Rome he was led of the Holy Spirit to see the widest world meaning of the Redeemer. In the face of the moral bankruptcy of the Græco-Roman world and the impotency of Jewish legalism he was led to a clear and definite understanding of the divine plan of righteousness by faith in the Son of God. In conflict with the ceremonial legalism which Jewish Christians carried over into the Church Paul wrought out the clear statement of the Christian way of salvation. And these fundamental doctrines of the new, conquering faith he wrote out for the missionary churches in Galatia, and in Rome.

(2) As the heresy known as Gnosticism began to find its way into the mission churches of Colossæ and Laodicea, raising doubts concerning the reality of the human life of Christ Jesus, or else questioning

the divinity of Jesus as the Christ, Paul wrote the Colossian letter to meet these errors; and he then went on to a more general letter to all the churches in the Roman province of Asia (Ephesians), in which he gave to Christianity its profoundest and most comprehensive statement. In this book he sets forth "the Glory of God in Christ Jesus": he gives to us the most exalted conception of the Church as the spiritual body of the Christ, that in which He gathers together and carries to completeness all that God His Father purposed in Him; and thus outlines the full significance of the Christian calling. This last phrase is Paul's own phrase for stating his purpose in the book. In the first verse of chapter 4, having in the previous chapters given the great doctrinal teaching, he begins an exhortation. In doing so he adopts the device of a play on words, for emphasis. The English translations only partially preserve this figure of speech. The Greek word used is, in its base syllable, the same as in our English *call* (Greek, *καλ*). We can use it in English three times just as Paul did in the Greek. Thus: "I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, *call-you-on* to conduct your life worthily of the *calling* in the sharing of which ye were *called*." This "high calling of God in Christ Jesus" was nothing short of perfecting the work of the Christ by which He gains His full expression in the life of humanity. We shall return to this thought below.

4. *He deals with special problems of missions.*

(1) Philemon was called forth by the need for reconciling a runaway slave, Onesimus, won to

Christ by Paul in Rome, to his master, Philemon of Colossæ, who spiritually also "owed to Paul even his own self" (v. 19).

(2) Philippians had for its primary purpose thanking the Christians of Philippi for money sent to Paul to meet his needs. By this gift they became the great missionary's "partners in extending, defending, and establishing the gospel" (1: 5-7).

John had also to deal with a question of finance in missionary work, from which we get his truly remarkable *Third Epistle*. Some missionaries had visited the church, possibly Corinth, bearing John's commendation. Diotrefes, "who loveth to have the preëminence among them," had led the church to refuse any hearing or support to the missionaries. Gaius had received them, entertained them and contributed to their work. He and such as joined with him in this worthy cause were excommunicated by the party of Diotrefes. John learned of all this and wrote to Gaius. It is noteworthy that he agrees perfectly with Paul in the principles he sets forth in approving and urging financial support of missions. He even goes beyond Paul in the emphasis he places upon this. Notice these items: (a) He prays that material prosperity shall be fully matched by soul growth. (b) He especially commends the supporter of missions and urges that he support them yet further. (c) The standard of such support he states in the exalted ideal, "worthily of God." (d) As reasons for such support he reminds us that the missionaries have gone out "for the sake of the Name," the supreme Name for Christians; that they cannot

expect support from the heathen; that such as support the missionaries thereby become "fellow-helpers" to the truth for which the missionaries are toiling. Dignity and glory are given in these teachings to all who share in this supreme work.

(3) The Epistles to Timothy and Titus are all three for the purpose of directing and inspiring these two men who so largely helped Paul and on whom he was depending for continuing the missionary work he had so splendidly begun.

## II. THIS INTERPRETATION PAUL'S GREATEST WORK.

Paul makes it very clear that he regarded it his greatest work to interpret God's inner, large purpose in the Christ, to get the Gospel understood as God's call to salvation to all in the whole world.

### I. *The stewardship of God's plan in Christ.*

In the third chapter of Ephesians he undertakes to have his readers understand "the stewardship of that grace of God which was given me on its way to you" (v. 2). By revelation God had made known to Paul His own deep, eternal purpose, so that Paul had been given an understanding of *the divine intention in the Saviour*. Such is the meaning of the phrase "mystery of Christ" (see vs. 3, 4). This plan of God is now a great open secret, made known by the Spirit to God's selected missionary prophets. This hitherto secret, but now open and proclaimed secret, of God is (v. 6) that the heathen nations are equally with those who had already known Him an inheritance of God; that they are, in God's plans,

equally members of the spiritual body which He is constructing in the world; that they are sharers, equally, in the promise of redemption in Christ Jesus by means of the Gospel.

Of this universal Gospel of the impartial love and purpose of God Paul was made a minister and his chiefest ambition and highest glory were in "making all men see God's method of giving out this secret which for ages had been hid in the God who created all things" and who through this Gospel is showing His great purpose in creation (see vs. 7-9).

2. *Paul's philosophy of history.*

Before he wrote this wonderful outline of God's plan Paul had already given the key to his philosophy of history in his address at Athens (Acts 17: 22ff.). That key was to be found in the gospel of "repentance inasmuch as God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead."

It was a serious problem in Paul's mind to account for the God and Father of Jesus Christ, the God of love and grace, maintaining and so being responsible for a human race most of whom were religiously ignorant, superstitious, idolatrous and immoral. How could God tolerate them? How could He permit them to live in a world which He had made, and continue as so large a part of a race of which He was the Creator and Preserver? The answer to this deep and terrible question could be found only in a great purpose of universal love. There at Athens

Paul outlined this great gospel explanation of the mystery of human history. "The God that made the world and all things therein, he being Lord of heaven and earth, . . . seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; he also made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; that they might seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being. . . ." Thus God is ordering the life of every people with a view to their coming to know and worship Him. This glorious end is brought about by means of the Gospel. And so, missions became the key to the understanding of history. Every nation's meaning in the world must be found in its relation to God's plan for winning to Himself the whole world. And He wins them through His Son, Jesus Christ. The late Dr. A. T. Pierson was fond of saying: "All history is just His-story."

3. *That God Himself can be interpreted only from this missionary standpoint is a distinct doctrine of Paul.* He implies it in all his teaching. In Romans, chapters 9 to 11, he works it out in a very striking way in dealing with the question of the salvation of Jews and Gentiles. But he states his teaching quite clearly and briefly in 1 Timothy 2: 3-7. He has exhorted that prayer shall be made for all men. Then he adds: "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge

of the truth. For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, himself a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all; the testimony *to be borne* in its own times; whereunto I was appointed a herald, and an apostle (I speak the truth, I lie not), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth." Note how comprehensive and how detailed is this brief summary statement of God's attitude and method.

(1) It is significant that Paul thinks of God as "our Saviour." That God's feeling toward men is that of saviourhood is a consistent and emphatic article in Paul's faith. In this same Epistle he so designates God in the first sentence of the introductory greetings. He is "an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Saviour." In 4: 10 he explains that "we labour and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." It is God's desire for "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." The entire scheme and process of redemption of the world are of God who is reconciling the world unto Himself (see 2 Cor. 5: 18f.).

(2) The one God argues a common goal for the one human race. There is one avenue of approach to Him, one Mediator, provided by the one God. The one God, one race, one Mediator, imply that this Mediator must be in the interest of all men alike, must be available for all, ought therefore to be made accessible to all at the earliest moment. John also announces that "Jesus Christ, the righteous one



. . . is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only (who have been led to know Him), but also for the whole world" (1 John 2: 1f.).

(3) It is needful, and is in the plan of God, that all men, in order to be saved and in being saved, shall come to know the truth. How shall men believe unless they hear? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (see Rom. 10: 14f.). All the Gentiles must have teachers in faith and truth.

(4) Emphasis is laid on the conscious purpose of the Redeemer, that He "gave himself a ransom for all."

(5) The testimony, by which all shall know of their ransom and so be able to receive its benefits, is to be borne at the proper time. Now is that time. In Isaiah 49: 8, Jehovah had promised the Redeemer "at an acceptable time" to give heed to Him, and "in a day of salvation" to give power to make effective His suffering in behalf of man. Paul, in 2 Corinthians 6: 2, quotes this and declares that "now is the acceptable time: behold, now is the day of salvation." Any delay on the part of Christians is failure to respond to the opportune day of God.

(6) Paul's solemn conviction of his own appointment to this missionary function is a challenge to us all to hear God's call to us to share in the work and if God wills personally to go, as Paul went, to be heralds, missionaries, teachers.

4. *Paul again interprets the function of the Church in terms of its relation to this universal Gospel.*

Referring again to Ephesians 3, we are told in

verses ten to twelve that this great open secret of the inclusion of all races in the love and grace of God is "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly *places (or relations)* might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to a plan of the ages which he purposed (or projected) in Christ Jesus; in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him." The Church thus becomes the vindicator of God in the eyes of the heavenly orders of personal being, God's interpreter to the organized universe. God's wisdom, in dealing with a world so full of sin and discord and loss and death as ours, is illuminated and glorified as the Church wins the world, redeems sinners, restores order, founds and builds and progressively realizes the reign of God—the kingdom of heaven—on earth. We may not comprehend all that is meant by this. We can know that in fulfilling the work of making the Gospel the possession of all men we are adding to the understanding of God by the intelligent spirits in other parts of the universe than our own. Thereby we know that the Church is increasing the glorious appreciation of God. Thus we can get at the heart of God's idea for a church. Each church is to be an agency for promoting this universal Gospel, a fulfiller of God's "plan of the ages which he projected in Christ Jesus."

The spiritual Church is thus coming to be the full realization of the full redemption of God through the Christ (see Eph. 1:23). When all this great purpose is fully realized, then "unto him who is able to

do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him *shall be* the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of the ages" (Eph. 3:20).

"Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood  
 Shall never lose its power  
 Till all the ransomed Church of God  
 Be saved to sin no more."

5. *The Christ comes to maturity in the growing Church.*

Paul's interpretation of the missionary message takes one other very striking form in Ephesians 4: 11-16.

(1) Under the figure of a growing human body the apostle represents the Christ Himself as growing to full maturity in the developing Church. He seems to be thinking of the general idea of incarnation, not specifically of personal incarnation, but the incarnation of an ideal and of a form of life. This is a process, then, by which the Christ gets Himself ideally and practically wrought into the life of the human race through the Church. As the Church grows, appropriates its environment and incorporates it into itself, assimilates and adjusts and unifies the human race into its own organism, the Christ so fully, so gloriously sees of the travail of His soul that we may be even so bold as figuratively, at least, to say the Christ is Himself growing into completeness. And this is more than a mere figure of speech. It is, of course, not to be taken literally, certainly not

physically, corporeally. As a person, the Christ is perfect; as our life, the life of the world, He is a spiritual process which is completed only where all the elements are in and all perfectly adjusted to one another and all perfectly responsive to the central control of Him, the Head of the Body, Christ.

(2) Under this very original and striking figure Paul, in the passage now before us, reaches his most persuasive argument, for such as appreciate it, in behalf of the most faithful and earnest efforts to make Christ Jesus really and fully the Saviour of all men. It is a profoundly true idea that Christ is not Himself full-grown until all His redeeming work is done; for so long as His purpose is unfulfilled, so long as His heart's deep desire is not realized, so long as His death is unavailing for needy sinners, so long as men whom He would rule in loving righteousness are left in the power of darkness and death, He cannot be satisfied. His joy is made full in His followers, His friends. He prayed most passionately that the world should believe that the Father had sent Him.

(3) So Paul represents in our passage that the reason for all the functional leaders in the Church, apostles, prophets, evangelists, is that the saints may be perfected for ministering, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

As we all, corporately and in communal relationship, come into unity of believing experience and accurate understanding of God's Son we shall together, as His body, reach the measure of the stature of the full-grown Christ.

Dealing thus truly as members of this growing body of the Christ we shall in all parts of the body and in all respects grow up to our perfect Head, the Christ. From this Christ, complete in Himself as the Head, there comes the inspiration, the directing, the constructing energy by which "all the body, properly joined and closely knit together by the proper relation and functioning of every factor, causes itself to grow, building itself up in love."

By this biological analogy the great missionary makes his appeal to every saved soul to function most fully to complete the salvation body, the saving work, of the Christ. The Christ Himself as the formative factor in history cannot be complete until all His saving work is complete.

By all these varied arguments and analogies Paul seeks to make "all men see what is the stewardship of the true meaning of the Christ." The Redeemer has set Himself in the world "to save the world." He reaches the world for saving it through saved men eagerly yielding themselves to transmit in their persons and testimony the saving grace, love and power to others. We do this to glorify God who sent the Saviour; to satisfy the passionate desire and purpose of the Saviour who is ever reaching out through us to fulfill His saviourhood; to complete the Church which is the growing expression of the Christ, and so is His glorious counterpart; and we do it for the sake of the men who are lost until they feel the thrill of the divine energy of the Redeemer in their souls and are quickened into active response to the love of God in Christ Jesus.

QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

Why should it be needful to interpret so extensively the nature and end of Christianity?

What does this need imply as to the spiritual and social condition of mankind?

Point out the reasons for Paul's writing his various epistles.

What was his purpose, especially, in Ephesians?

What do Paul and John teach about the financial support of missions?

What importance does Paul attach to his work of interpreting God's "secret" as to his Christ?

What is Paul's key to the philosophy of history?

How does Paul make the right understanding of God dependent on missions?

What is Paul's theory of the functions of the Church?

How does this bear on the duty of every church?

Outline Paul's biological figure of the growing Christ.

Is it possible to understand Christianity apart from the missionary principle and practice?

## IX

### THE MISSIONARY MESSAGE IN THE VISIONS OF PATMOS

THE REVELATION, the final New Testament book, is dominated by the missionary idea. It is at once the most obscure and the easiest of the New Testament writings to understand. If one desires to know what historical events and persons were represented to John by the various visions and by their symbolical figures, there is unlimited field for speculation and endless confusion. If one desires to work out a scheme of details of events marking the end of this world order and introducing another world order the field for ingenuity is limitless and one can construct millennial programmes indefinitely.

#### I. PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING REVELATION.

If one is content to read the revelation to find the great eternal principles on which God is controlling the world, and the general facts as to the course of God's guidance of the world to its fulfillment, this Book will be full of wisdom and instruction. The pictures will be clear and most striking in showing God's way in human history. These principles stand out clearly all through the dramatic visions by which God brought assurance, hope, and courage to His persecuted people.

## 156 The Bible a Missionary Message

1. *The conflict between good and evil, between God and Satan, is fundamental, radical and persistent in this age of our world.*

2. *The risen, living Christ is present, cognizant and intensely interested in His churches and calls upon them to be pure, loyal and faithful to His truth and His work.*

3. *The sovereignty of God, even in the midst of all the evil of the world, is prominent in each vision.* And God is always exercising His sovereign will and power in the interest of believers in Him and in His Son. No matter how powerful the evil, how violent and temporarily dominant the forces of sin and unrighteousness, God always sits in the background holding the determining lines of ultimate control. It is at the sound of His angels' trumpets that even the worst manifestations of destroying power are seen; and it is when the Lamb of God breaks the seals of the scroll of God's providence that war and famine and pestilence ride forth to their deadly work. When all is done God still sits on His throne. Thus is most effectively proclaimed the rule of God in the life of the world.

4. *The slain Lamb, sacrificed for the sin of humanity, is the one, and sufficient, clue to the mysteries of our strange world and of God's dealing in the long course of His providence with men.* In Christ alone can we understand human history. In Him and in His ever-growing work is the explanation of all that puzzles and distresses now.

5. *The certain triumph of God in righteousness, peace and glory is proclaimed.* The outcome of all



the conflict is to be a new heaven and a new earth from which shall be wholly and forever excluded "the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars" (21:8). "He that sitteth on the throne saith, Behold I make all things new" (21:5).

6. *The people of Christ are eternally blessed.*

They are blessed now in their ideals, in their relations, in their expectations, in their sufferings which are part of the means by which the world is being wrought into the Kingdom of God.

7. *The continuous urgency of witnessing to Jesus* stands out as the duty of all believers. In their faithfulness He wins His triumphs. In loyalty to Him they receive their deliverance and their triumph. All the time they are a part of the conquering forces. All the time their Lord is thinking and acting in relation to the whole enterprise of a redeemed and holy humanity. On this work they must wait; in this work they do share.

## II. THE VISIONS OF THE REVELATION.

These may be variously analyzed, according to the way in which various scenes are combined. There seem to be seven major visions, some of them breaking up into several scenes. In view of the obvious use of this sacred, symbolical number so extensively in the Book this arrangement of the visions into seven most probably corresponds to the way it was originally conceived by John. This arrangement leaves us with *a striking missionary element in each of the*

## 158 The Bible a Missionary Message

*visions.* This element is not lost if we adopt some other arrangement of the material, for it belongs to the thought of the whole and is interwoven into the structure of the writing which records the visions.

1. *Clearly the first division of the Book is that which gives the messages to the seven churches in Asia.* (the Roman province in Western Asia Minor) (1:4-3:22).

(1) In introducing the message and the vision of the Christ sending the message, John invokes upon the readers "grace and peace" from the God of past, present and future; "from the seven spirits that are before his throne" and by whom His rule of all things is marked as conscious and intelligent; "and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness" to God's will and purpose, "the first born of the dead" and so the pledge of eternal life to all who are in Him, "and the ruler of the kings of the earth," God's divinely appointed Ruler of all men, before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord to the glory of God His Father (cf. Phil. 2:9-11). It is this Christ, "who loves us and loosed us from our sins in his blood," who made us who accept Him "to be a kingdom, priests unto his God and Father." To Him we are expected to ascribe "the glory and the dominion unto the ages of the ages" (1:4-7).

(2) In all this paragraph there breathes the pulsing challenge to make the Christ the Master of mankind, for He is depending on us to be and to build His kingdom.

John saw Him as "the Living One, who was dead

and now is alive forevermore and holds the keys of death and of Hades." He was in the midst of seven golden lampstands, which are His churches, from which shines the light of His love and grace into the darkness of the world. It was a parable of which He was fond in the days of His flesh. In His living presence He is still calling on His churches: "Let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 16).

2. *The Book of God's providence.*

The second vision is contained in chapters 4: 1-8: 1. It might be named "Solving the Problem of God's Providence in Human History." It is a dramatic picture in three parts.

(1) 4: 5-5: 4 shows God on the throne of the universe.

He is surrounded by twenty-four elders on thrones, representing all periods and nations of people as governed thus from before God. Seven lamps before the throne, interpreted as the Seven Spirits of God, signify that all that goes on in the world is known perfectly by God. Four "living beings" close in by the throne signify the cosmic forces by means of which the order of the world is sustained and carried forward. These "living beings" had wings and were "full of eyes, round about and within," which means that it is not "blind" and "fixed" forces that carry on the natural and social order of the world. The world is sustained and developed intelligently and under control.

These "living beings," as John saw them, never

cease day and night to praise, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come."

Then the representative "elders" all fall before the throne, casting their crowns at its feet, while they praise "our Lord and our God" who is "worthy to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created."

All this recognizes the rule and the right of God in all things. But it leaves open still the question of why God made all this world, and why He continues it with so much of evil and sin and loss. John saw "in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book (or scroll) written within and on the back." No doubt it contained the plan of God in His rule of the world. But it was "close sealed with seven seals," "and no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look thereon."

John "wept much because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to look thereon." Thus ends the first scene of the picture. God is on His throne; all things are ruled by Him; He is praised by the high, ultimate forces as the creator of all things; but He cannot be understood. The facts of human life and government do not correspond to our ideas of what such a God would produce and support. Every good man has wept, like John, at sight of God and the sealed book of His providence.

(2) *A second scene opens.*

(a) We have the same setting as before, un-

changed in the main. John is looking down and away, in tears. One of the representative "elders" calls to him: "Weep not; behold, the Lion that is of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath overcome to open the book, and the seven seals thereof." He looks up through his tears and there nearest of all to the throne, inside the circle of the "elders" and the "living beings," "a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain." It had seven horns, signifying perfect, infinite strength. And its seven eyes take the place of the seven lamps of the first scene. These seven eyes of the slain Lamb are really "the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth." It is through His eyes of sympathy, love, sacrifice, redemption that God looks out upon all the earth. He, the slain Lamb, comes forward to take the Book of God's providence and to open it up for John, and for all who share John's concern.

This tangled, puzzling world is, then, after all, the arena of divine redemption. We can know God only in His Christ and in the cross of His sacrifice. We can solve the problem of the world's sin only in the light of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The "living beings and the elders"—nature and history—fell down before the Lamb, and each one of the elders held in his hands a harp of praise and "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." This suggests that God can endure and carry on human history only by reason of the saints, *i. e.*, believing men and women, and by their fellowship with Him through their prayers; which

recalls the word of Jesus to His followers. "Ye are the salt of the earth"; "Ye are the light of the world."

These forces of nature and history now "sing a new song," with a meaning quite beyond that they sang in the first scene. This is a song to the Lamb: "Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood *men* of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them *to be* unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth."

(b) We must not fail here to see *the method of God's Christ*. By His blood He purchases unto God some, a nucleus, a beginning, out of every section of the human race. These purchased ones He constitutes into a priestly kingdom and they are the true rulers of the earth. It is through these consecrated, understanding ones that God actually controls the world and carries on its history. Those who belong to the crucified, risen Christ and who serve Him truly have the whole world in their keeping and they determine its destiny. "They reign upon the earth." John now sees myriads upon myriads of angels surrounding the whole scene and singing to the Lamb: "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches and honour and glory, and blessing.

"Then every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, even all things that are in them, heard I saying,

"Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto

the Lamb, *be* the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion unto the ages of the ages.' ”

The plan is glorious, the completion of it will be glory. The Gospel of the cross of Christ is the means through which His saints rule the earth and bring it to its high destiny. The song of the universe in praise of God and of the Lamb waits on the making of this Gospel the possession of all men. When this work is done the glorious consummation will come.

(3) In *the third scene* of this wonderful picture *the seven seals are broken*. Judgments, disasters, afflictions are revealed. Toward the end, just before the opening of the seventh seal of the book, John sees a hundred and forty-four thousand from the twelve tribes of Israel sealed as “the servants of our God,” and “a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands, saying:

“‘Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb.’ ”

Then again all the angels and “elders” and “living beings” give eternal praise unto our God. Then the seventh seal was opened and silence in heaven signified that with this consummation of salvation the order of the world was done. It is in this wonderful process that missions occupies a central place.

3. Four chapters next give the vision of *seven angels that blow great blasts from seven trumpets*,

after each of which some devastating judgment falls on the sinful world.

(1) By way of introducing these angels another angel came and took his stand by the altar with a gold censer in his hand. There was given to him a great quantity of incense to mingle with the prayers of the people of Christ upon the golden altar before the throne, and the smoke of the incense with the prayers of these Christian saints ascended before God. Thus again we have the importance of Christ's praying people in the course of God with the history of the world (8: 2f.).

(2) When the seventh angel is shortly to sound his trumpet "another mighty angel" came and took his stand "on the sea and on the land" and with upraised hand swore by the eternal Creator that there should be no more delay. "Moreover at the time when the seventh angel shall speak, when he is ready to blow his blast, then are at once fulfilled the secret purposes of God of which he told the glad tidings to his servants, the prophets." Thus, again, the gospel of redemption for men of all lands and peoples is determinative in God's control of human affairs (10: 5-7).

(3) "Then the seventh angel blew; and loud voices were heard in heaven saying: The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of the Christ, and he will reign unto the age of the ages." Thus are fulfilled the promises of Jehovah to the Christ. The age of the Gospel is completed. The "four and twenty elders" fall upon their faces and worship God because history is com-



pleted. God had taken up His reign in great power; all those who destroy the earth are destroyed (11:15ff.).

4. In the fourth vision, chapters 12-14, *seven symbolical figures* appear representing the forces of righteousness and redemption and divine purpose in conflict with the forces of imperialism, autocracy and iniquity.

This vision is dominated by the appearance of "the Lamb standing on Mount Zion, attended by a hundred and forty-four thousand who have been redeemed as the first-fruits of mankind for God and for the Lamb." They "follow the Lamb wherever he goes." They are singing to an accompaniment of harps, "like the sound of many waters," "what seems to be a new song," and which none other could learn. We may not know what the song was. But from the prominence of the Christ here as the Lamb, from the statement that this great group are the first-fruits, merely the first-fruits, of God's harvest of mankind, we must suppose that the song was closely connected with the statement immediately following: "Then I saw another angel, flying in mid-heaven. He had the good news (the eternal gospel) of eternal blessings to proclaim to them that dwell on the earth, to men of every nation, tribe, language and people" (14:6). This glorious Gospel for all men is thus the climax of this vision, which now pushes on speedily to its termination in the overthrow of all who reject the Son of Man.

5. The next vision, that of *seven angels with seven final plagues* with which the political enemies

of the work of Christ are cursed and tormented, is occupied almost wholly with the severity and the tragedy of awful judgment, chapters 15-16. Even this vision of the righteous wrath of God, of the very completion of that wrath (see 15:1), opens with a scene of "them that come off victorious from the beast, and from his image, and from the number of his name." They stand with their harps by the sea of glass and "sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God, the Almighty; righteous and true are thy ways, thou King of the ages. Who shall not fear, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy; for all the nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy righteous acts have been made manifest" (15:3f.). Even in the midst of judgment the mercy of the Gospel and its success must have its song of praise.

6. "*The Doom of Christ's Enemies*" is the title given in "The Twentieth Century New Testament" to the series of pictures that make up the vision of judgment in chapters 17 to 20. "Babylon" is destroyed, the mystic name for Rome and the anti-Christian power, imperial and commercial, centered there. Vengeance is finally taken upon the violent and implacable enemies of the Saviour. Then, last of all, the devil with his cohorts and allies, Death and Hades, are all consigned to the bottomless pit. There has been a judgment of all men. What is known as the Millennium has intervened. Only those are left whose names are written in the book of life. All else were "hurled into the lake of

fire." The Lamb is taking His Bride and there is a great marriage supper. The Saving Christ and the saved and saving Church are to be united forever (19:6-8). A voice commanded John to write a new beatitude: "Blessed are those who have been invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb." John fell at the feet of the angel to worship, but was sharply warned: "See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren who bear their testimony to Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

In this remarkably interesting passage all who bear their testimony to Jesus are put in the class of prophets. We learn that the essential feature of prophecy is found in gospel witnessing. Prophecy is speaking for God. The heart of the message which God desires spoken for Him is the word that tells of Jesus the Saviour of men, the Saviour of the world. Every missionary, every evangelist, is declared to belong to the company of the prophets of God.

7. *The new order* produced by the Christ through His Gospel and by means of the judgment against hindering enemies is the subject of the closing vision (21:1-22:5).

(1) John says: "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth." This goal has ever been before God. To effect this He has worked through the course of the centuries. It was for the joy of this set before Him that Jesus endured the cross, despising its shame. "The former heaven and the former earth have passed away." "Behold, the tabernacle of

God is with men, and he will dwell with them and they shall be his peoples, and God himself will be among them, their God." The old order has passed away. "Then he who sitteth on the throne said: Behold, I make all things new." Of this completed work of renewal a view is given in a special scene (21:9-22:5). From "a mountain great and high" one of the angels, "in the spirit," showed John "the holy city of Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." The record describes its glorious light; its appearance as a whole; its foundations and its gates, in detail; its lack of temple and of sun and moon, these being rendered useless by the direct glory of God and the Lamb; its inhabitants; its provision for the eternal blessedness of all who are there.

(2) That to which we need here to attend specially is that this perfection and glory are the consummation which God effects for the process and work of redemption through the sacrifice of the Christ. Through all the description the Lamb is made most prominent. That gospel name is used for Him all through the account, keeping the idea of atonement and redemption before the mind. This perfect city is God's fulfillment of the redeeming enterprise.

When John is invited to the scene it is that he may be shown "the Bride, the wife of the Lamb" (21:9), that which is to Him most dear and most precious. Jesus had, in one of His parables, presented the gospel invitation, and its urgency upon the neglected and outcast of men, under the figure of

a marriage feast which a certain king made for his son. His servants continued to go out, at his command, and bring together such as could be constrained to come until "the wedding was filled with guests" (see Matt. 22: 1-14). Paul (Eph. 5: 22-33) takes the union of Christ and His Church as the standard for urging proper ideals and conduct in the human marriage relation. Christ "is the Saviour of his Body" and "loved his Church and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it . . . that he might present the Church to himself, glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." By this legitimate connecting of the use of this figure by Jesus, Paul and John, we get fresh emphasis on the New Jerusalem as the completion of the missionary undertaking.

Returning to the description, we read (v. 14) that "the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb," the men who had been trained by Jesus Christ, had received His world commission, and had been the secondary authors and founders of the enterprise of world-wide evangelization. Again we remind ourselves of Paul's teaching (Eph. 2: 20ff.) that Gentiles and Jews, by means of the Gospel, are being built into a holy temple in the Lord, "being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone."

In his glorious city John remarked that he "saw no temple, for the Lord God the Almighty, and the

Lamb, are its temple" (v. 22). The redeemed in the Lamb are immediately within God's presence and worship directly.

For illumination "the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine upon it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and its lamp is the Lamb" (v. 23).

The inhabitants of this city are "only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life" (v. 27). "The river of the water of life" in the city "issues from the throne of God and of the Lamb" (22:1); while again we are told that "the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants (the Lamb's) shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* on their foreheads. And there shall be night no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light; and they shall reign unto the ages of the ages" (22:3-5).

Into that city "they shall bring the glory and the honour of the nations," just the aim and the work of missions. "And the nations shall walk by its light; and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it" (21:24). Then indeed shall the Redeemer be King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

*In the epilogue* (22:6-21) several items emphasize the importance and urgency of the main ideas of the whole Book. Jesus Himself appears (v. 16) to say: "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things before the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." Let all the churches give heed; or, "Let him that

hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith to the churches.”

“And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come; he that will let him take the water of life freely.” Here is a final charge to give the gospel invitation to all; here a sounding of the universal call. “He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly.” It is for all who love Him to respond in deed and word: “Amen: come, Lord Jesus.”

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

Under what circumstances and with what purpose was the Revelation written?

What principles underlie its teachings?

What is its form?

Name the seven visions of the Book.

Point out the missionary element in each vision.

What impression do you get from the fact that the Lamb of God is so prominent in all the Book?

How alone can the problem of sin be solved?

Is there any order and goal to history apart from redemption?

What significance is involved in such extensive use of the term Lamb for Christ in the Book?

What attitude ought every serious man to take toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

## X

### THE MESSAGE IN THE TONGUES OF MEN

“How hear we every man in our own language wherein we were born?” (Acts 2:8).

#### I. THE NEED OF THE BIBLE IN ALL LANGUAGES.

If the Bible is God's message to mankind is it not evident that it must be put into the languages of all men? The ideas and the ideals of the Bible are such as all men need and such as appeal to all men. This is one great evidence that it is God's message. It has never been outgrown. No place has even been found where it is not welcome, or where it cannot be understood. One of the marvels of the Bible is that its great truths are capable of expression in the speech of all men, of all ages, of all cultures.

##### 1. *Required by all men.*

What other ancient writing is demanded by mankind in this twentieth century in translations that make it possible for every man to read it in his mother tongue?

In all the long history of humanity no other book can even be compared to the Bible in its fitness for translation and in the demand for its translation into the tongues of men. In six hundred languages its messages are now read by men, in whole or in part. Next to the Bible, yet a long way behind it, *Pilgrim's*



*Progress* has been printed in one hundred languages. But even its popularity is due to its graphic story of Christian experience and that story is told largely in the language of the Bible. Shakespeare has been produced in forty-seven tongues. None other approaches these.

2. *A necessary element in expanding Christianity.*

This work of translating the Bible message belongs to the periods when Christian men have been reading and studying its words, and have been stirred by the missionary impulse, an impulse which an understanding reading of the Bible always arouses.

Up to the beginning of the modern missionary period it had been put into twenty-eight languages. Thus Bible translation and missionary activity go together. Bible translation is a method of Missions. It is one of the most important and successful of all methods; and is absolutely necessary to the permanent establishment of a vigorous, conquering Christianity in any part of the world. Jesus and His apostles used the common speech of their day; and they spoke also in the Greek language, which had been brought into Palestine, as it had gone into all the ancient world and had become the common international speech of mankind in that day. Not only did they speak in the languages common to the people of their day; as a rule they quoted their scriptures, our Old Testament, not in its original but now antiquated Hebrew form, but in its Greek translation. This translation could be read by most intelligent Jews in Palestine, was read by most Jews outside Palestine, and was the only form in which non-

Jews read it. Thus in spirit and in practice Jesus and the apostles are squarely against any notion of a "sacred language" in which God's message is hidden from men. If we follow their example we shall seek to have all men hearing and reading "in their own tongues the mighty works of God" (see Acts 2: 11).

Does not the gift of tongues on the day of Pentecost mean that the Holy Spirit intends for us to give God's message to all men in their own languages? All the people in Jerusalem at that time could understand either Aramaic or Greek; but the Spirit of Jesus caused the people from all the fourteen sections to hear in the tongue native to each one.

Mohammedans have bitterly opposed all translation of their Koran and until quite recently have prohibited it and done all possible to prevent it. They have no message in it that will bear translation. In any but the Arabic language at once its poverty of spiritual power and appeal are made evident.

Roman Catholics have regarded Latin as the holy language of our Scriptures and have not encouraged their being put into the languages of the people. They have discouraged private reading of the Book even where the people knew its language. Moral stagnation and arrested religious development have been the results. It is at this point more seriously than at any other that their missions have failed. They do not give their converts the Word of God, and they never plant a pure Christianity that can set their converts on the way to become a vigorous, progressive, ethical force in the life of the people.

Even the missionaries themselves have no full knowledge nor any adequate appreciation of the Bible. The Jesuit missions to the Indians of the valleys of the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi and of the Middle West constitute one of the finest chapters of heroic devotion and personal sacrifice for the sake of the heathen. Yet they left no abiding influence because they failed to deliver God's message in the languages of the Indians.

John Elliot, in Massachusetts, succeeded in building Christian Indian towns and changing the whole idea and habits of life of the Mohicans; and a great factor in his success was his translation of the Bible into their language, the first translation (1661, 1663) into any Indian tongue. That the white men destroyed these Christian villages is a tragic illustration of how we need the religion of Christ translated also into terms of political and social relations and conduct.

## II. SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF TRANSLATION.

I. In the spread of Christianity *in the early centuries*, for a thousand years in fact, it was the custom to carry the Bible into the lands where Christianity went. This was especially true of the first five centuries.

(1) Before this the Old Testament in its Greek translation had played no small part in preparation for the coming of Christ and for the mission of His Gospel in the world. It was in the third century B. C., and in Alexandria, that this translation was produced. It is called the Septuagint, because of the

tradition that seventy Jewish scholars worked at the task of producing it. That enlightened King, the great library builder of Alexandria, Ptolemy Philadelphus, is said to have desired it for his growing collections there. But its Hebrew form would have met that need unless it was to be read. The ever growing multitudes of Jews in that city and in all other cities of the Greek-speaking world were less and less able to read their Bible in its Hebrew form and found it far easier to get the words of their God in the newer form. And the beauty and power of the message it carried made this Greek Old Testament a book sought by eager Gentile souls in all the Græco-Roman world. And so it had a great missionary career even before the Christ had come. In nearly every city "God-fearing" heathen men and women read this Septuagint and worshipped, as they might, the God whose messages it brought them. When the missionaries of the Christ went out with this story they found these Bible readers ready to accept the Lord's Christ and they became charter members of many a Christian church in the first century. They were an element of great strength in the growing churches.

(2) Before the end of the first century translations for missionary purposes had begun. By the third century besides its original Greek, the New Testament, and in part also the Old Testament, was read in the Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopic and Latin. The evidence is more than abundant that Bible reading in the native tongues was the common practice of Christians in the various lands. Special

provision was made for such reading by the new converts and by those seeking admission into the churches. Cyprian taught that it was of the highest importance thus to read God's word, because: "In prayer we speak to God, but in reading the Scriptures He speaks to us."

Harnack has produced the evidence that from their infancy children were taught the Bible, even by means of their "ivory letter-blocks." "The children daily hear the Scriptures read and learn passages of them by heart; a Bible was not only in the home; the Bible was the principal text-book of education; the chief aim in the whole training of a child was that he should be taught to understand the Bible." Such use of the Bible not only made missions successful but stimulated the missionary activity of those early Christians until they still surprise and shame our modern Christians. Their Bible sent them out with the glorious message to the ends of the earth.

(3) In the fourth century there were two notable versions. Jerome made a new version in Latin that became the sacred, standard Bible of the Roman Church. It is known as "the Vulgate," a name that ought forever to shame the Church that seeks to retain the Word of God in a form long since outgrown. *Vulgus* means "the crowd," "the masses." The Vulgate was the Bible for the people, the common man. When language changed with the development of the people the language of the Bible should have been changed so as to keep it in the mouths and minds of common men. Yet we have still thousands

upon thousands of Protestants and Baptists who think a translation into the English of three hundred years ago is somehow more truly the Word of God than a translation into the terms of our English of the twentieth century.

Ulfilas was the great missionary to the Goths, for whose sakes he left Constantinople and crossed the Danube to give these wild barbarians the Gospel of the grace of God. He invented an alphabet in order that he might put the Word of God in the language of this people. Thus he laid the foundation not only for their Christianization but for Germanic culture as well. It is of interest that he omitted from his version of the Old Testament the war histories of Israel because he felt that already these Goths were too warlike and he thought they would misunderstand and think God's approval sanctioned their bloody career. This Bible became the chief treasure of these migratory hordes, its manuscript copies being carried with them into Spain and Africa and to Rome. And the influence of this Bible translation modified the impact and influence of these heathen on the civilization and religion of the Roman world.

2. *In the rise and growth of Protestantism.*

Protestantism founded itself on the Bible. In Germany and in England, the Bible in the language of the people became the greatest factor in enlightenment and progress. In both lands it became the greatest classic of their literature and the most persuasive, the most sanctifying, the most inspiring influence in literature, in political progress, in religious reformation and growth. Literally hundreds of

volumes in Europe and America have drawn their titles from the Bible, have built their characters of Biblical material, have shaped their plots and plans from Biblical teaching. And our literatures in all Christian lands are filled with the language and the ideas of which the Bible is an inexhaustible source.

Laws and reforms have been inspired by, and determined by, the Bible. So far as we are progressive we are Christian; and we are Christian because the people have had the Word of God in their hands, in their homes, in their minds and hearts. That which promotes and purifies Christianity in the most Christian lands is equally vital for the growth of Christianity in countries just turning to Christ.

3. *In the modern missionary career.*

In many modern instances the Bible has been the beginning of literature and of culture, even as it was in the case of Ulfilas' Bible for the Goths. McAfee says "The Bible is a book-making Book. It is literature which provokes literature." His fine volume, "*The Greatest English Classic*," illustrates his thesis with numerous examples. Even where literature was known before the coming of the Bible, the Bible has produced a literary renaissance and has effected a change in the type of culture. Japan, China, and India all illustrate this influence of the supreme Book. Not only does the Bible soon begin to produce a Christian literature in any land, books, periodicals, hymns, tracts; it stimulates life in all its phases and enters as a vital force into all phases of a growing culture that is stimulated by its presence

and use. Truly the Bible is proving itself, in every forward moving land, a "tree of life whose leaves are for the healing of the nations."

### III. THE BIBLE AS AN INFLUENCE IN HEATHEN LANDS.

#### I. *Societies for the production and distribution of Christian Literature.*

These have arisen in country after country in the wake of the Bible to meet the demand it creates. And they have interpreted their calling in a large, generous way, producing often great quantities of modern school books and many works of a general character but a necessary part of Christian culture. In China, for example, *The Christian Literature Society* has a catalogue of hundreds of volumes: and *The China Baptist Publication Society* is rapidly widening the scope of its efforts to meet the insatiable demands for the printed page.

The *Literature Society* in the last thirty years has greatly enlarged the scope of its operations; has gained the most remarkable recognition; has acquired property to the value of a quarter of a million dollars: is supported by Chinese and foreigners liberally; and its Secretary, Dr. Timothy Richard, a notable Baptist missionary, was honoured by the Chinese Emperor by being made a Mandarin of the highest grade and the Mandarin honour was extended to include three generations of his ancestors.

In the various missionary lands mission presses to the number of more than a hundred and fifty produce Bibles, Testaments, Gospels and other "por-



tions" of the Scriptures; tracts, Sunday school literature, and other periodicals.

In very great measure these publishing interests are able to meet their expenses from the sales and from gifts from natives who appreciate the great service they render, when once they have become established in their work of blessing and had time to produce a reading public.

2. *Among primitive peoples.*

If in the great, populous and more progressive lands the Bible is the foundation of a new type of civilization and culture, *among primitive peoples it is the absolute creator of literacy and literature.* Millions in Africa received their first idea of writing and of printing from the pages of the Bible for which devoted missionaries invented alphabets and taught the first rudiments of learning. In the same way the primitive inhabitants of nearly all the islands of the Pacific stood in amazement before the printed page when first they saw the missionary "make the paper talk" to them in their own familiar speech. Mrs. Montgomery in "*The Bible and Missions*" tells, from John G. Paton, "of the joy which the first book gave to the Chief Namekei" into whose Aniwana tongue Paton had put the New Testament: "'Is it done? Can it speak?' asked Namekei excitedly. 'Make it speak to me! Let me hear it speak.' When part of the book was read to him, he shouted in an ecstasy of joy, 'It does speak! It speaks in my own language, too! Oh, give it to me!' He grasped it hurriedly, opened and then closed it with a look of disappointment, and said, 'I cannot make

it speak! It will never speak to me.' But it did, for the old chief with painful persistence learned to read, and as children and strangers gathered around him he would produce his prized book and say, 'Come, I will let you hear how the book speaks our own Aniwan words.'" What new worlds are thus opened up to primitive, unenlightened minds! What expansion of soul comes with hearing and reading God's word and all that follows in consequence of this wonderful beginning! More of the world's languages have been reduced to writing first of all in order to put the Bible into them than for all other reasons combined. And this initial work has made possible the scientific studies of anthropologists, philologists, linguists, historians and others whose work requires a knowledge of mankind. How great is the debt of science and culture to the Bible and to the missionary devotion and ability that are carrying that Bible into all the ends of the earth!

### 3. *In closed lands.*

When the missionaries could not go into closed lands and labour in person they have used the printed Bible to carry God's message and to prepare a way for the spoken word to follow later. The pioneer of missions in China, Robert Morrison, after twenty-seven years of ardent toil died six years before his successors were permitted to take up residence in the five Chinese cities first opened to foreign residence. He and his co-labourers, Milne, Medhurst and others had to labour outside among emigrants. Meantime with wonderful gifts and grace he put the Bible message into Chinese and his first native

helper, Liang Afah, could carry it in and get it into the hands of some of his people. The noble and original Dr. Gutzlaff not only did splendid work of translation but boldly distributed his tracts and Gospels from a houseboat in which he invaded the coast-land waterways. Morrison stood at the gates and produced a dictionary and a grammar to go along with his Bible and so provided the materials for carrying the Gospel to China's heathen when once it should unlock the doors. In similar ways the Word of God on printed page foreran the missionaries, in person, in Japan and Korea, and for many years told its story in "the Forbidden Land" of Thibet before any herald was permitted to proclaim salvation there.

Mohammedans have been most inaccessible to direct missionary approach. Wherever the political control has been in Moslem hands definite efforts to win converts from "the Faith" were absolutely prohibited. The first missionaries to Turkish territory, a hundred years ago now, took with them a printing press, at first operating it on British territory beyond the reach of Turkish hands. Besides this source of silent, subtle invasion the missionaries found that Christian education could not be barred even from Turkey, as long as active propaganda among Mohammedan students was omitted. With divinely imparted patience and wisdom these men and women sowed the good seed of the Word and now the fruits are justifying their faith with the hope of rich harvests soon to follow. Taking advantage of the Mohammedan reverence for the "holy" Arabic of the original Koran, which educated Mohammedans read

the world over, our Testament and Bible in various attractive editions have been put into the hands of very many, while also they have been translated into Turkish and other languages spoken by sections of the two hundred millions of followers of the Prophet. An illustration of what this sort of evangelism may be accomplishing is found in the story of a Mohammedan found reading the New Testament. On being asked why he was reading that book, he replied: "Ah, there is nothing that scours the sin out of my heart like this."

It is no wonder the Bible is the world's book in ever increasing measure. It is not easy to grasp the vast demand for it. No other book is at all to be compared with it. Dickens is the most popular writer in all secular literature. From the first until now it is estimated that twenty-five million copies of all his works combined have been sold. In a single year, of the whole and of parts, thirty-five million copies of God's Word were distributed among the sons of men.

#### IV. THE GREAT BIBLE SOCIETIES.

Back of this modern marvel of putting the Bible into the languages of men and circulating it are the Bible Societies and their colporters. In the period of Modern Missions there have been a number of such societies in the Christian lands, providing the Book for the people of these lands and of heathen lands as well. They have encouraged the missionary translators; met the sometimes enormous expense of producing important versions; aided the

Mission Boards in procuring and in distributing quantities of the Scriptures; coöperated with the organizations on mission fields for producing Christian literature; and they have sent their own colporters into many a land and section of country not yet definitely occupied by missionaries, to sell and give the Word to the people. In most of the countries of South America these emissaries of the Bible societies went with their holy wares when as yet the missionaries were not permitted to locate and labour.

Fifty Bible societies were listed in the statistics of the Edinburgh conference, 1910. Among such societies three stand out with such preëminence that all should know about them. The record of their labours and the achievements of the Bible under their labours constitute an evidence for the truth of Christianity and for the divine origin of the Bible message that cannot be refuted or gainsaid by all the skeptics and destructive critics. It is the best and the sufficient apologetic for our religion and for its right and its duty to make itself the religion of mankind.

1. *The British and Foreign Bible Society* was founded in London in 1804. An agent of the Religious Tract Society at a meeting of the directors in 1802 told the now famous story of Mary Jones. She could read the Bible only by walking two miles to see a copy owned by a relative. After years of saving at the age of sixteen she had money enough to purchase a Bible in her native Welsh. On foot she trudged the twenty-eight miles to Bala only to find that not a copy was left for sale. Mr. Charles

could not endure her tears of grief, and gave her the one copy he had, promised already to a friend. The story was bound to stir the men who heard it and Joseph Hughes, Baptist pastor at Battersea, exclaimed, "Surely a society might be formed for the purpose (of a new edition in Welsh, proposed by Charles). But if for Wales, why not for the kingdom? Why not for the world?" Beginning with the languages of Great Britain and of America the Society extended its labours until its library embraces the divine message in thousands of editions in five hundred languages. One of its most prized volumes is, of course, Mary Jones' Bible with the autograph on the fly leaf.

2. *The National Bible Society of Scotland* is the most important of numerous organizations auxiliary to the British and Foreign which for different reasons separated from the parent society and became independent.

3. *The American Bible Society*.

Several local societies for circulating the Scriptures in the United States were inadequate. After "the Great Awakening" of the first years of the nineteenth century the need for the Scriptures was keenly felt and the aroused leaders became aware of the terrible destitution. Surveys were made, the most extensive that by Samuel John Mills, Jr. It was estimated that there were not fewer than 78,000 homes with no Bible. In 1816 the American Bible Society was organized, primarily to meet this need. The range of its ministries extended until it is second only to the British and Foreign Society in its

achievements. Its centennial history is recorded in two stout volumes all whose pages give proof that the Bible is veritably God's message to men.

### V. HEROISM AND ROMANCE.

Heroism and romance, sometimes tragedy, mark the way of the Bible in its missionary career. Volumes of fascinating stories could be written of the trials and triumphs of those who have in the last century and a quarter made it possible for God to speak in His inspired Word to hundreds of millions of the human race who could not read it before.

William Carey, "Father of the Modern Missionary Enterprise," himself translated the Scriptures into a score of languages and edited others until in whole or in part he set the Bible free in thirty-six languages in India. And he early set up a printing plant for their circulation. One of the stories of mingled romance and heroism is that of Judson's Burmese Bible, the manuscript of which was first preserved by his faithful wife, concealed in his pillow during part of his terrible prison sufferings, thrown out in a rubbish heap by his ignorant tormentors, rescued by a native follower, and finally given to the people where it has become a classic.

Hotchkiss of Africa illustrates the serious difficulties that must be overcome in giving the Word to ignorant, savage peoples. Sometimes they have no name that can be used for God, no words for virtue, home, duty. For two long years Hotchkiss lived among his Africans, eagerly seeking some word for Saviour and for the idea. At last he found his

word when around the camp-fire his "boys" were recounting the exciting rescue of one of their number from drowning in the river during the events of the day. Hotchkiss declares that he would gladly spend the rest of his life for the privilege of bringing to another benighted group of human beings their first knowledge that Jesus Christ died to save us.

John Williams, the Master Missionary of the South Seas, tells how the Raratongans received him when after four years of toil he was able to return from England with the Bible in their tongue: "Every one was eager to buy a copy. One man, as he secured his, hugged the book in ecstasy; another and another kissed it; others held them up and waved them in the air. Some sprang away like a dart, and did not stop until they entered their own dwellings, and exhibited their treasures to their wives and children, while others jumped and capered about like persons half frantic with joy."

One of the tragedies in the Bible story has its scene in our own country. In 1831 four Nez-Perces Indians arrived in St. Louis from far-away Idaho asking, "Where is the white man's Book of Heaven?" of which they had somehow learned. They did not know whom to seek for information and help and fell in with some of the reckless, drinking, gambling adventurers then so plentiful in border towns. After pathetic ridicule they at length found friends and sympathy but no "Book of Heaven" that they could understand; and it was exactly forty years before the Bible was published in the dialect of the Nez-Perces. Two of the four men took sick



and died in St. Louis. The other two received courtesies and promises and with mingled grief and hope turned homeward. Their visit did hasten the splendid missionary labours of the Methodists and Congregationalists in "the Northwest Country."

Space allows but one more characteristic incident. While Japan was still closed to the outside world and Christianity contraband, in the very dawn of the new era, 1855, Murata Wasaka was official guardian of the Nagasaki coast region against foreign entrance or Japanese exit. One day on tour of inspection he found a Dutch New Testament floating in the water. He rescued it out of curiosity, only to be more puzzled to know what it might be. An interpreter told him and also informed him that the book existed in Chinese. Wasaka sent a man all the way to Shanghai to procure a copy. For years he studied it in secret. When the first educational missionaries went to Japan, no religious efforts yet being authorized, Wasaka and a brother sent from time to time lists of questions about the teachings of their Testament to Dr. Guido F. Verbeck, sending a trusted servant on a two days' journey each time. The upshot of it was that in 1866 the brothers and the servant were "baptized" by Dr. Verbeck and then professed their new faith to their *daimio*. This was five years before there was any free acknowledgment of Christ in modern Japan.

These sample stories suggest the fascination and the power of the Scriptures and their fitness to meet the religious need of the human heart the world over. They help to understand how the Bible outsells every

other book in Japan, China and India as well as in America, England and Canada. In 1916 Chinese bought more than two and a quarter million copies of God's good message.

The Bible is, at least in some part, now accessible to all who can read their own languages among seven-eighths of the human race. In order to reach the remaining peoples a thousand dialects must be conquered and used to carry the "beautiful words, wonderful words of life" which "Christ the blessed one gives to all." It remains yet to give God's word its complete translation into the terms of human experience and conduct.

For after all the *Living Word*, the Christ of God, can be translated only in "living epistles, known and read of all men." In this dual translation, into language and life, will come the fulfillment of that day predicted by the prophet when "no man shall say to his neighbour or his brother, Know thou the Lord, for they shall all know him, from the least of them to the greatest of them" (Jer. 31:34).

#### QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND REFLECTION

How many of the world's population now have the Bible in their own language?

Why do you think so many people desire this book?

What features of the Bible make it a book for all men?

What difficulties can you think of in translating it? In the translator? In the languages?

## The Message in the Tongues of Men 191

What influence has the Bible had on literature and on culture?

What is the oldest translation of Scripture?

What is the bearing of Scripture translation on the spread of Christianity?

How often ought the Scripture translations to be revised?

What caused the founding of each of the two most extensive Bible Societies?

How much remains to be done before all men can know the Word of God?

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• Fibre

missionary work

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