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THE PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS.





THE  
PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS :

*A PRESENT-DAY PLEA.*

BY

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*(Of the London Missionary Society).*

THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME."—*Haggai* ii. 7.

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To the Memory  
OF  
A BELOVED AND HONOURED FATHER,  
ALWAYS A WARM FRIEND OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.





## PREFACE.

SOME portions of this little book—about one-third of the whole—appeared a few months ago in a series of papers in the *Christian World*, the object having been to show the continued necessity for Missionary work under the new conditions of the time. These papers having awakened interest in various quarters, it has been suggested that some service to the Missionary cause might be rendered by publishing them in their present and considerably expanded form.

While the claims of Foreign Missions generally evoke a warm response, they yet fail, in too many cases, to enlist that intelligent sympathy which, as the grandest of the Church's ministries, they should everywhere secure. This want of interest is, no doubt, due, in part, to the unsettlement of theological thought; more largely, perhaps, to a misapprehension of the nature of Missionary work in the present day, and to a very limited grasp of the reasons that should impel us, as British Christians, to prosecute it. Hence there may not unfrequently be observed a disposition to disparage Missions and Missionary Meetings; as also to "look down" upon those dark races,

whose ancient faiths and culture are so imperfectly understood.

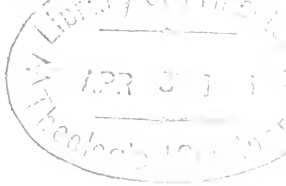
In these pages an attempt is made to re-state, in harmony with present-day knowledge and thought, the grand reasons for Foreign Missions ; to indicate broadly their *rationale* ; to raise the great and good cause to a higher level ; and to show that it ought not to suffer in the estimation of thoughtful persons from the current theories of the future life. Copious citations from writers of authority have been purposely made, to win for the views herein advocated a larger influence and respect, and to point younger readers to sources of information they may advantageously consult.

The "failure" of missionaries is still openly alleged, as seen in some recent correspondence in the *Times* (August 23rd, 1882), which appeared while these pages were passing through the Press ; and it is satisfactory to find that such adverse criticism has been anticipated, and, in some measure, answered.

In a few days the writer again leaves his native land and proceeds to Bangalore, in South India, to resume missionary labour amongst the Hindus. If this plea for the great enterprise he humbly strives to serve shall stir a more lively sympathy for it amongst Christian friends at home, his object will have been abundantly attained.

T. E. S.

BATH, *September 7th*, 1882.



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# THE PHILOSOPHY OF MISSIONS:

## A Present-day Plea.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *MISSIONS—THEIR EXTENT AND PROGRESS.*

THE present time has been called the age of universal Missions. The obligations of missionary labour were never more fully acknowledged than they are now. Every Protestant country has sent forth a larger or smaller band to engage in this "true crusade of the nineteenth century." Every section of the Christian Church presses forward to be represented on the field. Great Britain with her colonies, and America, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Scandinavia, Denmark, Finland, support and direct some eighty missionary societies, not to mention the more private undertakings that have arisen during recent years. The Cross of Christ has been uplifted on every shore. China and Japan ; India, with Burmah and Siam ; the Indian Archipelago, with New Guinea ; Australia and New Zealand ; Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine,

and Persia ; the coasts of Africa, and now its great central lakes ; Madagascar ; the South Sea Islands ; and the vast regions of the far West, from Greenland and Labrador down to Tierra del Fuego and Patagonia—all have been traversed for a longer or shorter time by the Gospel pioneer. Christianity is now girdling the globe, and there is no branch of the human family which has not been brought, in some measure, under its elevating influence.

And yet, strange to say, we hear in many quarters of *a decline in missionary interest*. There is not that enthusiasm in our churches, in respect to missions, which formerly existed. The work grows abroad, but zeal flags at home. Urgent and pathetic are the appeals that come across the sea for greater help from those whom God has called to foreign service ; but these appeals are feebly responded to.\* The societies are overwhelmed with the magnitude of the work in hand ; but there is not that sympathetic and generous co-operation on the part of the churches which they feel they have a right to look for. The missionary enterprise, instead of being an integral part of all church life, is looked upon rather as something outside the ordinary organisation of the church.† There may be a few

\* The staff of European missionaries in connection with the London Missionary Society, which in 1867 numbered 175, and in 1871, 160, was reduced in 1881, by reason of the heavy losses of the past ten years, to 139. Similarly, the general contributions to the funds of the society were £1,200 lower in 1881 than they were in 1871.

† In America it would seem as though the position of missions

periodical subscribers—though these are often out of all proportion to the wealth of the church, the number of the members, and the greatness of the work—and an annual collection may be made, but here the duty of the congregation seems to cease. It does not lie as a burden on the conscience of the church, which the members, as a body, are prepared to bear. The yearly festival may be held ; but the missionary spirit, which cannot be sustained on that alone, languishes as the months go by. The minister, perhaps, takes no interest in missions ; he himself seldom preaches a missionary sermon ; the work and the workers are rarely remembered in the Sunday and week-day services. The good old monthly missionary prayer meeting—the “ *United Missionary Prayer Meeting* ” it used to be—has been given up. The tide of missionary devotion is running low.

Such is the depressing strain one often hears ; and the question is asked, How is it ? It is possible that the dark side may be somewhat overdrawn. We, at any rate, rejoice to know there are noble exceptions ; that certain towns and churches still stand out conspicuous for their liberality and enthusiasm, inspiring alike directors and missionaries, and that many unknown friends are, in various ways, doing what they can ; we believe also that in some cases a revival of

in the work of the Church had been better understood, since they are carried on to a large extent by the churches themselves, as a regular church work, instead of being left, as here in Europe, to separate and voluntary societies.

interest has set in ; nevertheless we fear it cannot be denied that, with a large number of the members of our churches, there does exist a sad want of intelligent interest and hearty co-operation in missionary work.

And yet the present day should witness increased rather than diminished interest. The enthusiasm *should be deeper*, the interest *more intelligent* now than formerly. Doors, great and effectual, have been opened ; a footing has been securely gained where at first there was stout resistance ; many perilous advances have been made ; and just as when an army has fairly made an inroad into the enemy's country, and the attack needs to be bravely followed up, a nation's heart beats quicker, and reinforcements are cheerfully hastened on ; so when the missionary enterprise is no longer an experiment, when the Gospel standard has been planted on every shore, and the land has been taken possession of in the name of Christ ; when the Christian message is finding favour with many peoples, and steadily winning its way in the heathen world ; when the fields are thus "white unto harvest," hearts should warm more than ever to the work, willing hands should eagerly sustain it, and the Christian Church, in one enthusiastic band, press forward for the honour of her King.

Without attempting anything like a survey of the wide field of Foreign Missions—which is not the object now in view—let us reflect for a moment on *a few of the results*, roughly selected out of many, *that have been*

*achieved*, in spite of our coldness, narrowness, and unbelief.

In China, forty years ago, it was a crime for a foreigner to learn the Chinese language, and a crime for a Chinaman to teach it to a foreigner. The empire was closed to Christianity. Dr. Morrison had to address two or three persons, in a securely locked inner room, concealed from public notice. In 1843 there were only six Protestant converts in the whole of China. After less than forty years' labour, there are now some 50,000 converts (the number in the *whole* heathen world eighty years ago), and nearly 20,000 communicants. In thirty-five years the converts increased two thousand fold. Twenty-five years ago, there were five places in China where the foreign preacher might dwell; now the Christian missionary can preach the Gospel in every town and village throughout the length and breadth of the land. Six hundred stations, including out-stations, have been organised; and 80 ordained native pastors, and 600 native assistants, male and female, are co-operating in the work. And wonderful is the power of the Gospel over human nature in China; magnetising paralysed wills, and inspiring converts with unusual ardour in spreading the glad tidings among their countrymen.

In Japan, "the land of the Gods," that marvellously receptive and progressive island, where twenty years ago there was not a single Protestant Christian, eleven converts have increased in six years to some 60 congregations, with 4,000 converts, and 1,200 communi-

cants, worshipping in churches erected in part with wood supplied from ruined Buddhist temples.

In India, including Burmah and Ceylon, we find, as the work of the century, some 600,000 Protestant converts and 300,000 communicants, 1,600 ordained native preachers, and 2,500 mission schools and colleges, with 500,000 pupils. Among the wild hill tribes, such as the Santals and the Khonds of Orissa, of which latter tribe it is estimated that three millions have been sacrificed since the time of Christ, either as offerings to the Earth-god, or as victims of female infanticide, the Gospel has won its way; grog shops have been abolished, the tenure of land has been placed on a surer basis, and the people are fast emerging from the horrors of barbarism into the peace and security of civilised life. Thirty years ago, there were four baptised converts among the Kols of Western Bengal, who have practised the most debasing forms of a primitive idolatry; now the Gossner mission has 30,000 members under its care, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has 10,000 more. In South India, in the year 1878—the year following the terrible famine—60,000 persons abandoned idolatry and embraced the Christian religion, and since that time the accessions have reached 90,000. More remarkable still is the silent, steady *spiritual revolution* taking place throughout the land. Faith in the religious systems of Hinduism and Mohammedanism, and adherence to the social systems of ages, are giving way. Eclecticism, which generally



precedes the breaking up of a religion, is gaining ground. Christian ideas are taking hold of the educated native mind; and, beyond the compass of statistics, may be reckoned thousands who are loyal at heart to the claims of Christianity. Nevertheless, true indeed is the utterance of a distinguished member of the Irish Presbyterian Church, who has himself visited the East\* :—"If only people would think of the tremendous magnitude of the mission work to these peoples—the Brahmans, the Buddhists, the Mohammedans—with all their power of culture, with all their literary attainments, and with their ingenuity and subtlety, they would never have dreamed of fighting them with those slight forces which all the churches together sent out."

Turning to South Africa, we know how thirty or forty years ago it was customary to see on church doors in Cape Colony, "Dogs and Hottentots not admitted." Now, among the Hottentots, and Kaffirs, and other uncivilised races, there are 180,000 Christian adherents, and 35,000 communicants. The colony has become a Protestant land. Around the Niger, again, negro preachers and teachers, under Bishop Crowther, himself a converted African, are cultivating soil sown with the blood of martyrs.

Of the Malagasy, regarding whom the Governor of Bourbon said to the first Protestant missionary to the island, "They are mere brutes; impossible to make them Christians," there are now 40,000 native

\* Rev. Fleming Stevenson.

preachers, 240,000 Christian adherents, and 68,000 communicants, some of whom worship in martyr-memorial churches, and all of whom are subjects of a Christian queen.

Twenty years ago it was the opinion of Englishmen that the aborigines of Australia—undoubtedly the most degraded of human kind—were quite beyond the reach of the Gospel; but converts, churches, and communicants have dispelled the illusion, and shown that the Gospel can meet with a response even there, though the extinction of some of these tribes may be only a question of time.

If we think, too, of the thousands of converted cannibals of the South Seas, of Esquimaux, Greenlanders, and North-American Indians, emerging from brutal barbarism and grossest ignorance, and now clothed with the Christian character, we have the joy of seeing it proved that “no race is spiritually so dead that by the good news it cannot rise to newness of life, no tongue so barbarian that it will not admit of a translation of the Bible, no heathen soul so sunk that he cannot become a new creature in Christ Jesus.”\*

In Fiji, a truly wonderful work has been accomplished, as witnessed by such an impartial observer as Miss C. F. Gordon Cumming, in her graphic narrative, “At Home in Fiji.” A few years ago the inhabitants were a set of savage cannibals, but they have been rescued from false beliefs and debasing customs, and out of a population of 120,000, no less than 102,000

\* Prof. Christlieb’s “Foreign Missions of Protestantism,” p. 23.

are regular attendants at about 1,000 places of worship. Native teachers are supported, and prosperous schools maintained, and the people are living a Christian life, marked by honesty and self-denial, while in the mountains around, the remaining heathenism is rapidly dying out.

In another charming book more recently published, entitled, "A Lady's Cruise in a French Man-of-War," Miss Cumming bears similar testimony to the value of the work of missionaries in the Friendly Islands, and in Samoa; and many who never read missionary reports may learn from her pages something of the reality of the work the societies are carrying on.

In the Loyalty Islands, and Sandwich Islands, as well as in Sierra Leone, and in some of the countries already mentioned, the natives are now regularly ministered to by their own preachers, and the ordinances of Christian worship are maintained by the people themselves.

The Gospel *has* regenerated races—uncivilised and civilised alike—though, as might be expected, in a more marked and rapid degree among the former than among the latter. And any one desirous of possessing an exhaustive and yet concise summary of the facts and results of missionary labour from the commencement of the present century, cannot do better than consult the admirable little work of Professor Christlieb, entitled "The Foreign Missions of Protestantism,"\* which, through the marvellous industry of its

\* Published by Messrs. Nisbet and Co. 1880.

author, gathers together details of the work of all societies down to the close of 1879 ; or the more recent volume of Mr. Robert Young, entitled, "Modern Missions: their Trials and Triumphs."\*

Here then we have facts well worth studying—facts of surpassing import, that cannot be gainsaid—results and changes in every quarter of the globe ; awakenings and transformations in the life of nations, such as have not appeared before in the history of the world, and which only need to be honestly grasped to rouse the liveliest interest, and reassure the most sceptically inclined.

For have we not here the most complete refutation of the often repeated assertion that missions and Christianity have failed ? † Judging from the history of Christian missions during the last fifty years, does Christianity exhibit any tendency to decline ? Does it present any appearance of feebleness ; or, with the march of knowledge and civilisation, are the doctrines of the Gospel found incompatible with intellectual and social progress ? By no means. *The religion of Christ has never received such justification as has been afforded it by the missions of the nineteenth century.* The most striking evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity lies in the facts of its existence and persistence in the world, in its growth and diffusion among the different races of men. The tendency to *propagate itself* by the conversion of unbelief,

\* Published by Marshall Japp & Co., Lond.

† As recently declared in correspondence in the *Times*, Aug. 23rd, 1882.

together with the *regenerating power* it exercises upon the conscience and the life, constitute the truest test and prophecy of its permanence. In these co-existing characteristics, Christianity possesses two of those organic forces which are essential to the life of any true religion. Another force, which has special significance in the present day, is its *power of assimilating the conditions of advancing civilisation*, in a way no other religion has done, and which, apart from other and higher considerations, mark it out, necessarily, as the universal religion of the world. On these points, however, we propose to dwell hereafter.

## CHAPTER II.

### *MISSIONS—THEIR NATURE AND SCOPE.*

THOUGH Christianity and Christian Missions justify themselves, as we have seen, in the light of fact and history in a way that is beyond dispute, it still remains true that *the cause of missions has not that hold on the intelligence and the heart of many Christian people, which a devout study of the subject ought to secure.* The conclusion is naturally drawn that missions, too often, are *not* studied ; that the narrative of missionary enterprises and successes is not read ; that the wonderful progress of the Gospel in the world, and the silent revolution it is effecting, are going on unheeded.

It is *this ignorance of facts* that makes earnest hearts so impatient of that cold cavilling at assumed failure which one so often meets with, and not unfrequently in those who have themselves been in foreign lands. Those who would thus deny the power of missions are invariably those who have never acquainted themselves with the actual life of a mission station ; never attended the service of a native Christian church ; never examined the classes of a mission school or

college ; never been present at a Missionary Conference. An officer of the Indian army remarked at a missionary meeting not long since :—"Soldiers come home from India and say that missions are a failure, for they have never seen the results. I have been twelve years in India, and have never seen a tiger. If you want to see a tiger, you go into the jungle ; if you want to see a mission, you do not look for it just outside your cantonment, you look for it elsewhere." "The works of the Lord are great, *sought out* of all them that have pleasure therein."\* "He that seeketh, findeth."† It has been truly said, "It is not money we need ; it is a *heartfelt understanding of* and *heartfelt love for* the work." None are so blind as those who will not see. Scepticism in this, as in other matters, has more to do with the heart than with the head. Where there is no deep personal appreciation of the blessings of the Gospel, there will be no interest felt in its diffusion among others.

Turning, for a moment, from this class, it is satisfactory to note that not only the successes, but *the nature and scope of missionary work, are now beginning to be understood* by at least some sections of the Christian Church, as manifested by the fact that the science of missions is now being taught in theological seminaries ; that missionary lectureships and chairs have been introduced in Germany, America, and Scotland, in connection with colleges and universities. The lecturer on missions at the University of Berlin

\* Ps. cxi. 2.

† Matt. vii. 8.

recently remarked that "the science of missions is now of such extent and importance as to demand that men should be set apart for the purpose of expounding it thoroughly and regularly."\* Contributions to the ablest religious and secular periodicals show how the great subject is entering into the thought of the times, and contributing to the sum of human knowledge. The bearing of missions on education, literature, and science, on the learning and culture of the age, is being estimated more and more. Young men of intelligence and enterprise are becoming alive to the real character of the work.† Of late years special interest has been awakened at Oxford and Cambridge; and one or two University missions have been organised, chiefly in connection with work among the educated natives of India. The comprehensiveness of the work abroad is better understood. The foreign field is seen to present a wider and more varied sphere of usefulness, with less of the close atmosphere of denominationalism, and more of the open air of Christendom; a sphere of keener enter-

\* "The Science of Missions in the Universities," by Rev. Carl Heinrich Christian Plath.

† It is deplorable that this youthful and manly ardour should ever be damped by *ministers* at home. The following incident will scarcely be credited: A student in one of our theological colleges not long since told a Christian minister, that he was looking forward missionary work. "Hem!" said his companion, with a sneer, "*I did not know there was such a fool in ——— College!*" One can only pity and pray for the minister who has such a heart, and the church (if he has one) who has such a minister. May there be many such "fools" in our colleges!



prise, and in many respects, of greater difficulties than the field at home.\*

In the minds of many, the simple preaching

\* The following remarks of Dr. George Smith in his *Life of Dr. Alexander Duff*, on the contrast between work abroad and work at home, are noteworthy:—"The contrast between life and work in India and life and work at home is so marked as to be keenly felt by the official, the merchant, and the missionary, when they bid a final farewell to the East. There, the governing class, whatever be the motives of individuals among them, live for others; here the mass struggle for themselves. There, the contact of different civilisations, the conflict of civilisation with barbarism, the light and the colour of oriental peoples and customs, the exhilaration caused by the fact of ruling, call forth latent powers, suggest great ideas, kindle the imagination into creative action, and of middle-class Englishmen make an aristocracy in the highest or ethical sense of the word. Here, in the plane level of stay-at-home life, varied only by occasional glimpses at the parallel civilisation of the continent of Europe, there is no elbow-room, there are few careers save those in pursuing which the finer powers are blunted by the struggle for success. Competition in its worst as well as best forms sours the nature, starves the fancy, and obstructs the energies of the men whom it helps above their fellows. Men who would be statesmen and rulers abroad remain narrow and unknown at home. And if this contrast is in the main true of the professional and trading classes of our country, as they are abroad and at home, it is emphatically so of the clergy, of ministers and missionaries. The churches of the West may have so little faith as now to send few of their best men to the foreign or colonial field, but the self-sacrifice of his life, the breadth of his experience, and the nobility of his calling, go far to make even the average missionary an abler and more useful human being than the minister who cares for the third part of a village, or the tenth part of a town, or the hundredth part of a city. The historical divisions of the churches, the sectarian parties or schisms of each church, too often absorb the charity, waste the energy, and neutralise the action, which, abroad, are united in the one end of aggression on the common enemy. Thus it was that to come home from India to England, to leave for ever the catholicity and elevation of the mission field for entanglement among the

of the Gospel—teaching “the poor, ignorant heathen” the elements of Christian truth—has summed up the duty of the missionary. But this touches a nation’s mind at only one point, and affects but one class of the community. It is the high vocation of the missionary to give to a foreign race a Christian manhood, a Christian civilisation; to permeate the national mind with Christian ideas; to bring to bear, in manifold ways, the force of Christian influences. The intellect as well as the emotions, the will as well as the conscience, must feel the purifying touch of Christian truth. Hence every open avenue into a nation’s life must be entered, every available agency employed, so that points of contact between

ecclesiastical divisions of Scotland, was, for Dr. Duff of all men, to move on a lower level” (Vol. II., pp. 495—6). Dr. Duff, himself, in pleading for the ablest men as missionaries, says:—“If we go to war against a great city like Sebastopol—if we want to penetrate into the centre of Abyssinia—what do we do? We take the best and most skilful and experienced of our brave generals, and our best officers and troops, and we send supplies in such abundance that there can be no want. If we wish to be successful, we use the means which are adapted to secure success. . . . When God had a great work to do among the Gentiles, what did He do? Here is the church at Antioch, with Barnabas and Simeon, Lucius of Cyrene, and other men of character, but not equal to Paul and Barnabas. Does the Holy Ghost say that Paul and Barnabas, having been the founders of the church, were indispensable for its prosperity, and you must keep them; Lucius and the others will not be so much missed, send them to do the work. No; He says, ‘Separate me, Barnabas and Paul’; the other men can carry on the quieter work: the most able and skilled men must go forth on the mighty enterprise. . . . We need all the practical wisdom which the world contains to guide us and direct us in the midst of the perplexities which beset us in such fields as India and China.”—*Ibid.*, Vol. II., pp. 497—8.

Christianity and the mind of the people may be multiplied. The missionary must be many-sided, "the master of many arts," the originator of various schemes for human progress. Education of various grades, scientific and philosophical, valuable for its own sake;\* literary work of different kinds in English and the vernacular languages;† the translation of the Scriptures; lectures on Christian evidences, and criticism of the various forms of modern rationalism and unbelief; discussions with acute and subtle minds; the study of philosophical systems and ancient faiths; unlocking the stores of ancient languages and unknown tongues, as well as reducing spoken dialects to written forms in dictionaries and grammars‡—all these offer channels of influence and wide fields for research.§

\* On the Senate of the Calcutta University there are at present thirteen missionaries, two of whom are natives; one of the latter, the Rev. K. M. Banerjea, is an LL.D., and a distinguished author and editor of works on Sanskrit literature. After twenty years' work, this University had, in 1878, 326 M.A.'s, 1,334 B.A.'s, and 18,589 undergraduates.

† Printing is carried on by Mission presses in from two to three hundred languages. In India there are twenty-four at work, publishing in twenty-five different languages and dialects. One press in Calcutta, the property of a Christian convert, sends out regularly seven periodicals—English and Bengali. In ten years the Christian Vernacular Education Society of India has issued over ten millions of Christian books.

‡ The missionaries of the American Board of Foreign Missions have reduced more than fifteen languages to writing.

§ And yet it is declared that "Missionaries themselves despise these successes"! See the *Times* correspondence referred to on p. 10, note.

“There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ;”  
“there are diversities of workings, but the same God,  
who worketh all things in all.”\* The eloquent preacher,  
the accomplished advocate, the skilful theologian, the  
scholarly professor, the facile writer, the toiling  
linguist, the student of comparative philology and the  
science of religion—to say nothing of the explorer,  
geographer, ethnologist, and naturalist—may all find  
scope for the highest endowments of character and  
mind. Every friend of culture should be a friend of  
missions. There is no institution of learning—  
scientific, philosophical, religious—that does not add  
to its educating power, by connecting itself with the  
missionary enterprise. Professor Max Müller, the  
late Mr. Darwin, and other eminent men in literature  
and science, have recognised the value of missionary  
service. Mercantile men and political economists are  
beginning to speak of the importance of missions.  
And this is what is wanted in the present day—to  
get educated men and people of means interested in  
the work ; “to show,” as Professor Christlieb has  
said, “to scholars, philologists, geographers, historians,  
and naturalists, that, even from a scientific point of  
view, the world cannot be conquered without the aid  
of Christian missions ; to prove to them that their  
own scientific interests—if their faith as Christians do  
not—their desire for new objects of investigation,  
should preach to them the infinite worth of missions,  
and to impress upon them that some share in the

\* 1 Cor. xii. 4, 6.

work is due, on their part, from reasons of simple gratitude." \* Our hope for the future lies, indeed, largely in this, that *as the nature and scope of the work become better understood, and the intelligence of thoughtful persons is reached*, interest will revive, and sympathy be deepened. In the meantime, however, interest flags ; and we propose, in the next chapter, to consider a few of the reasons that may account for this.

\* "Foreign Missions of Protestantism," p. 54.

## CHAPTER III.

### *DECLINE OF INTEREST IN MISSIONS.*

WHEN one tries to account for the decline of interest in Missions, a variety of causes would appear to have been at work.

1. Some there are who, *erroneously estimating what has been already done in heathen lands, would excuse themselves from further responsibility.* The work, they say, has been fairly started, and may now be left to be fostered by native hands. But this can be true of only one or two of the oldest fields of labour, where strong native churches, and a native ministry, guide and mould the whole community. The smallest acquaintance with the great mission fields of the world, such as India and China, will show that the work has only just begun ; that the ancient religions of the people are still intact ; that the upper and learned classes especially have scarcely yet been touched ; and that, for years to come, the feeble streams of Christian influence that are slowly finding their way through those vast lands, will have to be fed continuously and bountifully from the fountain head of spiritual life at home.

2. Others, again, with similar shortsightedness, *would depute the work to the societies*. They are organised, it is urged, expressly for the purpose, and should bear the responsibility of projecting measures, and maintaining agencies, and even of awakening and sustaining interest, so that the churches may be free for congregational work. This, surely, is the parent casting off the child. What are the societies but the offspring of the churches? the practical expression of the Church's duty? the working committees of the Church? For a church to transfer the missionary enterprise to a society, to shake off its individual responsibility, and wait for the society once a year to wake it up to a sense of its connection with the work, thereby making the missionary really do the work of the pastor—looking to him to inspire the church, instead of the church inspiring the missionary—is as unnatural as for a parent to take no thought of a child, and as unbusiness-like as for a church, having appointed a committee, to take no more interest in the work she has commissioned it to do. Whatever may be necessarily relegated to the societies in relation to the actual prosecution of the work abroad, the churches that gave birth to the enterprise should certainly not lay on other shoulders the anomalous burden of creating an interest in the preservation and cherishing of a part of its own life. As it has been well observed—“It is not right that the congregation should depend chiefly on the societies for the awakening and maintenance of interest in the kingdom of the

Lord. This is, and ever must remain, essentially *the duty of the Church at home and of her ministers*. We should endeavour, as far as possible, to free the different societies from this burden, in order that they may be the better able to devote all their time and strength to work among the heathen." \*

3. There can be no doubt that *the increasing activity of Christian enterprise at home*, in distinctively home interests, has for several years past *been competing severely with missionary zeal*. The latter awakened the former, and now suffers somewhat from its own virtuous exertions. The temporal and spiritual needs of the rapidly-growing population of our larger towns, which had been too much neglected in the past, are now absorbing public interest and effort in a way unknown before. Charitable and educational work among these classes is becoming almost a fine art. The training of the masses is the question of the day. Add to this *the increasing occupation of religious parties in their own particular organisations*; the growth of the denominational spirit; church and chapel extension; classes, committees, associations, clubs, festivals, and soirées, without which accessories it seems doubtful whether some churches would exist at all, and we probably see some of the channels into which much of the zeal that formerly overflowed in missionary enterprises has been of late diverted. When one reads of a church at Boston costing £150,000, to seat 500 persons, while the foreign work

\* "Foreign Missions of Protestantism," p. 52.



is languishing for funds ; and when vast sums, more modest, it is true, than that, but still needlessly excessive, are lavished in our own land on the religious luxuries of a very small section of the human family, while millions of our brethren and our sisters have not so much as heard the Gospel, does it not become a serious question whether the mind of Christ and the design and nature of His Gospel are clearly understood ?

4. Much of the ardour of former days has, doubtless, *been consumed altogether by the absorbing secularisation of the age*, by the greedy spirit of wealth and worldliness which has been spreading so perceptibly at home, simultaneously with the advance of missionary work abroad. This fatal spell has unquestionably paralysed many a heart once warm in the missionary cause, and many a hand once active in spiritual work. Never, probably, was there a time when the seed of the kingdom was sowed more “among the thorns,” and when “the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choked the Word” more, and rendered it more “unfruitful.”\* What need has the Church for the heavenly fire to descend and consume the weeds ; and for the north wind and the south to blow upon the garden, “that the spices thereof may flow out.”†

5. Closely allied to the worldly spirit—in some cases induced by it, in others inducing it—is *the growth of scepticism in all things spiritual*, which settles

\* Matt. xiii. 22.

† Song of Solomon iv. 16.

down on churches in proportion as it lays hold of individuals. Scientific ideas, it may be, one by one, gather round the Christian believer, influence his faith, and seem incompatible with the truths which he has held. The chilling shadow extends across the mission field; and the thought of the conversion of the world provokes a smile, if not a sneer. The enterprise is one for visionary enthusiasts, not for sober minds and "accurate thought." We know of no specific for this malady any more than for the one preceding, but personal contact with the Divine Spirit, and, in spite of *ennui* and unbelief, an energetic care for others. Scepticism and worldliness are engendered by allowing the mind to be withdrawn from Divine things, and engrossed by mere earthly and individual interests. The best antidote is absorption in realities, and weariness in honest work. For, in the midst of the changes and revolutions of human thought—while scientists have been propounding their theories, and critics planning their assaults, and scoffers wasting their breath—Christianity has been steadily proceeding on her way, and, through those missionary operations, which many would ridicule, can now point to untold millions who are convinced of its claim, and are finding in the power of the Gospel their own regeneration and salvation. A devout and persevering *study of such facts*, and a *practical share* in their achievement, would disarm scepticism, and place the world's future in a new and brighter light.

6. But, again, it is affirmed by some that *the great*

*inspiration of missions has passed away in the changed aspect of theological thought.* The relation of missions to theology must needs be a very intimate one. Missionary enterprise will necessarily be affected by the theological thought and temper of the age; and that some of the decline in missionary devotion is due to this cause cannot be denied, and we wish carefully to look at it. The Rev. Edward White, in his valuable work, "Life in Christ," says, in a chapter devoted to "Missionary Theology": "There is now a certain separation between the missions of Protestantism and some of the deeper convictions of religious Englishmen. The formal creed of the missionary societies represents the thinking of eighty years ago, when the Church accepted, without question, the traditions of Protestant theology handed down by the reformers of the different sects. But they are now surrounded by a generation which has lifted the anchors of its theology, and has drifted or sailed into other waters" (pp. 544-5, 2nd ed.).

The ghastly argument drawn from *the appalling picture of the future misery of the heathen*, which once roused missionary assemblies, has been abandoned. The strongest claims of missions on British Christians used unquestionably to be derived from this source. The most pathetic pleas for the heathen world were those which gathered around the mouth of the bottomless pit into which myriads of unsaved souls were represented as falling. The lurid verse of Montgomery's missionary hymn, "The heathen perish," which begins with the words, "See the short course of vain delight,"

and which to so many presented the great impelling motive to missionary activity, is seldom sung—indeed, it has disappeared from many of the hymn-books. With the loss of this motive, it is asserted, the great inspiration of missions has gone. Ardour and energy have cooled. If the heathen are not perishing, why trouble to rescue them? If they are not rushing into hell, why hasten to them with the tidings of salvation? If they are not condemned already in their state of nature and of sin, why increase their responsibility by giving them the knowledge of the Gospel? If they are in the hands of a just and merciful God, why not leave them there?

It is not often that this vast and difficult subject is dealt with on missionary platforms; but many will remember how the late Dr. Raleigh courageously opened the question some eight years ago in Exeter Hall, with his wonted earnestness and grace; and how, more recently, Mr. R. W. Dale, in the same place last year, and Mr. Griffith John, of China, at the meeting of the Congregational Union at Manchester last October, showed conclusively that the great argument for missions to the heathen had *lost none of its urgency and completeness*, though we might no longer picture, as our fathers did, the great mass agonising in penal fire—might no longer, indeed, commit ourselves to any definite theory as to their final and eternal condition.\*

\* It will be instructive, we think, to bring together portions of these several remarks upon this subject, and we have, therefore, introduced them here:—

Dr. Raleigh remarked:—"I speak for myself, and I speak, I

Whatever theory we may hold of the future destiny of those who die unsaved—whether it be the old dogma

am sure, for a great many more, if not for all, when I say that we make no judgment of the heathen as to their final and eternal condition. Sometimes, to us, the prospect seems dark enough, and sometimes it is lighted up almost with a kind of hopefulness. When we look at it as the outcome of their moral condition, it is dark; when we look at it under the mercy of our God, it is brighter; but we can leave all that with Him. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? We do not question the genuineness or seek in any way to depreciate the worth of heathen virtues, in so far as they can be shown to exist; why should we? . . . If there is any probability that Job, and Elihu, and the Syro-Phœnician woman, and the Roman centurion, and the Ethiopian eunuch, have successors in heathen lands, we, of all people, whose very object is to promote human salvation, will and ought to rejoice. Nor yet, again, do we go into the awful future, as I have said, and presume to say what God may do, or not do, with or for the heathen. It is an awful question; and whether those who never heard of the incarnate Son of God, and of His renewing Spirit, and of the gates of mercy set open to mankind, after losing the battle here on their own darker field and lower level, shall have another opportunity presented to them, by the infinite grace of God, is a question, again, that is beyond our settlement. There are men quite as evangelical as their brethren, and quite as earnest in their lives, who think the one way, and there are men who think the other. We must leave that, again, with Him. Now, I say, I have ventured to go for a few minutes into a path not, I know, often entered by speakers at meetings like these, because there is some need for it in the state of outside sentiment, and because, I believe, we ought not silently to endure the indignity of always being classed with narrow-minded, illiberal, thoughtless, loveless, almost cruel people. On the contrary, I believe, we are—at any rate, I am quite sure that we wish to be—as broad as truth, and as tolerant as charity, and as hopeful as the sight of spring flowers, and stars, and daybreaks, and returning summer can make us. We believe in God and His mercy. We believe that God is light, that God is love. . . . We are taunted sometimes with degrading salvation by representing it as all con-

of endless misery, or the view commonly designated “the annihilation theory,” or that known as “the

sisting in a certain craven feeling of safety. Surely such a taunt lies more particularly against those who oppose or make light of this great missionary design of ours, for what do they say? “Let the heathen alone,” say they—“Let them alone; they are well enough under the government of a merciful God; they are safe.” No, we answer, safe they cannot be with the consciousness of sin, without some consciousness of its forgiveness through Divine mercy; safe they cannot be in idolatry, which is a degrading thing; safe in superstition they cannot be, or in estrangement from God. But if they are safe, if it could be shown that they are safe, we are not content with this. We want them to be true, and pure, and good, and to be happy, as they never can be till in Divine light and Divine love they begin to share the blessedness of God, and, therefore, we go, as far as in us lies, into all the world to preach the Gospel to every creature.”—*From Speech in Exeter Hall, May, 1874. See the “Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle,” June, 1874.*

Mr. Dale observed:—“There was a time when the great stress of the argument on behalf of Christian Missions was rested on the dark and appalling destiny which was supposed to menace, without discrimination, the whole of the heathen world; it was believed by many of our fathers that these millions were drifting, generation after generation, without a solitary exception, to ‘adamantine chains and penal fires.’ You may be sure that it is not my intention to discuss open questions of theological controversy, but we are bound on this platform frankly to recognise the fact that to large numbers of Christian people the whole question of the future destiny of the heathen world is surrounded by grave uncertainty, and that the theory on which this great appeal was rested has been by very many altogether abandoned. The point, however, on which I want to insist is this, that whatever our theory concerning the future of the heathen world may be, the obligations resting upon us to evangelise it remain unalleviated and unimpaired. I protest against the easy and indolent temper which says that we may leave the heathen uncared for, because they are in the hands of a just and merciful God. . . . We have to deal with men in this mortal life; they are here within our reach, mil-

larger hope," or the more modest opinion that on this subject nothing positive has been revealed—it is evi-

lions upon millions of them, many of them weary with sorrow and suffering, and it is in our power to give them divine consolation; many of them crushed, many of them in those heathen lands, crushed with a sense of sin, and we know of God's infinite mercy; many of them feeling after God in the darkness, if haply they may find Him, and we have to tell them, if they are seeking God, it is because God is seeking them. . . . Does God care to have the heathen know in this life all that you know about Himself? Whatever your speculations may be about the possibilities of the infinite future, is not the heart of God yearning to have His children home soon? Does He want to wait for them until they have exhausted the years of this mortal life?"—*From Speech in Exeter Hall, May, 1881. See the "Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle," June, 1881.*

Mr. Griffith John remarked:—"There is the old view which, I suppose, may be presented in this aspect—that the majority of the heathen go down into endless, conscious misery on their departure from this life. Do you believe that? Do you know what you are believing? I do not say you are not right; but do you really know what you are believing? If that be true, just look at what it means in regard to China. In China it is computed that some 33,000 die daily,—that the daily mortality of China would drain England of its population in two years, London in four months, and your Manchester in nine days. Do you believe that these millions upon millions of adults are sinking into hopeless misery as they depart this life? If you do, then I do ask, in the name of God, why don't you send missionaries out to save them? If you do, why is it that you don't go out yourselves to try and save them from such a terrible calamity? 'Well, but I do not believe,' another man says, 'in the old view. I believe in the destruction of men after a certain period of probation, or punishment: I believe that they are blotted out of existence or shrivelled up into nothing.' I have been compelled to put this question to myself, 'Granted that this is the Biblical view, what then? Can you go on with your missionary life?' and I have come to the conclusion that, if this is the true view, I can draw from it sufficient motive to go on with my missionary life. Here is a soul, capable of

dent that, *if rightly understood, neither of them can disparage missions.* The cause of missions is immovably based, as we shall see hereafter, on the Divine

dwelling for ever with God. Here is a soul, capable of eternal existence, of eternal blessedness and happiness, capable of expanding into a seraph, shrivelling up into nothing, or blotted out of existence. What would be the blotting out of ten thousand worlds compared with the blotting out of that one soul? I do not know how you feel; but I feel that it would be worth my while going round and round the world in order to save one from such collapse. Then there comes the universal restoration view. Some say, 'I do not believe in the old or in the second view; but I believe all souls shall be restored at last.' What then? I am glad to be able to tell you I have looked at that view in its face; and I have come to the conclusion that I can draw even from that view sufficient motive to go on with my missionary work. Suppose, for instance, an angel were to come to me when I lay my head upon my pillow this evening, and whisper these words in my ears, 'Brother, all souls are to be restored at last; all the heathen are to be restored at last; the Chinese are to be restored at last. You are only just beginning your missionary work. There is a long, long missionary life before you; your work in China is a mere school in which you are preparing yourself for a grander work by-and-by.' What would be the effect of it upon my mind? To paralyse my hand? To prevent me going back to China? No; on the contrary. I feel that if an angel were to reveal that to me as the truth of God, the spark of missionary enthusiasm in my heart to-day would burst into a flame. I should reason in this way. 'Is it so? Can it be that the human soul is worth so much? Can it be that human souls are so dear to the heart of the Father—can it be that the great atonement can cover all guilt, and that that mighty Spirit contains all souls?' If this be true—if it be true that all souls are to be redeemed, then I go in for the missionary life, not only for this æon, but for the æons of æons until the Christ of whom we have heard so much these days has put all His enemies under His feet, and presented the kingdom to God the Father."—*From Speech in Free Trade Hall, Manchester, Oct. 1881. See the "Nonconformist and Independent," Oct. 13, 1881.*



command, and on the whole spirit of the Gospel. Nowhere are we urged in Scripture to philanthropic efforts among the heathen, on any grounds relating to their final and eternal condition; but because the Gospel, *here and now*, is, by virtue of the Saviour's word and work, the right of *all*, and the only regenerating and redeeming force in human society. To stay our helping, healing hand because there may exist conflicting theories as to what may happen in the ages that are to come, would be as great infatuation and as gross a crime as it would be to refrain from stopping a pestilence or a fire, because we are ignorant or doubtful of some of their constituent elements and latent possibilities.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *MISSIONS AND THE FUTURE DESTINY OF THE RACE.*

IT will not be affirmed that adherence to the *traditional* doctrine of the Church with regard to the future destiny of the wicked, has cooled the ardour of those holding it in the cause of missions. For it was on this basis that the founders of missions built; and that basis has never been officially repudiated. It is the departure from the old belief that has carried with it, it is alleged, much of the former inspiration. This departure has taken, in the main, two very different directions; the one towards the *ultimate extinction* of multitudes of our fellow-men; the other towards the *ultimate restoration* of the human race to God. The inquiry is, *Are these tendencies of thought necessarily prejudicial to the cause of missions?*

Is the *first theory* calculated to arrest missionary enthusiasm? How should it? Is not the extinction of personal existence, after a season of sharp torment of soul and body, a doom sufficiently awful to impel the heart that believes it, to rescue if it be but a single soul? How intensified that doom becomes when it is seen hanging, as a black, funereal pall, over the teem-

ing nations! Is not the field of missions the foremost place where the doctrine of "Life in Christ" should be proclaimed—proclaimed to those thus literally "perishing" for lack of knowledge? If this view really tended to diminish zeal for missions, we should expect to note it in the utterances of the leaders of this school of thought. But instead of that, we discover the reverse. The Rev. Edward White, the ablest exponent of this theory, says:—"I cannot but think that the mode of presenting Christianity—which we advocate as apostolic and Divine—as a message conferring eternal life as a donation upon dying men, is not only fitted to assist the faith of European minds deprived of their old hopes and fears by recent scientific conclusions, but also, probably, of the countless millions of Buddhists throughout India, Siam, Japan, and China. In those lands the loss of individual being, *nirvana*, has, under the inspiration of demons, become the final expectation of the human race. Will it not give to the joyful voice of Christianity a new energy, when it has learned to proclaim through Christ the promise of individual life in conscious union with Deity, as the eternal blessedness of the righteous?"\* And, again:—"Let the Gospel be preached

\* "Life in Christ," p. 555. Note. 2nd ed. There would appear to be some instances, at least, in the lower culture of mankind, where the immortality of the soul is not held. Among Greenlanders, Fijians, and Guinea negroes, the departed soul, either at a future judgment, or in tests and contests to which it is subjected hereafter, is liable to die "a second death," to be "drowned and buried in eternal oblivion." See Tylor's "Primitive Culture," Vol. II., p. 20.

in India and China as the message of Life to the dead, as the gift of Immortality in body and soul, to a race sitting in the death-shade of atheism ; let it be preached as the message of a God who is intelligibly beneficent, but intelligibly and justly 'terrible' to wicked men, . . . and one cannot but believe that a new power might attend, in the East, as in the West, the diffusion of Christianity." \*

The same writer quotes the following passages from the letter of an Indian missionary : " I have not been forgetful of my standing obligation to diffuse as widely as possible a knowledge of the special truth so tersely expressed by Paul, ' The wages of sin is *death*, but the *gift* of God is *eternal life*, through *Jesus Christ* our Lord.' . . . Years ago, and before God had brought me to receive Scripture teaching as I now receive it, I was often sorely pressed in argument by those men of brains around me (especially those known as Brahmists) in relation to the *Christian doctrine* of unending suffering, in vindication of which dogma I was necessitated to resort to a species of argument which I felt to be as sophistical to my own mind, as it was evidently unsatisfactory to my questioners. I have now, however, to bear testimony to quite a new and different kind of experience. . . . A minute or two spent in repudiating the doctrine as it is usually presented, and five minutes more in laying bare to view the essence of Christianity as set forth by the Lord Jesus Himself (see John iii. 16, 36), gives to

\* " Life in Christ," p. 556. 2nd ed.

the whole matter such a reasonable and unobjectionable aspect, that in the vast majority of cases it leaves neither room nor desire for protracted discussion."\*

The Rev. Evan Bryant, for several years a missionary in China, says :—" I have preached the Gospel in China on the lines of Conditional Immortality for ten years ; and I saw the declaration of the destruction of the wicked producing an unmistakable sense of terror among my Chinese hearers ; and I know that not a few Chinese have felt satisfaction and joy at the assurance given them, that in Christ is sure to them an endless life, perpetual incorruption. This teaching gave to me definiteness and freedom in my work, and great was my joy in being thus able to preach the Gospel of everlasting life to all sorts, and to untold numbers of China's sinful people."—*The Christian World*, July 13, 1882.

Here, then, without expressing any opinion on the teaching itself, which is not the task before us—we have unquestionable evidence that the doctrine known as "Life in Christ," or "Conditional Immortality," instead of paralysing missionary effort, fills *those who have most carefully examined it, and who most firmly believe it*, both here and abroad, with the conviction that new force is thereby given to the Gospel message, and new aids afforded to the faith of those who are urged to accept it.

Turning now in *the other direction*, and giving it a more protracted glance—since it is this theory rather

\* *Ibid.*, p. 559.

than the last which is said to disparage missions—does the bright belief that, by ways and means unknown to us, but known to the holy love of God, the dark shadow of sin and misery shall one day vanish from the universe, and all souls be gathered in a perfect reconciliation around His throne, prejudicially affect the missionary enterprise? The question is not, Is the theory true? but, should it militate against the cause of missions? \*

That it *has* affected it, we think there cannot be a doubt. Prevailing discussion on the future destiny of the race has unquestionably relaxed the minds of many, and slackened their missionary zeal. And it is, probably, the *uncertainty* that has been gathering around the whole question of the future, rather than a definite apprehension of the truth of any particular theory, that has created an indifference about the state of the heathen, and cooled the ardour of missionary enterprise. If the minds that have thus been unsettled, would search diligently for some new ground of faith and effort, and pray that, in the clear light of the Gospel, a better view of the truth might be granted them, we are sanguine enough to believe that something of the old missionary spirit would return. Until clearer and deeper convictions are reached by Christian people in general, we fear no healthier missionary spirit is likely to come. And with the view of offering a little help in this direction, we wish to attempt

\* We have stated this theory strongly and fully, not with the view of pleading for *it*, but for *the cause of Missions*, as related to the broadest aspect the theory embraces.

to show that the "restoration" theory, if rightly apprehended, need have no paralysing effect upon missionary work, but, on the contrary, that it may well irradiate it with new light, and invest it with a higher meaning.

For is it not hope—large hope—more than anything else, that makes us strong to live and work? Here, if anywhere, on the wide field of missions, where earth's lost millions are sought and found, does the theory of a universal restoration find the fullest scope for an enthusiastic working out. Here, among the kingdoms of this world, which are to "become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ,"\* the devout advocates of this view should find the noblest and only adequate field for their exertions.

For the theory, as we understand it, does not leave the nations in the hand of an Almighty Power, which is hereafter to compel submission to its authority by an irresistible decree; but it sees the Divine Love which agonised on Calvary, ever pleading with and winning the rebellious hearts, and redeeming the souls for which it suffered, from their sin and sorrow: and in loyal sympathy with that Love, it labours "yet more abundantly" to carry out the Divine purpose, to diffuse the far-reaching virtues of the Cross, and satisfy the Saviour's heart. The theory being founded, not on any Divine decree, but on the doctrine of the Divine Paternity, must logically require the revelation of the Father to the children, *through the proclamation of the Gospel*, and the pressing home to each individual heart the Divine appeal.

\* Rev. xi. 15.

The Bible revelation thus comes to be conceived as "the educator of humanity," the means by which the great Father is training His human family for Himself. No part of the race, no section of the family, may be left in ignorance of that revelation. The spiritual development of *the race*, and not of one particular portion of it, is to be continually advancing. And "the vast, slow wheel which brings mankind nearer to this perfection is only put in motion by smaller, swifter wheels, each of which contributes its own individual unit thereto."\*

Hence the necessity for the use of means, and the room for individual effort. Believing that each saved soul is to bear the message on, those who hold this theory should see in each enlightened continent, in each island won to Christ, a new impulse to exertion, and a fresh pledge of the ultimate realisation of their hopes. The field of missions thus becomes the great field for the fulfilment of prophecy, the sphere where the most glowing predictions of Scripture are to be realised. The missionary life becomes more than ever the noblest of all lives; the work of the missionary the most glorious of all undertakings—the most real, most unselfish, most apostolic, most Christ-like. He who prosecutes it is brought in sympathy and endeavour nearest to Christ; stands in closest connection with the Divine purposes; and is contributing most towards the development and perfection of the race. The earthly training it affords is the

\* Lessing's "Education of the Human Race," p. 75. 3rd ed.



best preparation for the work of glorified spirits in the ages to come ; for if the Christian life is eternal life in any sense, self-sacrifice, which is the flower and crown of the Christian character, must be eternal ; and a sphere must exist for its exercise in other worlds. The true missionary spirit will be able to enter most deeply into the noble sentiment of one of the sweetest poets, that

•                   “ Love must be  
The *Missionary of Eternity* !  
Must still find work, in worlds beyond the grave,  
So long as there's a single soul to save ;  
Must, from the highest heaven, yearn to tell  
The message ; be the Christ to some dark hell.”\*

Let us quote the words of one who has thought and written devoutly on this subject, to show that the prospect which it opens up does not dazzle the eye for present duty ; but that as the “ thoughts of men are broadened,” their zeal enlarges, and their capacity for usefulness increases. The Rev. William Dorling says :—“ Looked at from the point of view which many theologians require us to occupy, the world is at present a failure.” But, he adds, “ Our hearts have confidence that we do not see the end. All things are moving onward to a result, rising ever to a point which is the crown and glory of things, the ‘ one far-off Divine event to which the whole creation moves.’ . . . Failure is not to be inscribed upon the world's history. Our God is working every instant for good. Triumph is sure to come at last to every earnest and true hope that has ever

\* Gerald Massey's “ Tale of Eternity,” p. 107

thrilled our breasts with joy. . . . We are living and working, if we are Christian people, towards such a result. Our aim is to help, if by ever so little, the coming on of a time so full of brightness and joy. . . . *Because we see it coming*, and know that the eternal promise gives it to us as our blessed hope, *we labour with cheerful diligence, and pray with loving confidence, until the day dawn, and the shadows flee away.*"\*

In a similar spirit, the Divine Master Himself, who declared, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, *will draw all men unto Myself*,"† also said, "*My Father worketh even until now, and I work.*"‡ "*We must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day.*"§

We see, then, that the great argument for missions not only remains unchanged, but *receives fresh cogency* from an earnest apprehension of *either* of the current theories of the destiny of the race; and we claim for this great work the hearty co-operation of their most ardent advocates.

To leave the heathen in the hands of a just and merciful God would be to act on a principle which, if carried out, would paralyse every benevolent effort in the world; it would be to fall back on a cruel fatalism. To leave them destitute of the Gospel because they may not perish everlastingly without a knowledge of it, is to be treacherous to our Christian trust, disobedient to the Master's clear command, and utterly selfish in keeping

\* "The Larger Hope for the Future of the Human Race," pp. 62—74.

† John xii. 32. ‡ John v. 17. § John ix. 4.

to ourselves that which can alone make the present life a life worth living, that which can alone promote the unity and proper development of the race.

If there are those who still believe that the heathen, as heathen, are exposed to endless torment, let them, by all the terrors of such a vision, devote themselves to their rescue with the most passionate energy; though we would utter the solemn warning that, in teaching such a doctrine, they are taking away with one hand what they are offering in the other, and weighting the Gospel with an appalling burden which, in view of the fatalism, and pantheism, and idolatries of the East, it cannot bear. Those again, who hold that out of Christ there is no spiritual existence hereafter, but only "eternal destruction from the face of the Lord,"\* will surely find in the great world of heathendom the fittest field for their philanthropy: while those who see a brighter light breaking over the eternal hills, and faintly trust a "larger hope," may well seek, with such an inspiration, to hasten on the blessed end; work with a buoyant will towards "the times of restoration of all things,"† when "every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them," shall be heard "saying, unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever."‡

\* 2 Thes. i. 9. † Acts iii. 21; Col. i. 20. ‡ Rev. v. 13.

## CHAPTER V.

### *MISSIONS AND THEOLOGY.*

WHATEVER may be the actual case at home, arising out of the changed aspect of theological thought, the great cause has certainly not lost, of late years, any of its urgency *on the field itself*. It is doubtful whether the appalling pictures of the future condition of the heathen were ever so prominently presented to the heathen themselves, as they were to their Christian brethren at home. But a severe type of Calvinism was no doubt carried to distant lands, in the earlier era of Christian missions ; and we can recall the scene of the Indian missionary who was preaching to a company of Hindus, and causing to pass before them the long line of their ancestors, who, having died without the Gospel, were consigned to everlasting woe, when one of his thoughtful listeners, resenting such a representation as unworthy of the Great Spirit of the Universe, calmly said, “ Then we prefer to keep our own religion, rather than accept such a Gospel.”

Though such preaching was, we believe, rare even in the earlier days of Christian missions, the fearful dogma has yet managed to become associated in the mind of the heathen with Christian truth, and

is even now sometimes brought forward as a fatal objection to the religion of Jesus; and it will be a happy day for the Gospel and for missions when the mind we seek to gain is thoroughly disabused of such oppressive and disastrous teaching. "This is, I venture to think," writes the Rev. Edward White, "one reason for the general rejection of the Gospel by the Brahmanists, Buddhists, and Confucianists of the East. God's love is hidden from them, and they turn away sorrowful from so direful a Christianity. Whatever the better sort of thinking men of any nation generally reject, will not be long or widely received by the uneducated. . . . We are beginning to learn, not only what the missionaries think of the learned and able men of India and China, but what the learned men of India and China think of some things taught by ourselves.\* We are learning to exercise imagination upon the evangelical enterprise, and to

\* As a sample of what some of the "learned men of India think of some things taught by ourselves," we subjoin the following remarks from a little book, entitled, "A Hindu Gentleman's Reflections respecting the works of Swedenborg, and the Doctrines of the New Jerusalem Church," pp. 77—79 (James Speirs, London, 1878):—

"Christianity, as is now taught and preached to the world, appears to me to be almost silent on the important question touching the fate and future destiny of that vast and incalculable number of human beings who have died, and who at this day are daily dying, in total ignorance of its voice; not to speak of that inconceivable number of human beings who had occupied and left this our earth during a period of thousands of years previous to the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. It cannot but be greatly surprising to see that a question involving the spiritual interests of such a vast mass of human beings, com-

understand better in what light it presents itself to the 'natives' whose religion it assails."\*

When we consider that missionaries are giving a Christian theology to those who, in the providence of God, will one day form Christian churches and communities, it becomes of the utmost importance that

pared to whom all those who have been actually benefited by the teachings of Christ form but a very insignificant, almost an infinitesimal portion indeed, should fail to engage serious consideration, and to excite any deep interest amongst the teachers and professors of Christianity. I do not allude to that interest which Christians have been known to feel and evince in the conversion of the heathens from the time of the Apostles to the present day; but an interest which should urge them to consider and discuss the question concerning the possibility or otherwise of the eternal damnation of the whole heathen world, which they are taught to believe almost universally through their respective churches. . . . The New Church explicitly teaches us that the heathen and Gentiles who have led a virtuous life will receive the truth in the world of spirits, and have as much right to enter into the gates of heaven as the Christians themselves. In the case of the heathen there is a course of Christian knowledge and instruction which they have to go through, and which they had not an opportunity to obtain while on the earth; but which the universal benevolence of the Heavenly Father of all mankind has provided for them in the intermediate state, under the loving care of ministering angels. These appear to me to be not only noble, but correct sentiments, which must surely be confessed by those Christians who have not allowed their minds to be contracted by the preaching of bigoted and narrow-minded ministers. . . . It is said and believed that Christ was co-eternal with God (see John i. 1). He could, therefore, I believe, not only see, but provide for the redemption and salvation of mankind from eternity, as He has done by His Incarnation *de facto*. Cannot, therefore, His passion on the cross have a retrospective effect in the procurement of salvation for mankind, as the same is now universally believed throughout the whole of Christendom exclusively in prospective aspect? I believe it can."

\* "Life in Christ," pp. 553—4. 2nd ed.

the theology thus transplanted should reflect the healthiest and highest of the thought at home. This responsibility is not always realised as it should be. We give heathen nations the Gospel, but *with* that we cannot help giving them something of the theological systems of Christendom; and in doing so, how careful should we be not to perpetuate error and mistakes, not to propagate the seeds of endless perplexity and contention in the virgin soil, thereby marring and hindering the sublimest work God has given us to do. For our brethren in the mission-field in the present day, we believe we may safely say that what may have been once, and with unquestionable earnestness, presented as the Gospel, is not now proclaimed as the "good tidings of great joy" that have come to all people. A brighter, more sympathetic, and, we would fain hope, more effectual message is delivered now.\*

And *has the work thereby lost any of its urgency, or the workers any of their enthusiasm?* The work abroad is growing every year. Reverses and losses

\* We should be sorry to have to endorse the opinion expressed by the Rev. Edward White, in his "Life in Christ," that the consignment to "endless misery" of the millions in India who refuse "to abandon their ancestral creeds, is still the foundation of our missionary theology. This is still what may be called the state creed of the missionary societies, Roman and Protestant. No one is considered at liberty to deny it in a missionary speech or sermon. It is the platform creed of Exeter Hall. The students of the missionary colleges are supposed to believe it. The missionaries abroad are supposed to believe it. No one who openly assailed it would be permitted to plead the cause of missions before the British or American people."—P. 545. 2nd ed.

there may be from time to time in isolated and ill-protected outposts ; but, in the main, one triumph follows another. Each successive band that joins the missionary army becomes more devoted to the work, and more sanguine as to its ultimate issue. Some of the most promising students of our colleges are eager to enrol themselves in its ranks ; and there is on every hand, on the part of those most closely engaged, a healthy activity, a cheerful courage, a manly hopefulness, that may well dispel the notion that the cause of missions need itself suffer, the missionary heart be itself paralysed by the decay of the former teachings.

No good cause can really gain by a false advocacy. It can only suffer immeasurable harm. Such a glorious and heavenly cause as Christian missions should, least of all, be based upon an incredible delusion. It does not need the dark background of perdition to manifest its sacred character, and commend it to earnest hearts. In the all-embracing Love of a Heavenly Father, who loveth all men, and hateth nothing He has made, "who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth," \* it glows with Divine light, and appeals with irresistible power.

We have apparently reached a new point of departure in relation to missionary work, when something like a re-statement of the nature and claims of the missionary enterprise should be attempted. And we believe that if this were frankly recognised, much of the present decline of interest which has been "partly

\* 1 Tim. ii. 4.



attributed to an unconfessed modification of the faith on which the societies were founded," would pass away entirely from many minds. For there can be no doubt that there does exist at present *a want of sympathy between the societies and certain members of our churches on theological points.*\* Might not a kindly effort be made on each side to come to a truer understanding—to a frank and mutual recognition of any change of ground in regard to missionary advocacy?

Altered views of the nature and character of God, which missions have in part contributed to bring about, have altered the views of most of us, and widened our horizon, with reference to our fellow-men. Not the wrath, but the love of God now impels us to go out among the lost until we find them. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, missions find their fittest portraiture and their truest justification. We have grasped more clearly the truth that there is "one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through

\* To quote again from the Rev. Edward White:—"It is felt that the missions of the Gospel do not thoroughly represent the results of religious England's present convictions—that there ought to be more space allowed both at college, and in the mission field, certainly for doubt, for undecided opinion, and even for open variation from the ancient creed—that there ought to be liberty for missionaries to express abroad, especially in their dealings with the educated men of India and China, ideas which are gaining ascendancy over so many abler minds at home. . . . It is felt that what is needed in missionary work, above all things, is, not concealment of opinion, not weak compliance with articles insisted on by the multitude, but earnest enlightened faith, a faith which believes, and therefore speaks."—"Life in Christ," p. 547, 2nd ed.

all, and in all ; ”\* one Divine Son who has revealed to men this Father ; and *one family* on earth and in heaven. And missions are bringing the Father near to those who know not the brotherhood. They represent Him as yearning with an infinite solicitude over every member of His human family, whom in Christ He has redeemed, and whom in Christ He is seeking to recover to His home and heart. They recognise *the brotherhood of men*, the brotherhood of nations ; they acknowledge the equality of all souls in the sight of God ; the claim of all on the same Divine affection ; an equal place for all in the same parental heart. They testify to *the unity of the race in Christ*. They reveal Christ as the organic root and Head of the human family ; † the Representative of the race, in whom every tribe is interested, and towards whom every soul stands in vital relation. They declare Him to be the source of all true civilisation, of all social virtues, and of the highest political and national life. They point to Him as “ the Light of the World,” as the Fountain of all the truth and goodness that gleamed out in the ancient world, § as the Fulfiller of all pre-Christian hopes and aspirations, as “ *the central truth that reconciles the systems of men*,” as well as the spiritual “ bond that unites the lives of men,” as the explanation of human nature, the justifier of its deepest convictions, the satisfaction of the human heart. Missions thus constituted *par excellence* the sphere of the Christian redemption—the redemption

\* Eph. iv. 6. † Acts xvii. 26. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 3 ; Col. i. 17. § John i. 9.

of the religions of the past, as well as the redemption of all life and all souls; the field of "the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God,"\* in connection with which, in the fullest sense, the Redeemer is to "see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied."† If we want a sphere of large ideas, of capacity for faith, of boundless hope, of glowing visions—that sphere is the field of Christian Missions.

Missionary advocacy is thus coming to be placed on a wider and surer foundation; and we can commit ourselves to the enterprise *on the ground of the highest reason and truest philosophy*, as well as on the ground of Christian duty and benevolence, and apart from all theories of the future destiny of the heathen.

We will proceed in the next chapter to gather up some of the considerations which not only justify but enjoin missionary activity, and which should not fail, we think, to secure the consent of very various minds.

\* 1 Tim. i. 11.      † Is. liii. 11.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MISSIONS AND CHRISTIANITY—A PLEA FOR THE CHURCH.

1. THE great *raison d'être* of Missions rests on the command of Christ. We may grow impatient of the continual vindication of missions on the ground of their success. The great commission recorded in St. Matthew's Gospel, chap. xxviii. 18-20, "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations," &c., must ever form the basis of the missionary enterprise. The only wonder is, that with these recorded words before it, the Church of Christ did not sooner awake to a sense of her responsibility, and grasp the meaning of her trust, and go forth to the work solemnly committed to her to do. The wonder is, that in comparatively modern days, with these words ringing in her ears, she could have been so blinded by the withering influence of a worldly spirit, or of a hard Calvinistic creed, to the condition and claims of the great world outside, that the pioneer of missions to the East, on proposing that a discussion should take place on the Church's duty with regard to missions, was "peremptorily commanded by the astonished Conference to be silent;" and the Moderator of the General Assembly of

the Church of Scotland, at the close of the last century, was able to carry by a majority the opinion that "to spread abroad the knowledge of the Gospel among barbarous and heathen nations, seems to be highly preposterous, in so far as it anticipates, nay, it even reverses the order of nature."\* When, however, the Church once roused from her apathy, and, convinced of her false position, committed herself unreservedly to the missionary cause, this last command of Christ has been her watchword through the night of toil, her rallying shout in all seasons of depression and flagging zeal. During long years of thankless labour and of barrenness, when hope deferred has made many a heart sick, and many a hand weary, when visible results might have prompted a withdrawal of forces from the field, this imperative command has left the Church no choice, but to be simply true to duty,

\* See "Life of Dr. Alexander Duff," by Dr. George Smith. Vol. I., p. 34. In the same work we meet with the following:—"When passing through the theological curriculum of St. Andrew's," said Dr. Duff to the General Assembly, "I was struck markedly with this circumstance, that throughout the whole course of the curriculum of four years, not one single allusion was ever made to the subject of the world's evangelisation, the subject of which constitutes the chief end of the Christian Church on earth. I felt intensely that there was something wrong in this omission. According to any just conception of the Church of Christ, the grand function it has to discharge in this world cannot be said to begin and end in the preservation of internal purity of doctrine, discipline, and government. All this is merely for burnishing it so as to be a lamp to give light, not to itself only but also to the world. There must be an outcome of that light, lest it prove useless, and thereby be lost and extinguished." Vol. II., p. 417.

and loyal to her Lord. And if, in the present day, we were to see no fruit, if converts failed to reward our efforts, and we were tempted on that ground to surrender any portion of the work, so long as we hold in our hand this last commission, our course is clear, our duty plain—we are to mind our “marching orders.” Each soul of man is one for whom Christ died;\* and to each soul, therefore, is the word of this salvation sent.

2. But not only was the missionary enterprise solemnly entrusted to His followers, but *the missionary spirit was first breathed by Christ Himself*; and all who have since possessed it have caught it from Him. He came to seek and to save the lost. The first missionary meeting was held in heaven, when the Father “sent the Son”—the first Great Missionary—“to be the Saviour of the world.”† In this He has set us *a supreme example*, that we should follow in His steps. A loyalty to truth is good, but a Christ-like longing for men is better. The best and brightest life that our world has seen was a life of ministry unto others; and in proportion as we seek to live that life, we approach nearest to the Divine life and blessedness. Our religion is always expansive and broad in proportion as it is spiritual. It is only as we realise God incarnate in human form—the Father revealed in the Son coming near to the race—that we too come close to, and care for our fellow-men. The only way to love the children is to know the Father. The only way to conquer selfishness and unsympathetic narrowness is

\* 2 Cor. v. 15.

† 1 John iv. 14.

to think of that love that so loved the world that it gave its "only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life."\*

3. But, further, *the advent of the Spirit was directly connected with missionary evangelisation.* It was for others, not for themselves, that the disciples were endued with power from on high. The Day of Pentecost witnessed the first missionary meeting of the Church after the ascension of her Lord; and it was one of an extraordinary character. The apostles and brethren who were together in one place, were "filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues," so that they might accomplish a swift and noble work of evangelisation among those who had gathered at Jerusalem "from every nation under heaven."† Grand was that day's preaching, and marvellous its results, when there were added unto the little band "about three thousand souls;" prefiguring in the plainest and most striking manner the future missionary character and career of the Christian Church, when the Gospel should be preached in all the languages of the world, and unto all the dwellers therein, and the Gospel net should gather in its converts out "of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation."

And if the missionary spirit was thus evolved in the Church by the Spirit of God, it can *only be sustained from the same life-giving Source.* It is a great

\* John iii. 16.

† See Acts ii.

*spiritual* work in which the Church is engaged—a work which, more than any other, throws her completely on God, brings her near to Christ, and Christ near to her. Dependence on the Spirit, therefore, is a necessity. The Church needs to return to the Apostolic belief “in the Holy Ghost,” and to connect all her work with His Presence and Power. This, unquestionably, is the ultimate root of the decay of missionary zeal in particular, and of the feebleness of the life of Christianity in general; and what the Church needs is such a real revival of *spiritual* religion in the midst of her communities as shall cause a fresh outburst of enthusiasm for missions. *The work is the Spirit's*, just as the work is Christ's; and if the Church is to have the missionary spirit, which is to have “the mind of Christ;” if that sceptical indifference with regard to the conversion of the heathen is to be shaken off; if a real sense of the grandeur of the work is to possess her, and she is to infuse spiritual life into all the channels of missionary enterprise; if prayer is to become mighty, and sympathy keen and strong; if gifts and graces are to shine forth for the work; if the churches are to give generously of their silver and gold; if ministers are to be stirred up, and men are to be fired with a missionary spirit so as to consecrate themselves to the work, it can only be *through the Spirit of God*.

4. It follows from the foregoing considerations that *the true idea of the Church of Christ is, and*



*has ever been, that it is a Missionary Church.* It is nothing if it is not that. "It became the most sacred duty of a new convert," says Gibbon, "to diffuse among his friends and relations the inestimable blessings which he had received."\* Christianity is a missionary religion, "converting, advancing, aggressive, encompassing the world," as Professor Max Müller avowed it to be, in his lecture delivered on Missions, in Westminster Abbey, a few years ago, so that a non-missionary Church is an abandonment of the fundamental conception of Christianity. In Old Testament times the individual, the family, the nation, became, in turn, the depository of Divine truth; that after being treasured and developed by a Divine culture in various ways, and through long periods of history, it might be diffused abroad among all nations. Abraham, Jacob, Israel, were elected, not for the sake of the special privileges they were to enjoy themselves, they were selected as instruments for the ultimate good of the world. The apostles were missionaries; they "went everywhere preaching the Word."† The "Acts of the Apostles" is one bright, full page of missionary history. And how could it be otherwise when it is the very nature of the Gospel to "run," and, in having free course, to "be glorified?" Its glory consists in its freedom, and its universal power to bless. How can the Church be other than a missionary Church, when the mission of light and love to the human race,

\* "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Vol. II., p. 275.

† Acts viii. 4.

entrusted by the Father to the Son, was by the Son entrusted to the Church? It was the *world* that filled the Father's eye of pity; the *world* that He so loved as to surrender for its sake His Son; the *world* Christ came to redeem. And the Church He has chosen as His organ, taken as His Body, immediately occupies a false position, is unfaithful to her calling, disloyal to her Lord, as soon as she becomes absorbed with herself, and forgets that *she exists for the world*.

Can 600 missionaries for the whole of India, and 300 for the whole of China, which gives one missionary to half-a-million of the people in the former, and less than one missionary to one million in the latter, possibly be the proportion of labourers which *the world's* Redeemer, and the spiritual Head of *humanity* would claim for these mighty lands? Or can a sum of a little over one million sterling, which is the amount annually expended by British Christians on the entire field of foreign missions—a sum yearly spent in London on charities alone—adequately represent the Church's duty in this sacred matter, or be a fitting expression of gratitude for her own peculiar privileges? We are administrators of a Divine trust, stewards of a Divine estate, heralds of a Divine message; and if we are selfish, slothful, and dishonest servants, we shall have our talent and our office taken from us.

For *Churches cannot*, any more than individuals, *keep a blessing to themselves without committing sin*. The missionary character of the Church is based on this unchanging truth. We cannot keep the Gospel,

which is God's best gift to the race, from the race, without sinning directly against the Giver. Every true man, with a blessing to give, feels bound to give it. And he does not wait for openings and opportunities, he *makes* them. This is what Christ did for the world when He came to it in its sorrow and its sin; when by His own gracious inspiration He set men seeking for the opportunity to help, and bless, and save. "Many will give, and give generously, when objects of compassion are presented to their sight; but the world wants those who will stir themselves to search into its sorrows, to search into its sores, and apply the helping, healing hand; and *this* ministry Christianity created, and still sustains."\*

This is the meaning and object of every modern philanthropic institution. Material and scientific progress have put it *in our power* to dispense the rich results of knowledge and discovery; and we feel bound, therefore, to give out the good we have acquired. Power means responsibility. And shall not the same law operate in still higher spheres; and what we do for the bodies and minds, be done for the souls of men? Missions interpret the highest works of Christian mercy; they embody the noblest acts of benevolence and charity. The law which sheds the greatest amount of brightness on our dark and sinful world is the Divinely ordained law that each is to be the other's helper. Since all men are

\* Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, in his Address at the funeral of Mr. Wm. Crosfield. February, 1881.

brethren, members of the same family, we have obvious duties to all mankind. Our sympathy and effort, in this as in every other humane and merciful cause, are asked for on behalf of *brethren*, on behalf of men possessing the same impulses and passions, the same capacity of pain and sorrow, of happiness, and love, and hope as ourselves. We call them "heathen," "pagans," as though they were almost a different race of beings; but they are *men*—our brothers and our sisters—and this surely should send at once a sympathetic chord through every missionary enterprise. If it is in our power to alleviate suffering, to enlighten ignorance, to dispel sorrow, to bring a ray of immortal hope into the sunless heart, to tell men how the burden of sin may be removed, how existence may become a blessing, and everlasting life may be secured, we are bound, in the sight of God and in the sight of men, to discharge our obligation.

The Church that is most sympathetic in its attitude towards others, most keenly sensitive to human wants and woes, most catholic in its aims, most expansive in its energies, most alive to the existence of a great world outside its little self, most conscious of being but a part in a mighty whole, and of only truly living when living for the welfare of the whole—the Church, in short, that is *most missionary* in its constitution, is the Church truest to its traditions, most apostolic in its spirit, most Christian in its character, most after the mind of Christ. Whereas the community that is most exclusive in its services and habits, most narrow

in its grasp of truth and modes of thought, most indifferent to the masses, most local and circumscribed in its plans and enterprises, most wrapped up in its own sectarian privileges and denominational life, and least in spiritual *rapport* with Christ's universal Church, and God's wide world and family, is scarcely worthy of the name of Christian, and has the hand of death already on it.

5. For, further, if the work of evangelisation thus early filled the thoughts and stirred the life of the infant Church; if this was the first channel through which the inspiration of the Spirit passed, so that the Christian Church is essentially a missionary Church; so have missions since been *the chief means of quickening the life, and developing the resources of the Church*. This, again, is a natural as well as a scriptural law:—“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”\* In blessing others, we are blessed ourselves. The more liberally we spend in spiritual things, the richer we become in gifts and grace; and, conversely, to consider only our own wants is the surest way to impoverishment. It is a righteous and salutary rule: “There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”† “The renouncing of all outward interests has, like the mildew, a reflex action within . . . you

\* Luke vi. 38.

† Prov. xi. 24.

cannot gather water together into heaps,—unless you allow it to *freeze*.”\*

Let ardour in missionary enterprise languish, and the expansive power of the Church is lost. The Church is probably more indebted to missions than missions to the Church. Eighty years ago the Church scarcely believed in missions; but what life, and interest, and zeal they have since created among all her sections! Who can say that missions have failed if they have accomplished that? They have been the heart of the Church during the present century. The periods that have witnessed most activity abroad have also seen most life and prosperity at home. Find out the time when foreign missions were neglected, and you find out the time when churches were decayed. The Church, deprived of foreign missions, would be left, it has been said, to “home idolatry.” And churches and denominations are beginning to understand it, as one after another steps upon the field. The conviction is growing that it is *here* they must prove the strength, and show the health of their own life. Any church incapable of sending forth reinforcements must be weak and sickly; just as the heart, unable to send forth in healthful regularity the life-blood through the veins, manifests that decay of vital power which precedes the end.

Missions supply *the noblest ideal* which, in times of sloth and feeble life, acts as an inspiration. They broaden the views, and expand the sympathies of the

\* “Foreign Missions of Protestantism,” p. 53.

Church. We should seek, of course, to acquaint ourselves with mission work in general, so as to understand its extent and design, and thereby transform mere sectarian zeal into zeal for the kingdom of God. The mission field, last of all, should not be made the arena for denominational jealousy and party strife. Here, if anywhere, should Christendom be united ; each separate section being animated by the same lofty and catholic aim. And as the Church rises to meet each fresh demand, she finds herself endued with greater intensity of purpose, and with new energy of faith. "Zeal in missionary enterprise," says the late Canon Mozley, "is essentially a child of *faith*." Based upon the command of the risen Saviour, it rests also upon His promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."\* Continual dependence is thus exercised on an unseen Power—the central Power of the universe—which is also the Head of our humanity, and the fountain from which all our spiritual blessings flow. Missions bring us, necessarily, into contact with the Living Christ, and so draw out the highest activities of the Christian soul. The very idea of missions is thus inseparable from *prayer*. Every missionary society was prayed into existence by godly men ; and the faithful and successful labours of many years have been sustained and achieved by believing prayer. More *united* prayer has been probably born of missions than of any other source. Hence, any decline in prayer reacts injuriously

\* Matt. xxviii. 20.

on the Church rather than on the world. Again, the spirit of *benevolence* is evoked by missions in a pre-eminent degree. The Christian character has been called, in a word, "benevolence"; and the missionary spirit is at once the measure and promoter of it. Increase of brotherliness is increase of strength.

Missions, therefore, while arising, in the first instance, out of the life of the Church, continually contribute to its purity and vigour. The very contact with the world, which missions oblige, is a means of testing its truest strength, and developing its fairest graces, as every fresh encounter drives it back upon its inmost life, so that it may not be overcome of the evil, but may overcome the evil with its good. It has been remarked by Dr. Dorner:—"The *intensive* and *extensive* process alternate with each other in the Church's history. The latter, though naturally arising from the former, brings the Church into a defiling contact with the world, from which it can only be delivered by a fresh concentration, and a recurrence to the purifying and intensive process. Nevertheless, the work of Christianity upon the human race is progressive."\*

For *her own sake*, then, and as *the most effectual means of promoting her own highest welfare*, should the Church prosecute to the utmost the work of Christian missions.

6. But there is a consideration that may well weigh with us even more powerfully than this—a point to which our preceding reflections lead us. Christian

\* "Hist. Prot. Theol.," II. 447.



missions thus become *the justification of Christianity*. More than all our denominationalism, dearer than all our churches, must be our common Christianity. And missions bear the best testimony before men to the life and reality of our religion, and to the prospects of its extension and permanence in the world. The grandeur of their conception, the universality of their aim—which is nothing short of bringing the world to the feet of Christ—gives a robustness to the Church's piety, a reality to her faith, an elevation to her prayers, and a stimulus to her charity, which no other object can impart, and which makes her conspicuous, as a spiritual force, before the world. It has been this greatness of the aim of Christ—the establishment of a universal kingdom, embracing the human race, and covering all the ages—that has afforded to many reflecting minds one of the strongest arguments for His superhuman mission—a subject that is well worked out in Dr. Bushnell's "Character of Jesus," pp. 32—37. And the grandeur of the undertaking, which Christian missions seek to execute, invests the Church with a character which is Divine, in proportion as she rises to the greatness of her calling.

Nothing is so calculated to extinguish those sectarian animosities, to destroy the narrowness, to consume the bitterness of theological wrangling, which, more than anything else, have weakened the influence of the Church upon the world, and to give prominence to the common faith of Christianity, as Christian missions. As the Archbishop of Canterbury observed

at a meeting held at the Mansion House in London, not long since \*:—"When men are brought into connection with heathenism, they feel there is a gulf between heathendom and Christianity before which the distinctions of the various Christian bodies sink into insignificance." Missions save the Church from the weakness of denominationalism, while they openly vindicate Christianity in "the field" which is "the world." "The living exhibition of the Christian character," said Xavier, many years ago, "is the first great instrument of Christian conquests over idolatry." It is the same power that must gain conquests over worldliness and unbelief.† The bright and winning manifestation of Christian virtues in the lives and characters of Christian people; the beauty of Christian unity and brotherhood among the different sections of the Christian Church; the unmistakable testimony that the supreme end of the Church's existence is the good of men—to each of which Christian missions bear a silent and convincing witness—these constitute the strongest defences of the faith.

So much attention is directed in the present day to the written *defence* of the truth—to the literature of apologetics—that there is danger of the truth itself being lost sight of, and its actual progress, which is its best apology, being overlooked. In carrying the

\* In May, 1881.

† As the evidential value of miracles has diminished through lapse of time, the *moral* evidence of Christianity has grown stronger and stronger; and this can be said of no other religion in the world.

Christian attack into foreign ground, we best defend and justify the faith of the Church at home. As Italy of old, assaulted in its citadel, sent forth her armies to conquer the world; as she was saved from Hannibal by taking the war across into Africa, so Christianity, called upon as it is in the present day to guard itself against numerous foes, to vindicate its claims upon the intelligence and consciences of men, will be best served by sending its forces away to heathen lands. The best weapons against modern unbelief are to be drawn from the armoury of missions. The best evidences of Christianity are converted Hindus and Chinamen, whose marvellous transformation of character proves the spiritual efficacy of the Gospel. The best defenders of the faith are tamed and enlightened savages, who have experienced its renewing power. The strongest bulwarks of our religion are those native churches in heathen lands that have been won to the Christian side. Spread the Gospel throughout the earth; let the word of the Lord "run and be glorified," gaining the acceptance of civilised and uncivilised nations, superseding ancient faiths, subduing prejudice and passion, and building up communities of men and women in all the virtues of spiritual and social life, and we need not fear for the future of Christianity. Let the Church only propagate her faith, and sceptics and scoffers without will be silenced far more effectually than by an age of controversy, while those of declining faith and love within will be put to shame. We are

not called to speculate about Christ, but to spread abroad a knowledge of the Saviour. The successful *diffusion* of the Gospel establishes conclusively its Divine origin, and justifies its Divine claims. "A faith which *boasts to be for humanity*," says F. D. Maurice, "cannot test its strength unless it is content to deal with men in all possible conditions. If it limits itself to England, it will adapt itself to the habits and fashions and prejudices of England—of England, too, in a particular age. But doing this it will never reach the hearts of Englishmen. . . . Most important is it to ascertain whether we are holding a faith which addresses us as members of a class, or one which addresses us *as men*, which explains the problems of our human life . . . which is *for men*, here and everywhere."\*

We commend some wise words of Professor Christlieb :—"Missions, that is to say, the embodied courage of the Church, the touchstone of her faith, of her unchanging hope,—missions, the world-subduing Christianity of deed, its witness-bearings, its self-sacrificing love, *are their own best apology*. And, therefore, we need them ever more and more, to confirm the truth of the promises of Scripture, and thus repel the attacks on the Divine Word. All mere earthly wisdom, wisdom according to the flesh, be it that which makes a God of this world and of life, or that which despairs of both; all speculation of the mere present, of pride and selfishness,—of all this,

\* "Religions of the World," pp. 243, 244. 4th ed.

missions must help to discover the foolishness, as they must aid in unanswerably proving the superiority of the Gospel and a true Christian culture to all human means of education." \*

\* "The Foreign Missions of Protestantism," p. 214.

## CHAPTER VII.

### *MISSIONS AND CIVILISATION—A PLEA FOR THE WORLD.*

7. ALL that we have urged thus far, implies that *Christian ideas are in themselves infinitely worthy of dissemination*. And here we come to the central justification of Missions; to that which in itself, should be a sufficient plea for the heathen, and a sufficient incentive to every thoughtful Christian to take part in the missionary enterprise. Missions, as we have seen, are an immense blessing to the Church herself—the fullest expression of her life—so that an appeal in behalf of the former is an appeal in behalf of the latter; but it would be spiritual selfishness to base our plea mainly on the ground of the reflex benefits we ourselves enjoy. The vindication of our common Christianity is not the highest reason for engaging in the work; but the fact that this Christianity of ours is *the embodiment of ideas that lie at the root of all true spiritual and intellectual life*—ideas for which the world is waiting. Missions enrich our common humanity by bringing it into contact with Christianity. Apart altogether from the

destiny of the heathen, on which we are not called to speculate, we have here in our possession that which is intended to be a blessing to the race—ideas which have wondrous power to purify and ennoble the personal, domestic, social, political, and national life of men.\*

The historian Gibbon, in his “Rational Inquiry into the Progress and Establishment of Christianity,” observes:—“While that great body (the Roman Empire) was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a pure and humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol.” And when he asks “by what means the Christian faith obtained so remarkable a victory over the established religions of the earth,” he attributes it “to the convincing evidence of the doctrine itself, and to the ruling providence of its great Author.”† Nothing but its own inherent strength—the “sheer spiritual superiority” which

\* Mr. Wace, in his “Foundations of Faith,” observes that “the history of the world would appear to be, in great measure, a history of the manner in which religious ideas, often of an apparently abstract and subtle character, can determine the future of whole races, and of vast regions of the earth.” P. 194, 2nd ed.

† “Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,” Vol. II. Chap. xv. pp. 265-6.

was in it—could have gained the adherence of the foremost nations of the world. “The question which the apologist presses,” says Professor Redford, in his valuable work, “The Christian’s Plea against Modern Unbelief” (p. 475),—and at many points the apologist and the missionary are one—“is, *not* why Christianity spread so rapidly when it became a Romanised religion and mingled with the imperial system, but why it succeeded in forcing its way from the obscurity of a Galilean village to the throne of the Cæsars, and especially why it was fitted to take the place of all the decaying systems of heathenism, and, as M. Renan puts it, ‘answered to the cry of all tender and weary spirits.’” Christianity became the power of a new life—intellectual, moral, religious—to mankind, by virtue of a new set of Divine ideas which Christ planted in human society.\*

The *purely spiritual ideas* that centre in the Christian conception of God, which “combines into a living unity all the separate elements of positive truth which are to be found in systems like Pantheism, Deism, Rationalism,” while “it excludes all that is false in views lower than or contrary to its own;” † the ideas that

\* The natural point of comparison in Christian and non-Christian faiths is between naked, isolated, ineffective truths, and Divine truth fixed in fact and life, deposited in the organic structure of the world’s life and history, and endowed with a living energy that ensures supreme and permanent power.

† Prof. Flint’s Lecture on “Theism,” p. 50.



gather round the moral nature of man as a spiritual and responsible being; the future life and a personal immortality; the reality of sin, and the necessity for redemption; and the continual and active agency of the Divine Spirit in the soul and in society—are truths adapted to the reason and nature of man in all the varieties of his existence, and essential to their satisfaction, as is abundantly shown by the triumphing of these truths when fairly in conflict with other forms of faith.\*

Nor are the more strictly *social and political ideas* which are inherent in the nature of Christianity any the less worthy of dissemination. They are calculated, indeed, to secure the consent and co-operation of philanthropists and political economists, in the cause of missions, when the more spiritual aspect of the question fails to move.† Christianity has not only given to men a pure worship and “a saving faith”; but it brings with it a complete renovation of society, and an emancipation of the human mind from base super-

\* We have but to compare the moral sentiment of Christianity with that which previously existed to see the superiority of its ideas. Sin becomes an inward stain instead of an outward offence, as is the case in other religions: forgiveness of injuries, humility, and benevolence become prime virtues; while a trustful resignation under calamity to the Father of spirits is opposed to Stoical submission or Mussulman fate.

† “In this, according to Rationalistic theologians, consists the perfectibility of the religion of Christ, viz., in expanding the doctrines of Christianity into those *eternal truths of reason which constitute the universal possession of the race.*” Eaton’s Bampton Lectures, 1872, p. 341, note.

stitutions, foul licentiousness, and idle speculations. It has conferred the rights of humanity upon the entire race; the rights of private judgment and liberty of conscience upon each individual man. It is the religion of the family and of the future. It has entered the circle of home, sanctified the marriage tie, and elevated the condition of women and children, the former being no longer degraded, and the latter no longer the property, but a part, of the family. It has removed the crowning curses of domestic and social life—polygamy, polyandry, concubinage, slavery, infanticide, and other cruel rites\*—which have debased non-Christian lands, ancient and modern; and has thereby saved many tribes where native life would

\* The following are among the evils that India has been delivered from by the influence of Christianity:—

1. The murder of parents, by suttee, by exposure on the banks of rivers, and by burial alive.
2. The murder of children, both by ordinary infanticide and by dedication to the Ganges, to be devoured by crocodiles.
3. Human sacrifices, both in temples and by wild tribes.
4. Suicide, by devotees flinging themselves before idol-cars, casting themselves from precipices or into rivers, and by widows drowning themselves.
5. Voluntary torments, by austerities, by hook-swinging, by thigh-piercing, by tongue-extraction, and by falling on knives.
6. Involuntary torments, by barbarous executions, by the mutilation of criminals, by bloody ordeals, by torturing witnesses.
7. Slavery, both domestic and predial, and the African slave trade.
8. Evils of caste, by the exclusion of low castes from offices, and by the exemption of high castes from appearing to give evidence.

otherwise have become extinct, for barbarous and un-civilised peoples sink the deeper the longer they are left to themselves. It has inspired the love of man *as man*, giving birth to brotherly feelings and self-denial.\* It has ameliorated human suffering, brightened the life of the young, and lightened the burdens of the poor.† “As a matter of fact,” says Mr. Lecky, “it has probably done more to quicken the affections of mankind, to promote pity, to create a pure and merciful ideal, than any other influence that has ever acted on the world.”‡ It has created community of classes, fostered representative government, moderated legal severities, and laid the basis of international law, by elevating the sentiments and practice of warfare, and encouraging intercourse and commerce among the

\* M. Comte speaks of “that love of the *whole human race* which was introduced by Christianity.” Pos. Phil., Vol. II. p. 235. (Har. Martineau’s Tr.)

† It has been remarked that before Christ came, no author in Greek or Latin antiquity has handed down the name of a carpenter or a boatman, or of any other humble working-man. The Gospel, by doing this, and by commencing with the poor, has created a belief in the dignity of *man*, and shown that the highest blessings are the heritage of *humanity*.

‡ “Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe” (Vol. I. p. 326, 6th ed.) Mr. Lecky says, vol. ii. p. 234, that the spirit of Christianity reorganised ancient society on a new basis. “It did this in three ways: it abolished slavery; it created charity; it inculcated self-sacrifice.” “Christianity alone could effect the profound change of character that rendered possible the abolition of *slavery*.” It did this by opposing to it the doctrine of universal brotherhood (p. 237). In Greece and Rome there appear to have been no public refuges for the sick; the infant was entirely unprotected, and infanticide was seldom regarded as a crime. “The epitaphs in the catacombs abun-

nations. It has supplanted the old idea that the governed exist for the wealth and welfare of the governing, the subjects for the sake of the Crown, with the nobler sentiment which is at least the ostensible, if not the real, motive in all modern extensions of our own British Empire—that our rule is beneficial to those who are brought beneath it.\* There is no

dantly prove the multitude of foundlings that were sustained by Christian charity" (p. 241). "*Charity* was one of the earliest, as it was one of the noblest, creations of Christianity. The precepts and examples of the Gospel struck a chord of pathos which the noblest philosophers of antiquity had never reached. For the first time the aureole of sanctity encircled the brow of sorrow, and invested it with a mysterious charm" (p. 244): "The history of *self-sacrifice* during the last 1800 years has been mainly the history of the action of Christianity upon the world" (p. 372).

\* Mr. Anthony Trollope's "*Life of Cicero*" (Chapman and Hall, 1880), gives some glimpses of the real state of the Roman world before the time of Christ. Half the population of the Roman cities were slaves. Slaves were tortured as witnesses, which is spoken of with no horror by Cicero or any other Roman writer (Vol. I. pp. 82-100). To lend money to citizens or allied states at enormous rates of interest was the ordinary resource of a Roman nobleman in quest of revenue (I. 116). To be proctor and consul that he might rob a province, and come back rich enough to bribe the judges, were the usual steps taken by enterprising Romans towards power, wealth, and enjoyment (I. 114). The Senate was time-serving and corrupt (I. 135). On the Roman oligarchy no judgment can be passed save one of unsparing condemnation (I. 127). The debts of Cæsar—the noble—were proverbial (I. 113). His pillage of provinces, and merciless cruelties in war and slavery, equalled the blood-thirstiness of any tyrant (I. 120). As to shame at such doings, there was no such feeling left among Romans (I. 174). There seems to have been no recognised standard of right and wrong. Cicero, who was almost a Christian, was unable to arrest corruption and quicken the morals of the people.

phase or condition of human life that is not blessed by the ideas of Christianity.

And the question is, *Are not these ideas as worthy of dissemination now as ever they have been?* And do not nations *need* them now as much as ever? As we reflect on that reconstruction of society which has been the work of Christianity, on the softening and purifying influence it has exercised in domestic and social relations, on the enlargement of human sympathies, the flow of "the pathos of life"—do not Christian missions, as the channel of such blessings, appear the noblest of all agencies, the broadest and most beneficent of institutions, the worthiest passion of all humane and earnest hearts?

8. And here we may tarry for a moment to glance at an aspect of the subject which may well come home to us as Englishmen. Missions, which convey these lofty and beneficent ideas to men, thus *contribute largely to the strength of our international policy.* The *highest testimony has been borne to the value of missions* in this important sphere of national life. For nothing can so materially contribute to the solution of difficult international problems, to the creation of those common interests, and aims, and hopes, which knit together by a bond of sympathy the different sections of mankind, as the spread of the Gospel, and the diffusion of that spirit of liberty, and industry, and brotherly kindness, and universal peace which missions breathe.

It is a melancholy fact, as Mr. Froude has observed, "that only a fourth part of mankind are born Christians; the remainder never hear the name of Christ, except as a reproach. The Chinese and Japanese, we may almost say every weaker race with whom we have come in contact, connect Christianity only with the forced intrusion of strangers, whose behaviour among them has served ill to recommend their creed." It is, therefore, a consideration that may well weigh with educationalists, moralists, and others, who may be jealous of the good name of England, and yet half-hearted in the cause of missions, that if missionaries do not go among foreign tribes and nations, *others will*, who, instead of taking them the Gospel, will carry powder and shot and brandy.\*

It also serves as the reply to those who say, "Let the Hindus, and the Chinese, and others

\* Miss C. F. Gordon Cumming, in her valuable testimony borne to the Polynesian Missions, remarks :—"It is, unfortunately, only too notorious that wherever, as in those northern isles, the natives have derived their first impressions of civilisation from traders, they have invariably deteriorated, and the white influence has been exerted to exclude all improving influences. On the other hand, throughout Polynesia, the missionaries were the first to occupy the field where traders dared not venture, and in every case they so tamed the fierce savages, that commerce naturally followed in their wake and under their protection. Yet even here no debt of gratitude is considered due to the successors of those early pioneers, and the antagonism of the traders to the missionaries is, unfortunately, notorious."—"A Lady's Cruise in a French Man-of-War."

alone, *till you have provided for those at home.*" Most forcibly has Mr. Maurice remarked:—"If Englishmen *did* abstain rigidly from all intercourse with Mohammedans, Hindus, Buddhists, if *no* body of our countrymen were engaged in trading with other countries, or in conquering them, or in keeping possession of them, the interdiction of all spiritual communication might be judicious—at all events, possible. But as the points at issue are, what *kind* of communication shall we hold with these people, what *kind* of help or protection shall we extend to them; if they are spiritual creatures, and, as such, must in some way be dealt with, *then how?* Since this, I say, is the fair statement of the case, such appeals to our home sympathies seem rather capricious and rhetorical than benevolent or sensible." \*

We know that unscrupulous Europeans, godless traders, spirit-merchants, gold-seekers, and slave-hunters, *will* carry with them to the end of the earth their demoralising influences, as they have done to that "child of sorrow," the Indian of the United States. To many parts of North America, to South Africa, to New Zealand and Australia, to India, and China, and Japan, the white man is carrying the vices of the West. For the fame of the West, for the honour of our country, as well as for its stability, shall not the men be multiplied who will take to their fellows the Gospel,

\* "The Religions of the World," pp. 242-3, 4th ed.

and with it material and spiritual prosperity? \* According to Mr. Whitmee, formerly a missionary in Samoa, "Each missionary in the South Seas causes a return in commerce of about £10,000 annually," so that, from a mercantile point of view, missions are far from being unproductive. Colonial Governments, again, have affirmed that "one missionary can dispense with many soldiers." †

\* Lieutenant Shaw, in "The Flight of the Lapwing," says:— "The missionaries do more towards winning respect for foreigners than any other class in China; and there is no doubt that they do succeed to a large extent in conquering the pride of the natives and overcoming their intolerance; and they not only gain the respect of those amongst whom they work, but they gain it for all foreigners who are worthy of it."

† Take the South African question; how missionary enterprise has contributed to its settlement. What the Colonial Office has failed to do has been quietly and successfully done by missionary training. Mr. F. R. Statham, in his "Blacks, Boers, and British," gives an account of the native settlement of Edendale, near Maritzburgh, said to be the largest village in S. Africa, and which owes its origin to Mr. Allison, formerly a missionary in that part of the country. He purchased a farm of 6,000 acres, and set about the formation of a native industrial settlement, "attracting round him natives who had come under his influence." 4,000 out of the 6,000 acres are now under cultivation. "The prevailing atmosphere is one of orderly progress and high respectability." It was from these men, "black as the Zulus themselves," that a brave little force, some sixty strong, was raised by Col. Durnford, who, with their "rough uniform and broad-brimmed hats," stood by their "shaggy little ponies" on that fatal day of Isandhlwana, and fired steadily across the Buffalo river at the advancing swarms of Cetywayo's warriors, with "no European leader left to direct them, and delayed their own retreat to save what they could of the remnant of the ill-fated force left in Lord Chelmsford's camp."



From our great Indian dependency unmistakable testimony is borne by the Government to the value of missions, the intimate bearing of which on the moral and material progress of the people, and on the stability of our Indian Empire, cannot be lost sight of by us as Englishmen.\* Lord Lawrence says—"Truly the

We read of Sir Henry Bulwer's visit to the settlement, and how he thanked them in the name of the Queen "for the good service done by the Edendale men, and their gallant conduct in the field." "These men of Edendale," says the writer, "are, it is plain, men who, while they are deeply religious both in thought and action, are men who enjoy life; they can fight as well as pray, and cultivate their fields as well as fight. To-day they are honoured citizens of a British Colony, capable of holding their own, either politically or commercially, with their English fellow-subjects. Thirty years back, the settlement of Edendale was still unfounded, and the fathers of the now rising generation were little better off in any way than the subjects of Cetywayo. This is what can be done with the native Kafir when due conditions are observed, and yet there are people who say that the native question in Natal is a hopeless puzzle."—"Blacks, Boers, and British," chap. XV. (Macmillan. 1881.)

\* The following testimony respecting the loyalty of the native Christians of India during the Mutiny of 1857, as given by Dr. George Smith, in his "Life of Dr. Duff," is of high value:—

"While the missionaries themselves were surprised by the steadfastness and the faith of converts, whose physique was generally weak, and their pre-Christian associations demoralising, the Government, led by the great Punjabee heroes, began to see that *Christianity meant active loyalty*. Native Christians, among them Mr. S. C. Mookerjea, of Dr. Duff's college, manned the guns in Agra Fort. Within a fortnight of the receipt of the Meerut massacre, the Krishnaghur Christians—weak Bengalees—vainly offered 'to aid the Government to the utmost of our power, both by bullock gharries and men, or in any other way in which our

conduct and character of Englishmen have had a mighty influence on missionary enterprise in India and elsewhere. No doubt such considerations have led many a heathen to reject the faith which seemed to him to produce such evil fruit. But the greater the baneful effects of such examples, the more necessary is it that we should apply the Gospel as an antidote. Apart from the higher interests of religion, it is most important, *in the interests of the Empire*, that there should be a special class of men of holy lives and disinterested labours among the people, and seeking at

services may be required, and that cheerfully, without wages or remuneration.' Those of Benares, under Mr. Leupolt, formed a band which defended the Mission till Neil arrived, and they joined the new military police till the Calcutta authorities forbade them. Not a few, even then, served as men and officers with the police levy which saved Mirzapore, and in Mr. Hodgson Pratt's corps, which gave peace to Hooghly. The German missionaries in Chota Nagpore offered the blinded Government of Bengal a force of 10,000 Christian Kols; and the American, Dr. Mason, volunteered to send a battalion of Christian Karens from Burmah."—Vol. II., p. 350.

A similar testimony is borne to the confidence reposed in the missionaries at that time by the natives. "If any European is respected and trusted by the natives at present, it is the missionary. All the influence of public officers and their agents at Benares could not succeed in procuring supplies for the troops and others from the country round; but a missionary well known to the people is now going round the villages, and getting in supplies for the public service. The missionaries and their families are living, at that and some other stations, at some distance from the other residents, and from the means of defence, and are surrounded by the people on every side. How remarkable is this state of things!"—*Ibid.* Vol. II., p. 352.

all times their best good." \* Again, the Government of India says that it "cannot but acknowledge the great obligation under which it is laid by the benevolent exertions made by the 600 missionaries, whose blameless example and self-denying labours are infusing new vigour into the stereotyped life of the great populations placed under English rule, and are preparing them to be *in every way better men and better citizens of the great Empire in which they dwell.*" † Sir Bartle Frere, as former Governor of Bombay, says:—"I assure you that, whatever you may be told to the contrary, the teaching of Christianity among 200 millions of civilised, industrious Hindus and Moham-medans in India, is *effecting changes, moral, social, and political*, which, for extent and rapidity of effect, are far more extraordinary than anything you or your fathers have witnessed in modern Europe." ‡ We add one testimony more, and this is the verdict of one of our Indian fellow-subjects. Babu Keshab Chandra Sen, the leader of one of the sections of the Brahma Somaj Society, in a lecture he delivered in Calcutta, in 1879, uttered the following words:—"It is not the British army that deserves any honour for holding India. If unto any army appertains the honour of

\* From the *Times*, Jan. 6, 1873.

† From the Report of the Secretary of State and Council of India, upon "The Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India."—April, 1873, p. 129.

‡ Lecture on "Christianity suited to all forms of Civilisation," p. 30.

*holding India for England, that army is the army of Christian missionaries, headed by their invincible Captain, Jesus Christ."*

Surely we cannot afford to feel lukewarm towards a cause so closely bound up with the honour and prosperity of our country, and which seeks to bring about a moral and political unity among the nations. We plead that missions, instead of securing the sympathy of a few pious souls in certain sections of the community, should win the hearty and manly response of all lovers of their country, all good citizens, and all earnest politicians.

9. For, further, we see that Christian missions *diffuse the religion of progress and civilisation*. "Progress and development appear to me," says M. Guizot, "the fundamental ideas contained in the word civilisation;"\* and Christianity from the first has been the religion of progress. The philosophy of history clearly indicates a gradual improvement in human affairs which the distinctive character of the Gospel has brought about. Christianity has been an instrument in civilisation, and a permanent agent in human progress.† This is admitted by M. Comte; its

\* "Civilisation in Europe," p. 29. (W. and R. Chambers, Edin.)

† Unlike all other religions, the supreme claim on men's acceptance of the Bible revelation rests on its historical character, on its being a record of the Divine Nature and Will unfolded on the plane of history. The Bible is the history of a Divine culture of men from the earliest ages. The Koran, and the religious books of the Hindus, do not contain great historical facts that can be verified; but the Bible is history from beginning to end; and its

history has been a history of continuous growth.\* The late Dean Stanley calls the Bible the guiding book of the world's history, and speaks of its "insight into the wants of men far beyond the age in which it was written."† "The tendency to look, not to the past, but to the future for types of perfection," says Sir H. S. Maine, "was brought into the world by Christianity." And he adds, "Ancient literature gives few or no hints of a belief that the progress of society is necessarily from worse to better."‡

This is exactly what is wanting in the old religions. There lacks in every one of them the principles of *progress*, and that element of *universality* which is Christianity's distinctive glory. There is no trace in them of any "modern element," of universal adaptation to the wants of men. The Chinese "reverence humanity as typified, not in the endless promise and hope of the future, but in the completed characters and achievements of the past." And

continuous and progressive revelation explains the history of the race. Regarding the Bible thus, as the record of the manifestation of God in history, we are bound to give the world the sacred book, that it may learn its religious history, as well as its present heritage, and future destiny.

\* "Pos. Phil." Vol. II., chap. 9. (Har. Martineau's Tr.)

† He refers to that modern element which we find in the Bible—to the enforcement of principles and duties which for years and centuries lay almost unperceived, but which have, we see, been in accordance with the utmost requirements of philosophy and civilisation.

‡ "Ancient Law," p. 74. 5th ed.

this is true of the nations of the East generally. Their religions, including Mohammedanism, have reflected the climate, country, race, time, in which they arose, and hence could never be faiths of progress and universal religions.\* Christianity, on the contrary, is suited to every clime, land, tribe, and age, and to every social and political constitution. "Mohammed, *as he was*, rules Mohammedans *as they are*. His word was petrified and crystallised in Mecca, and can assimilate no new truth."† Thus the Mohammedans lag behind the Christian nations in the present day. They cannot adapt themselves in Turkey, in India, or elsewhere, to the march of civilisation. A native of India once remarked to the writer:—"Mohammedanism is effete; many Hindu institutions are out of tune with the spirit

\* If we look at the civilised world between 400 and 500 years B.C., we come upon some of the greatest minds our race has known—Confucius in China; Sâkyâ-Muni, the founder of Buddhism, in India; Zoroaster in Persia; Pythagoras and Socrates in Greece—but though great their genius, and excellent many of their ideas, what did they accomplish? M. Guizot, in his "Meditations on the essence of Christianity" (pp. 58, 59, Eng. Tr.), asks, "Did such leaders of thought really change the moral and social condition of nations? Did they *cause humanity to make any great progress*, and open to it horizons which it had not before known? By no means. Whatever influence they may have exerted . . . they did not draw nations out of the beaten track in which they had lived. . . . Notwithstanding the material and political revolutions which they underwent . . . these ancient nations afterwards followed in the same ways, and retained the same propensities as before."

† R. H. Hutton's "Essays" (Theol.), p. 277.

of progress ; Christianity seems to adapt itself to all time."

There is nothing so marked in a comparison of religions as this, namely, the *limited development* of non-Christian systems, and the absence of any guiding and moulding authority. Any creative principle of civilisation which they may have possessed, as was the case with Greece, becomes exhausted ; or, as in India and Egypt, there is a dull monotony, and society falls into a stationary, frozen state. They answered only for a certain stage of culture. "When," as Neander says, "the nations in the course of their progress had passed beyond this, the necessary consequence was a dis severing of the spirit from the religious traditions."\* This is what is going on, in such a striking manner, in India in the present day. Contact with the religion and civilisation of the West causes the native mind to divorce itself from ancient traditions and hereditary beliefs. As science and criticism proceed, the old creeds of the world are maimed. They are not fitted to harmonise with the intellectual, social, and moral progress of the modern world. Advancing civilisation destroyed

\* "Church History." Vol. I., p. 6. (Clark's ed., Edin.) Among the Western nations, Neander says, "The more widely diffused civilisation became, the more extreme grew this schism. Religion was deprived of its power, and the defection of this led at the same time to the depravation of morals. . . . There was as yet *no salt* to preserve the life of humanity from decomposing, or to restore it back again when passing to decomposition." *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the religions of Greece and Rome, as it is doing the religions of India to-day. Only Christianity can bear "the brunt of advancing civilisation." It is the only religion that comports with the march of modern progress, as represented by the foremost nations of the world. "There is but one example of a religion," says Mr. Lecky, "which is not necessarily subverted by civilisation, and that example is Christianity ;" \* and naturally, for in the highest stage of civilisation it is the purest form of religion that will ultimately prevail. † It is not affirmed that the influence of civilisation and the influence of Christianity are identical; each may have a separate sphere of action, and may react upon

\* "Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe." Vol. I., p. 306. 6th ed.

† "The widely prevalent opinion, that the Indians *must* become extinct, is now refuted by the indisputable fact that those tribes of them which have been Christianised are increasing in number, while their outward condition is being rapidly bettered. The Gospel, preached by 226 American missionaries (including Catholics) has proved itself to the Indians the savour of life unto life; whilst *without* its morally regenerating power, all usages and exigencies of civilisation serve but the more quickly to destroy them, as they do all non-civilised people. Upwards of 41,000 Indians can now read, and this number is increased by 1,200 every year."—Christlieb's "Foreign Missions," p. 99.

Mr. Murray, an experienced missionary to the South Seas, remarks, "All external progress, meant to be lasting, must not be forced untimely upon a nation. The people must, in the first place, be spiritually, morally, and religiously so far raised, as really to feel those wants which create a desire for the comforts and requirements of civilised life. Inward and outward things must go hand in hand." *Ibid.*, p. 136.



the other. Conquest, colonisation, intercourse, trade, science may be the pioneers in many instances, as in India, Africa, and Japan; but high civilisation and Christianity co-exist, and it remains true that the religion of Christ, in its purest and freest form, is the religion of civilisation—the soul of all real progress.\*

The question is, Is the world all round to advance in civilisation, or is one corner of it to be isolated from the rest? The tendency of modern thought and sentiment is against the isolation of nations, and aims at knitting them together by a bond of sympathy woven out of common dialects, common interests, and common hopes. The tendency is “to treat mankind,” as Mr. Tylor says in his “Primitive Culture,” as “homogeneous in nature, though placed in different grades of

\* Its true strength in this respect lies in its planting itself in the midst of all human interests, in its being accessible to the power of new ideas, in its allowing all other intellectual activities—trade, law, diplomacy, politics, science, literature, art—to be progressive and indefinite. It has the power of absorbing the elements of universal knowledge, of healthfully assimilating the varying conditions of progressive civilisation. It has allowed every nation that has embraced it to contribute something to its growth. It was this which gave it its supremacy in its early days. “Christianity,” says Luthardt, “did gain the mastery, yet far from annihilating, it preserved, purified, received into itself, and united with its very being the cultivation of the ancient world, and transmitted it to posterity. After having taken possession of the Roman world, it laid the German world at the feet of Jesus, made its people the instruments of transmitting its doctrines to futurity, and developed in them a new intellectual life.”—“Apol. Lect. on Fund. Truths of Christianity,” p. 241.

civilisation ;” “ for there seems,” says the same writer, “ no human thought so primitive as to have lost its bearings on our own thought, nor so ancient as to have broken its connection with our own life.” \*

The comparative sciences—philology, mythology, politics, jurisprudence, religion—are finding out the rudimentary words, legends, social organisations, laws, and doctrines of related peoples, and establishing the unity of the race. No class of men is content to stay at home. The merchant is seeking fresh countries for trade, the explorer fresh fields for science, the statesman new lands to colonise, the warrior new frontiers to annex, the missionary new tribes to evangelise. Everywhere there is a tendency to be borne out on “ the tidal wave ” of the race. “ The development of the *Idea of Humanity*,” says Baron Bunsen, “ must be the governing principle in

\* Vol. I., p. 6. Vol. II., p. 409. “ The human mind in its upward progress,” says Sir John Lubbock (“ *Origin of Civilisation*,” p. 206. 2nd ed.), “ everywhere passes through the same, or very similar phases,” which shows that all are susceptible of higher culture and nobler influences. Tree-worship formerly existed in France and Poland, while England had its sacred groves ; serpent-worship prevailed in parts of Italy ; water-worship and stone-worship in many parts of Western Europe ; witchcraft, which is fetichism, notwithstanding all the burning, has not even yet been eradicated in our own country ; while in Scandinavia and Russia, human sacrifices continued down to the introduction of Christianity ; to say nothing of the fact that in the cradle of civilisation, in Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and India, the traces of a ‘ stone-age ’ have been discovered.”

history itself.”\* “The nation exists for the race, as the individual for the nation. . . . Men die that man may live : peoples perish that humanity may endure.” †

And this is a sufficient answer to those who ask why other nations *may not be left* with the faiths that have served them so long, undisturbed by the new forces of Christianity. They will lag behind in the common march of progress. For the sake of “the continuity of civilisation,” and that there may be a unity of development among the different races of men, the world must be girdled by the Gospel. All should grow together towards a common goal, and therefore all must be penetrated by the same true spirit of the ages. Nothing unites men together like a common faith—a common religion. And if the Gospel be not given to the nations, while they are yet to share in a common civilisation, they will soon have, as we have seen, no religious faiths at all.

In the Hibbert Lectures, 1881, Mr. T. W. Rhys Davids remarks (p. 111):—“The *sense of duty to the race* has sprung out of a fact only lately become a

\* “God in History,” Vol. I., p. 27. Elsewhere he says, “Each individual and each nation ought to be a representative of Humanity, but at the same time ought to serve her, set her above itself, *recognise her to be its aim and end*,” p. 38. “Christianity restored to the elect among the nations of antiquity the conception and the sense of the *one undivided race* of man,” p. 46.

† Fairbairn’s “Phil. of Relig. and Hist.,” pp. 256, 258.

generally received conception—I mean the progressive continuity of human progress.” We recognise and gladly welcome this “generally received conception,” the doctrine of the solidarity of the race—though we should affirm that the doctrine appeared in the New Testament before it found a place in the school of Positivism—and we maintain that Christian missions are in fullest sympathy with it, and illustrate it more clearly than any other enterprise. They move with the broad stream of their age; raising to higher levels lower races of men; supplying with nobler motives and more comprehensive principles those of the great human family who have sunk into dreary torpor and wasted life; stablishing, all round the globe, “the things that remain, which were ready to die.”\*

We may thus plead for missions on no sectarian, theological, or speculative ground, but on the broad, common-sense ground of social philosophy, which every true lover of the race must accept. Missions mean knowledge and enlightenment to all the nations; the well-being of humanity; “the greatest happiness to the greatest number.” They are not merely a converting power, but a great elevating power, purifying the whole mass; “having promise of the life which now is,” as well as “of that which is to come.”† And they are this because they bear a

\* Rev. iii. 2.

† 1 Tim. iv. 8. Missions in India proceed upon this principle. They are wisely worked, to a large extent, on the understanding that

message addressed to all mankind, whose revelations correspond with the spiritual and intellectual intuitions of the race, alike of the highest culture and the lowest barbarism. The Bible is the only true charter of the rights of humanity ; and it is the cosmopolitan character of its doctrines that gives it its great success—they are congenial to the truest wants and instincts of mankind at large.

no *great immediate* results should be impatiently expected, but that a gradual elevation of the tone of society—effected mainly through the instrumentality of our schools and colleges—the inculcation of a healthy morality, and of Christian ideas of excellence in various spheres of life, necessarily contribute to the ultimate triumph of Christianity. The true criterion of success is not How many *converts* can this or that society boast of? but How far has Christian teaching told on the systems of the East? How much nearer are *India* and *China* to their conversion? Hence it follows that no branch of missionary work is to be judged by the results which it may produce alone, but *as part* of a great effort designed to accomplish vast and glorious issues, reaching far into the future of the Church and of the world.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *MISSIONS AND RELIGION—A PLEA FOR THE WORLD.*

10. WE pass now to a higher position. Christian missions not only diffuse the religion of progress and civilisation, but that which must ever form the basis of all true civilisation—*the highest standard of morality, and the regeneration of individual life.* The formation of nobler character is the great design of the Gospel. Its doctrines are intensely ethical, and are of value to us in exact proportion to their moral and spiritual power. Taking the lowest ground—on the admission of rationalistic theologians or mere moralists, Christianity is a vehicle “for passing on to future generations the gift of an *improved morality,*” and should, therefore, be diffused. We take our stand, of course, on higher ground than this; but it contributes materially to our purpose to note that Christianity is admitted by those outside its distinctive sphere, to promote the moral development of the race.

Among the five causes that favoured “the rapid growth of the Christian Church” in the first cen-

turies, Gibbon mentions "the *pure and austere morals* of the Christians."\* "The *desire of perfection*," he says, "became the ruling passion of their soul."† M. Comte remarks that "the grand social characteristic of Catholicism (by which he signifies Christianity) was that by constituting a *moral power*, wholly independent of the political, it *infused morality* into political government," which, he adds, "marks more than any other characteristic whatever the *radical superiority* of modern civilisation over that of antiquity."‡ "The great characteristic of Christianity," says Mr. Lecky, "and the great moral proof of its divinity, is that it has been *the main source of the moral development* of Europe, through the assimilating and attractive influence of a perfect ideal. The moral progress of mankind can never cease to be distinctively and intensely Christian as long as it consists of a gradual approximation to the character of the Christian Founder."§ M. Guizot affirms the same thing. In depicting the moral aspect of the middle ages, he traces to Christianity "*a certain moral idea*" that hovered over this rude society, and adds, "Its precise characteristic is to inspire men with a *great moral*

\* "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," Vol. II., chap. XV., p. 267.

† *Ibid.*, p. 317.

‡ "Pos. Phil." Vol. II., p. 262. (Har. Martineau's Tr.)

§ "Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe," Vol. I., p. 307. 6th ed.

*ambition*, to hold constantly before their eyes a type infinitely superior to human reality, and to excite them to reproduce it." \*

Man everywhere is a moral being, and his moral nature, though in different stages of development in different countries, is everywhere the same. We find similar, though defective, ethical ideas existing in the East as in the West, and therefore the highest standard of morals, which shall be, at the same time, the greatest stimulus to morality, is needed as much by *all* nations as it is by one. "The New Testament," says Professor Seeley, "is the text book of universal or natural morality." Its type of character is perfect, not partial; universal, not national and generic. And the world *needs* the high morality of the Gospel. Though man is a moral being, human nature in non-Christian countries is, more or less, a corrupt mass of immoralities. Though we may not go so far as Sir John Lubbock, who affirms that lower savages are "almost entirely wanting in moral feeling," that no instance is recorded of one "having shown any symptoms of remorse;" that in the languages of some savage tribes there are no names existing for virtue and vice, justice and injustice, love, soul, and God; † it is a fact patent to all who have lived among the heathen, that they have, at the best, confused ideas of justice, right, moral retri-

\* "Civ. en France." III. 115, ed. Bohn. Quoted in Eaton's Bampton Lectures, 1872, p. 172, note.

† "Origin of Civilisation," pp. 298, 303. 2nd ed.



bution, and immortality; that the moral sense is very imperfectly developed, and waits for the enlightening and quickening influences of Christianity. The character of the deities worshipped is often flagrantly immoral. Purity of mind and heart are rendered impossible in India, Egypt, and elsewhere, by low, gross, sensual forms of worship. "The corruption of religion," says Bunsen, "is the corruption of nations."

And this corruption may proceed from two sources, the one or the other of which, or both of them combined, blights the life of all pagan races. *Idolatry and superstition* paralyse the moral and spiritual nature of man, and leave the mass of the people dead; or *pantheism* weaves its subtle web around educated minds, and destroys the spring of voluntary actions. The degeneration of the original religious consciousness, the loss of faith in personal moral responsibility, which pantheism engenders, leads to the corruption of the individual, and so to the corruption of the nation. Wherever pantheism exists, as it does so largely in the East, morality is dead. Both India and China exhibit a state in which man has not discovered the distinctive reality of his being as a force apart from Nature, and consequently has no clear conception of individual obligation and responsibility. This is the result of ages of pantheistic dreaming; and the moral regeneration of such nations is hopeless apart from Christianity.

We would not overlook the numerous moral sentiments and precepts that are found in the old religions—those imperishable elements of moral truth that light up the darkness of the pre-Christian world—emanating especially from such faiths as Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism; we hail them gladly as witness-bearers to “the Light of the World,” for truth is truth wherever found; but we must rightly estimate their value. Some there are who, taking Bolingbroke as their example, maintain that the moral element of Christianity has in it nothing distinctive and peculiar. Certain isolated ethical sayings are culled from different heathen writers, and the sentiments they embody are held up as anticipating the truths of Christianity, and even as a pretext for leaving heathen nations to themselves, with their own religions. But the true originality of any system of morals depends, as has been frequently pointed out, not so much upon the elements of which it is composed, as upon the manner in which they are blended together, the proportionate value that is attached to different qualities, the symmetrical formation of a certain type of character. And judged thus, the Christian type is altogether different from the pagan. Christianity has originated a character, which, in the matchless blending of the sterner and the gentler virtues, and in the portrayal of virtues altogether unknown before, was never even imagined in the ancient world. It has added largely to the vocabulary of morals. It has focussed in One who was

the Truth, the moral truths of all time ; and as the several prismatic rays blend into the one white light of heaven, so the scattered virtues of the past meet and shine lustrously in the one perfect character of Christ. The central idea of holy love, which sums up the Divine character revealed in Christ, with its circle of related ideas which go to form Christian morality, was unrealised in the pre-Christian world. Love to God, and love to man, which are the root ideas of Christian morality, representing as they do the filial relation to God, and the brotherly relation to man, were, it is true, latent in human nature, but were evoked by Christianity ; and from them have sprung new motives of action, new sanctions for duty, new principles and aims—the fruits of a new spirit which, entering into our fallen humanity, makes it flourish again.

But how is this? Is it that Christianity simply preaches a lofty morality? A gospel of morality has been preached before, and has failed. There has been a great gulf between saying and doing. Morality could not have had a fairer and finer field than China ; yet the Chinese, after centuries of moral teaching, are admitted, by those who know them best, to be among the most immoral of mankind. What is the explanation? The Chinese, most deficient in morality, are also most deficient in the religious faculty. They can hardly be said to have ever known religion. Two of their religions—Confucianism and Taoism—would scarcely be classed as such in any other country, while

the third is a depraved form of Buddhism imported from India.

Outside Christianity there is no essential connection between religion and morality. Religion, where it exists among non-Christian races, has not a moral aspect or influence; and moral character, if it exists, does so independently of the established religion of the country. Even Socrates saw little connection between religion and ethics. Aristotle is said to have done the same. No people *knew* better what was right than the ancient Athenians; and yet Athens became fearfully corrupt. There is much high moral teaching among the Hindus; but knowledge and works, belief and practice, thought and life, are far more completely divorced than among ourselves. Theoretically, a Hindu may be one thing, and, practically, another; and it is this strange severance of two parts of human nature that renders moral and social reforms so difficult in that country. The understanding of the Hindu may apprehend the fitness and unfitness of things, but there does not follow the practical authority of these conceptions over voluntary actions; there exists a moral inability to allow any necessary connection between conviction and practice. We need *with* ethical ideas the moving force of an authoritative and spiritual religion. This is the fatal defect under which all heathen nations lie. The history of the world is the history of moral failure through the drying up of the fountain of religion. The only moral regeneration possible to men must come through the diffusion of the

Gospel ; and the secret of the success of Christianity lies in the fact that it presents a *moral dynamic* to the will—that which is summed up in the language of the Apostle Paul, “THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US ; ”\* so that we are able to say “*non eloquimur magna, sed vivimus.*”

Sublime as the Gospel morality is, it does not constitute the whole Gospel.† As a moral system alone it would never have accomplished the work given it to do. It exhibited a purer law of life and a loftier example than the world had seen before ; but it conquered by the invisible spiritual power proceeding from its Head, which becomes a fountain of new life in our corrupt humanity, quickening and guiding men of all classes, and in every variety of condition. It is in its *transforming action on individuals* that the real work of Christianity, as compared with other religions, is seen.‡ The moral changes effected in individual

\* 2 Cor. v. 14.

† “This is,” says M. Guizot, “not less than absolutely to mistake the bond which unites in man thought with sentiment, and belief with action. Man is grander and less easy to satisfy than superficial moralists pretend ; the law of his life is for him, in the profound instinct of his soul, necessarily connected with the secret of his destiny ; and it is only the Christian dogma that gives to Christian ethics the Royal authority of which they stand in need to govern and to regenerate humanity.”—“Meditations on Christianity,” p. 260. (Eng. Tr. Murray.)

‡ In the preface to the second edition of his “Christian Evidences,” Prebendary Row remarks :—“Nothing has more strongly impressed upon my own mind the necessity—nay, the duty, of placing the *moral evidences* of Christianity in the front of the argument,

character by new spiritual convictions—not the result of natural causes, of any social constitution, as maintained by M. Comte, but by contact with a Divine personality—entered into society, and healed it. Christianity advanced from heart to heart through personal influence. Contact with the life, and death, and teaching of the Nazarene, won and transformed, first of all, a small band of individuals, shut out from the culture of the age; then possessed and moulded men of mind and influence, till the thought of Alexandria, Athens, and Rome, together with governments and nations, yielded to its sway.

And it is this spiritual power over individuals, which, as missionary experience abundantly testifies, is the distinguishing mark of Christianity in the world to-day. As the degeneration of the religious consciousness led, in the first instance, to the corruption of the individual, and then to the decay of the nation, so now nations are redeemed through the regeneration of the units. “Who will deny,” says M. Guizot, “that Christianity from the first was a great crisis in civilisation? Why? Because it *changed the internal man*, the prevailing principles

and of assigning a subordinate place to those events which are commonly designated ‘miracles,’ than the enormous difficulties which that form of the argument which relies almost conclusively on the attestation of miracles places in the way of an inquiring Hindu theist, and the all but illimitable investigation into which it compels him to enter before he can be expected to accept Christianity as a Divine revelation.”—Bampton Lectures for 1877, p. viii. 3rd ed.

and sentiments, because it *regenerated the moral and intellectual man.*" \* This, he maintains, must ever be one of the main elements and conditions of civilisation. The inward and the outward, as we have already seen, must go together. We must not force external progress on a people. Civilisation, if it is to be real and lasting, must grow up from within, from cleansed desires and regenerated passions. The members of the community must be first raised, spiritually, morally, religiously, so as to be really conscious of the wants which a higher state of civilisation supplies.

And this inward quickening is effected by the doctrines of the Gospel. They contain "the core of man's moral regeneration." The doctrine of Grace has been the force which has moved the world. It established a new centre of influence ; it gave to the race a new beginning. A new-born consciousness of sin, and of salvation through faith in Christ, give motives to repentance for the past, and invest the present life, and the life to come, with new solemnity.† This is where all other religions fail. "The old world," says Carlyle, "*knew nothing of conversion ;*" nor does the modern world, outside Christianity. Christianity makes the only adequate provision for the claims of the human spirit, in its sense of sinfulness and need of reconciliation, and in its yearning after Divine com-

\* "Hist. of Civil. in Europe," p. 31. (Chambers' ed.)

† "Of all systems the world has ever seen, the philosophies of ancient Greece and Rome appealed most strongly to the sense of virtue, and Christianity to *the sense of sin.*"—Lecky's "Rise and Infl. of Rationalism in Eur." Vol. I., p. 355. 6th ed.

munion. Other religions have no such quickening, elevating, satisfying power. *They do not transform souls.* "Outside of Christianity there have been grand spectacles of activity and force, brilliant phenomena of genius and virtue, generous attempts at reform, learned philosophical systems, and beautiful mythological poems ; *no real, profound, or fruitful regeneration of humanity and of society.*"\* For this our weary, wasted world is waiting ; and it is the beneficent ministry of Christian Missions to convey to the nations this living virtue, this healing balm, this redeeming grace, if they are not to perish, as others have done before them, in their own corruption.

11. We spread Christianity abroad, then, because it is the *purest and highest and only adequate religion* the world possesses ; and it is incumbent on those who have it to give to their fellows that which is the equal right of all mankind. We do not stop to prove that religion is a *necessity*, and not a weakness, of the heart. All that we have said proceeds from that assumption. Religion is a universal phenomenon of humanity, though as variable in type as are the races of men. It is a natural growth from roots fixed deep in our humanity, and expands according to necessary laws. An overwhelming majority of the race bears testimony to the fact that man *must worship*. No tribe has yet been discovered destitute of some belief in beings higher than themselves. The universal

\* Guizot's "Meditations on Christianity," p. 59. (Eng. Tr. Murray.)



is the necessary. "What man has everywhere done, he could not but do." Man must worship; and if he does not worship the true, he will worship the false.

The so-called religion of Nature, or the religion of humanity, does homage to the religious spirit; but by narrowing its sphere it dwarfs the spirit. The most devout disciple of natural religion reaches a point beyond which he cannot know, and at that point joins the Agnostics. Revelation alone supplies an answer to the mighty questions that press upon the mind; alone provides solutions for its profound enigmas.

The superiority of Christianity over every other development of religious thought is generally admitted, even by those who do not include themselves within its ranks. M. Comte admits the earliest ideal of the Christian Church—which is, of course, the truest ideal—to be *the greatest triumph* humanity has yet achieved.\* Strauss observes: "As little as mankind will ever be without religion, so little will they ever be without Christ—an historical, not a mythical Christ—an individual, not a mere symbol. Christ remains to us, as *the highest we know and are capable of imagining* within the sphere of religion, as He without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible."† And, again, "Never, either in our days or in the remotest future, *can any religious pro-*

\* Quoted by Eaton in his Bampton Lectures for 1872, p. 274. Note.

† Quoted by Dean Stanley.

*gress hope to rival the gigantic step* which humanity made through the revolution effected by Christ.”\* M. Renan says: “The world will always be religious, and Christianity, in a wide sense, is *the last word of religion.*”† Let us add testimonies of writers more sympathetic with Christianity. “If thou ask,” says Carlyle, “to what height man has carried it in this manner (*i.e.*, religious symbols), look on our divinest Symbol—on Jesus of Nazareth, and His Life and His Biography, and what followed therefrom. *Higher has the human thought not yet reached*: this is Christianity, and Christendom; a symbol of quite perennial, infinite character, whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest.”‡ “The religious minds of every land and of every opinion,” remarks Mr. Lecky, “have recognised in the Founder of Christianity *the highest conceivable ideal and embodiment* of compassion as of purity.”§ Christianity stands by general consent without a rival: it has grown and spread as no other religion has done; it has proved itself superior to all other faiths; it has testified its suitability to all the spiritual and social wants of man. It has been well said, “Men could not, would not, turn from it, if it was properly brought home to them—if it was not tendered to them with

\* “Life of Christ.” Vol. II., p. 49. 3rd ed.

† Quoted in Eaton’s Bampton Lectures for 1872, p. 242. Note.

‡ “Sartor Resartus,” p. 137. (Chapman and Hall.)

§ “Rise and Infl. of Rationalism in Eur.” Vol. I., p. 326. 6th ed.

some admixture of earth about it, exciting their suspicions, and robbing it of its heavenly fragrance.”\* It is not possible to expect a further and more perfect manifestation of religion. It is the best and highest we can conceive, and, therefore, the inalienable right of the whole human race—of the whole family of God.

We are aware that in recent years, and as the science of comparative religion has advanced, there has been a tendency in certain directions to exalt some of the ancient faiths at the expense of Christianity; and there are those to be found, even in distinctively Christian circles, who would leave the nations in the enjoyment of their own faiths, and not trouble them with the doctrines of the Gospel. But this we have seen, on the broad ground of civilisation and moral progress, to be impracticable, apart from the fact which we have yet to consider—that these faiths *wait for their fulfilment* in Christianity. A close examination of them, moreover, will satisfy any thoughtful mind that they are defective, and, to a great extent, erroneous; leading souls astray, and altogether unfit to be permanent educators of half the human family. The question again is, Is one-half of the world to remain old, while the other half has renewed its youth? If there is to be intercourse, commerce, international law—anything like a brotherhood of nations, with

\* Ffoulke's "Divisions of Christendom," p. 24. Quoted in Eatons Bampton Lectures for 1872, p. 376. Note.

common interests and common aims—a Christian sociology, the race must be animated by the same faith, look up to the same Father in heaven, learn to offer the same prayers, be united together by that bond which cements when no other tie will hold, and which ensures the security of all other ties—the bond of a common religion.\*

Which of the faiths of the world could purify, or elevate, or rule the race? Which of them satisfies the deepest yearnings of its own adherents? The old-world religions have wandered into polytheism and pantheism, into mysticism and superstition, into mammon worship and infidelity. They have not produced results, moral and spiritual, worthy of the capacities and dignity of human nature. Their power has steadily declined. They are, at the present moment, waning, dying faiths.

We have seen how deficient are the *Chinese* in the religious faculty, and how morality, though highly taught, is little better than a name. Through their ancestral worship they live altogether in the past. Whether they are theistic or atheistic would appear to depend very much on a chance interpretation of their speech. There are three recognised religions in

\* At any early stage of civilisation, when the tribe is the social organisation, every tribal group has its own spiritual chief. When the tribe expands into the nation, the power and importance of the deity undergo a corresponding improvement. Divinity is divided because humanity is divided. The bringing men together by colonisation, commerce, social intercourse, and a common civilisation, means unity of idea—the worship of one and the same Supreme Ruler of men.

China; but one of their late Emperors advised his people to have nothing to do with any one of them. "And so this gifted race, deprived of the ideals which could alone urge it forward, has for centuries moved in a cycle which gave movement without progress, and has, by turning back to a dead worship of a dead past, ceased to advance along the not always straight line which offers alike to the individual and the nation the only path to perfection." \*

Turn to *Brahmanism*. To say nothing of its social degradation—the condition of women, the impious power of the priesthood, and the tyranny of caste—its moral code resembles all the laws of antiquity in placing purity on a line with priestly ceremonials; and so, to this day, the Hindu clings blindly to rites and sacrifices. All moral energy is paralysed by superstition and pantheism. As in China, so in India, when man's personality is sunk in the life of the universe, morality can only be discerned under the form of mechanical obedience to law. The highest ideal a man can reach on earth is a self-conqueror (*yati*) or self-renouncer (*sannyasi*)—ascetic and devotee. † The majority of unfortunate mortals, how-

\* Fairbairn's "Studies in the Phil. of Relig. and Hist.," p. 311.

† Mr. Lecky, in remarking on ascetic and industrial philosophies, which characterise respectively ancient and modern religion, shows how incompatible the former is for present-day life. "The watchword of the first philosophy is mortification, of the second, development." . . . "When, therefore, the ascetic, proclaiming the utter depravity of mankind, seeks to extirpate his most

ever, not obtaining deliverance from the bonds of sensual existence, are born and reborn in lower ranks of men, or animals, or plants, in proportion to the sins committed in a former birth; and eventually, when the wheels of existence need run no more, each separate personality sinks away into the Soul of the universe. Actual life, if not a curse, is at best a void; and the external world itself a mere delusive *máyá*. Following out the history of the Hindu doctrine of immortality, we find that the mind, bewildered in the mazes of transmigration, terrified by the everlasting procession of births and deaths, and rejecting the religion of penances and abstinence that led to it, leaped into the darkness of annihilation, and embraced a religion of despair.\* “Unable to find a way to a right conception of God, and a consequent right conception of immortality, it rose into an absolute denial of both, produced and propagated a religion founded on the abolition of what Western thinkers used to regard as the fundamental truths of

natural passions, to crush the expansion of his faculties, to destroy the versatility of his tastes, and to arrest the flow and impulse of his nature, he is striking at the very force and energy of civilisation. Hence the dreary sterile torpor that characterised those ages in which the ascetic principle has been supreme.”—“Rise and Infl. of Rationalism in Eur.” Vol. II., pp. 363, 368. 6th ed.

\* Even though we may allow the latest definition of *Nirvana*, as given by Mr. Rhys Davids, in the Hibbert Lectures for 1881, to be “the destruction of passion, malice, and delusion,” “a salvation from the sorrows of life which was to be reached here on earth in a changed state of mind” (Appendix X.), Gotama held that, *after death, nothing will survive* but the result of actions, or *karma*.

every faith—the being of God, and the immortality of man.”\*

This is *Buddhism*, one of the classified *universal* religions of the world—the other two being Mohammedanism and Christianity. Powerful as it was as a great ethical revolution, incomparable as are some of its sentiments, all aglow with “a poetry and a beauty” which may well captivate the modern mind, and noble as was the life of its gentle and saintly founder,† is the world prepared to accept the Buddhist doctrine of human destiny, or does that doctrine, based as it is on an essentially atheistic principle, afford fit sustenance for a third of the human race? “Buddhism,” says Mr. Rhys Davids, “sees no distinction of any fundamental character, no difference except an accidental or phenomenal difference, between gods, men, plants, animals, and things. All are the product of causes that have been acting during the immeasurable ages of the past, and *all will be dissolved*. Of sentient beings, *nothing will survive* save the result of their actions; and he who believes, who hopes, in anything else, will be blinded, hindered, hampered in his religious growth by the most fatal of delusions.”‡ The good and healthy influence in Buddhism was connected with its early ethical preaching, but that was dependent on the

\* Fairbairn’s “Studies,” p. 164.

† For a charming sketch of Buddha’s life and teaching, see Mr. Edwin Arnold’s poem, “The Light of Asia” (Trübner).

‡ Hibbert Lectures for 1881, p. 214.

personal character of Buddha; the Church he founded was one only in appearance, and his doctrine was too high for the common people. The only object to be sought after was "the attainment in this world of the state of mental and ethical culture summed up in the word Arahatsip," or the man made perfect. Hence there is a clear distinction drawn between "the intellectual goodness of those who have entered the Excellent Way, and the lower kind of goodness attainable by ordinary men."\* The impracticability of such a religion is fatal to its permanence. The fundamental error of the system is the complete loss of faith in the actual constitution of things. With Buddhism as with Brahmanism, there has been no attempt at any civil or political progress and improvement. Its effect on "weary-hearted Asia" has been likened to that produced by "a mild dose of opium." Bunsen thus describes it: "Looking at its general bearing on the world's history, Buddhism may be regarded as a sort of repose of humanity after its deliverance from the heavy yoke of Brahmanism, and the wild orgies of nature worship. . . . The repose is that of a weary wanderer, who is withheld from the prosecution of God's work on this earth by his utter despair of the triumph of justice and truth in actual life." "The greatest happiness is not to be born; the next greatest is for those who have been born to die soon."†

*Islam*, again, though qualified above many other

\* *Ibid.*, pp. 104, 105.

† "God in History." Vol. I., pp. 374—5.



faiths for a universal religion, by reason of its freedom from the bonds of nationality, and the simplicity of its doctrine, conquered in Arabia because there was nothing better to occupy the field, made its way in India and Persia by force of arms, and by means of the civil and material advantages it offered to believers, and succeeded in persuading, for the most part, people of imperfect development, such as corrupted Christians, and Malays, and Turks. But Islam, which is the proclamation of a great Sovereign, not of a Moral Being, can thrive only when engaged in conquest. What have been the revelations of its history? What transforming and elevating power has it shed abroad among the nations? It is, at the present time, sick at heart, and can live only by reforms which at once change its essential constitution. "Founded among a people which developed late," observes Tiele, "it is the youngest and also the lowest of the universal religions. Only for a short time, under the stimulus of favouring circumstances, and in conflict with its own principles, did it call forth a higher civilisation. When carried out with due strictness it brings all civilisation to nothing." \*

And so the faiths of the world, one after another, are found wanting in those elements that the nature of man and the constitution of society require. There is no dispute as to the superiority of Christianity, and which will be the religion of the future. It is a simple question of "the survival of the fittest." The Bible,

\* "History of the Ancient Religions," by C. P. Tiele, p. 104. 2nd ed.

as it is the charter of human rights, is also destined to be the one rule of faith, and guide of human destiny. The so-called sacred books of the world have ceased to be religious powers, and are now studies for a select circle of oriental scholars. The nations that possess them cling to dead creeds, and have not a living faith. This constitutes the moral and spiritual difference between Christian and non-Christian nations. A faith, to be a faith at all, must be *living*; and such is the faith of Christianity—a faith in a living, acting, regenerating Christ. A creed may be held from custom, from reverence for ancestors and antiquity, from policy or fear; and such are the dead inoperative creeds of the ancient world. The greatest religions have originated with persons. Confucianism was built upon Confucius; Pârsism upon Zoroaster; Buddhism upon Sâkyâ Muni; Judaism upon Moses; Islam upon Mohammed; and Christianity upon Christ. But of all these, Christ alone is recognised as *living*, and acting *now*; and hence Christianity is the religion that lives on, while others have their day, and die. And if we are satisfied that this is so, how can we hesitate to give this highest and only satisfying form of religion—the faith which is meant for mankind—to those who possess it not?

12. There remains one other point of view—the last from which we shall look at the great subject of Christian Missions—namely, that *all other religions wait for their fulfilment in Christianity*. This is, perhaps, the

most philosophic of the grounds on which the claims of missions may be based, as it is also, in some respects, the most fascinating and most pathetic. There is no aspect of our race so deeply affecting and profound as the natural history of the human consciousness, the dim groping of men, through the ages, after God. We know that the great Gentile world, though beyond the pale of an historical revelation, has not been outside the sphere of the Divine providence; that "in the generations gone by" He "suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways," yet "left not Himself without witness." \*

The old religions, flourishing as they have through immense periods of time, have undoubtedly had their place in the economy of nature, and must have served some purpose in the world. They could never have lasted had there not been elements of truth in them that nourished, in a certain stage of development, the religious nature of man. A large admixture of error is long able to maintain its ground by appealing to some of the religious instincts of humanity, till, by the will of God, it is superseded by a purer, higher faith. These old religions have endured according to the amount of truth they have contained, according to the fitness of their doctrines for the special circumstances of country, race, and culture that prevailed, and according as they testified, however unknowingly, to Him who is the "Heir of all the ages," and who, "in the fulness of times," should come to fulfil, not only the prophecies of Judaism, but

\* Acts xiv. 16, 17.

also, as "the Desire of all nations," "the unconscious prophecies of heathendom."

The world, says Dr. Bushnell, is governed supernaturally in the interests of Christianity.\* "Jewish prophecy *and* heathen philosophy," says another writer, "had in different ways prepared for the reception of Christianity. Christ came to fulfil the Law and the Prophets—the Law of Moses, it is true, but no less the Law of Nature, and of Gentile morality in its highest and purest conceptions."† In the same way Neander remarks: "Christianity is the end to which all developments of the religious consciousness must tend, and of which, therefore, it cannot do otherwise than offer a prophetic testimony. Thus there dwells an element of prophecy, not merely in revealed religion, unfolding itself beneath the fostering care of the Divine Vintager (John xv.) as it struggles onward from Judaism to its complete disclosure in Christianity, but also in religion, as it grows wild on the soil of Paganism, which by nature must strive unconsciously to the same end."‡ And, once more: "The revelation which claims acknowledgment in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament takes up into itself all other revelations as subordinate and preparatory, leading on to that which does not, properly speaking, *supersede* them, but explains, fulfils, and glorifies them." §

\* See "Nature and the Supernatural," chap. xiii.

† Eaton's Bampton Lectures, 1872, p. 180.

‡ "Church History." Vol. I., p. 240. (Clarke's ed.)

§ "The Christian's Plea Against Modern Unbelief," by Prof. Redford, p. 2.

“The world had been preparing for Christianity in every way,” says the same writer, quoting from Schaff’s “History of the Apostolic Church,” “positively and negatively, theoretically and practically, by Grecian culture, Roman dominion, the Old Testament revelation, the amalgamation of Judaism and heathenism, the distraction and misery, the longing and hopes of the age; but no tendency of antiquity was able to generate the true religion, or satisfy the infinite needs of the human breast.” \*

This we regard as the true setting forth of the relation between the past and the present. Christ was not “the *product*” of human history, but, as Luthardt says, “its *requirement*.” As the child is explained by the man, so the person and the work of Christ provide the key by which the mystery of the world’s previous religious history is solved. Christianity possesses “the one element which was wanted to perfect the lower, the one thought whose absence made the natural system incomplete; the one note whose silence caused a jarring in the natural harmony.” † “When that which is *perfect* is come, that which is *in part* shall be done away.” ‡

The growth of a science of comparative religion, which regards all times and places and creeds to be, in their own way and season, the manifestations of the religious idea; which seeks to discover points of

\* *Ibid.*, p. 480.

† “Natural Elements of Revealed Religion,” by George Matheson, D.D., p. 14.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

agreement between separate forms of faith, has led to the cultivation of a broader and more generous spirit towards the ancient religious systems of the world.\* Twenty years ago, F. D. Maurice could write: "Within fifty years a prodigious change has taken place in the feelings of men generally—of philosophical men particularly—respecting religious systems."† The change has steadily continued, and in no direction is it likely to exercise a healthier influence than in distinctively Christian circles, and especially in relation to the missionary enterprise.‡ For the

\* Prof. Fairbairn, in the Muir Lectures on the Science of Religion, delivered recently at Edinburgh University, said that no religion was an accident, each had a rational cause; no religion walked with aimless feet; each had a place to fill, and a work to do in the system that was being slowly built up by myriad independent yet co-ordinate hands into what might be called the history of man in time. Similarly, Mr. Tylor remarks: "No religion of mankind lies in utter isolation from the rest; and the thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilisation, perhaps, even, of human existence."—"Primitive Culture," Vol. I., p. 381.

† "The Religions of the World," p. 7, 4th ed.

‡ "Notwithstanding all that has been written," says Mr. Tylor, "to make the world acquainted with the lower theologies, the popular ideas of their place in history and their relation to the faiths of higher nations are still of the mediæval type. It is wonderful to set the unappreciating hatred and ridicule that is lavished by narrow hostile zeal on Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrism, beside the catholic sympathy with which deep and wide knowledge can survey those ancient and noble phases of man's religious consciousness. . . . *The question really lies between understanding and misunderstanding them.* . . . No more can he who understands but one religion understand even that religion, than the man who knows but one language can understand that language."—"Primitive Culture," Vol. I., pp. 20, 380.

more the faiths of the world are known, and the deeper their doctrines are studied, the more will they throw light on the religious nature of man; the more will they be found to bear witness to Him who is the Truth; the more will Christianity be seen to lie at the basis of all the religions of the past, and, therefore, the more imperative will be the claims of the world at large on the blessings of the Gospel. As a consequence, the wider will grow the vision of the Christian, and the more sympathetic is he bound to become in respect to the feelings of his fellows. It has been ignorance of non-Christian systems, the failing to observe points of contact, and elements of truth in systems outside our own, that has led us to regard them as inventions of priest, or lawgiver, or devil, and to trample on convictions which have been rooted in human nature for thousands of years.

Happily, we no longer believe that the peculiar glory of Christianity consists in its being accidental—unlike everything else—and not part of “the essential stuff of humanity.” We are not greatly exercised by the resemblances between the teaching of primitive Christianity and that of contemporaneous philosophy, and do not attempt to prove a contact between Pagan moralists and Christian influence—that Philo came into contact with Peter, and Seneca with Paul; but we expect to find that “the Light which lighteth every man as he cometh into the world” shall have “communicated to diverse systems

something of its own unity.”\* Our allegiance to Christ demands that we affirm nothing to be good but His; but it does not require us to disown the good and true wherever we may find them; indeed we dare not trace them to any lower source, but gladly claim them for their rightful Author.† It is an argument for the divinity of His mission to see that in Christ *all* fulness dwelt; it is one of the surest corroborations of that Christianity which is “the Truth of life,” to find that it is a manifestation of the truth in other systems; that echoes of it are to be caught in all ages and in every land; that it is an answer to the deepest needs and universal convictions of mankind. Instead of being poorer, how much richer and more glorious does Christ become, when we see the Divine ideas which had wandered up and down the world at length realised in Him; that what was “obscurely struggling to be Christian before Christ” ‡—all which men had felt, and hoped, and believed of good—did in Him come to a glorious birth; and that His religion, which offers itself as the faith

\* It is remarkable that the greatest of systematic theologians, who denounced the virtues of Paganism as splendid vices, should have yet drawn most largely from the intellectual treasures of heathendom.

† We like to think of a stream of Divine inspiration flowing unbroken through the plains of history, watering here and there the dry and barren soil of pre-Christian times, and widening and deepening at the fulness of times, when that stream becomes in the Gospel so emphatically “the River of the Water of Life.”

‡ Justin Martyr was willing to allow to Socrates the name of Christian.



for mankind, does indeed supply whatever has been found necessary in the experience of by-gone ages.

How wonderful and pathetic is this yearning of the nations after Christ! "For as the earth in its long polar night seeks to supply the absence of the day by the generation of the northern lights, so does each people in the long night of its heathen darkness bring forth, in its yearning after the life of Christ, a faint and glimmering substitute for the same. From these dreamy longings after the break of day proceeded oracles, priests, sacrifices, lawgivers, and the like. Men have nowhere given up hoping; or acquiesced in the world's evil as the world's law."\* Every religion is full of presentiments of the truth, foreshadowings of the substance, promises of redemption.

Look at Hinduism. Existence is one prolonged effort to realise the capacity of man for closest intercourse and actual identity with the Divine. The man who attains this—the "twice-born" man—is the highest man, separated from the animal and earthly man; clearly pointing to the possibility of a birth into a Divine kingdom (John iii.), a kingdom of holiness as opposed to sin. Again, throughout the Hindu mythology, the thought expands that there must be some object in which the Divine Being Himself sees His image reflected; and in the avatars, or incarnations of Vishnu—the second person in the Hindu triad—we behold Him assuming some human or earthly form,

\* Trench's Hulsean Lectures for 1846, p. 27.

sympathising with human trials, subjecting Himself to earthly calamities, and Himself carrying on the struggle between order and disorder, between life and death.\*

The fabulous thus foreshadows the real ; the legendary deliverer prefigures the historical Deliverer to come. Centuries before Christ came, heathen nations believed that the gods could and would come to them in their extremity, and that they came in human form.† Both in Hindu and in classical mythology, we have anticipations and forecastings of some of the sublimest facts of the Christian religion ; and a missionary has no better or more hopeful course than to appeal to those true principles and cravings to which these ancient myths give expression, as bearing testimony to that religion which justifies men's deepest longings, and can alone satisfy their inextinguishable wants. The Hindu, more, perhaps, than any other non-Christian race, has a deep sense of unrest from the burden of sin, and a rooted faith in sacrifice ; and as we behold much that is a revolting caricature of this sacred rite, we have to show them what the true Sacrifice

\* Dr. Dorner, in his work on the "Person of Christ," points out how myths cannot possibly be regarded as merely man's work, and, we may add, still less the devil's. They are not arbitrarily invented, but follow a true religious development. Mythology is eminently the region of religious ideas, a sphere not so much for the play of fancy, as for the unfolding of the real longings of human nature.

† See Acts xiv. 2.

is, and what the true form of self-immolation. Their highest philosophy and most popular mythology are alike concerned with a redemption—a deliverance of souls out of a world of falsehood into a world of truth. And all this we have to meet and satisfy. We must recognise these religious yearnings, if we would really touch the conscience, and reach the people's heart. All that is capable of being turned to account either in the faith or character of a people must be tenderly and sacredly distinguished from what is to be condemned. We must honestly discern what the good is, and under what conditions it may be preserved and perfected.

We must show the Buddhist, *e.g.*, that his Christly doctrine of the absolute equality of all men—which gave to his religion its marvellous success in a land which for ages was, and still is, oppressed with caste—finds complete expression in the great Christian truth of the brotherhood of man; and that it draws its vitality from having its living and eternal root in the correlative truth which the Buddhist does not know—the Fatherhood of God.

Similarly, we should show the Chinese that their worship of ancestors and antiquity is a homage that should be paid to Him who is “the Ancient of days,” the root of all relations, the ground of family life.

Or, again, if the great truth of Islam—belief in an Absolute Divine Being, living and ruling in the world—the truth which undoubtedly gave to Islam its mastering force, but which has now lost its power over

Mohammedan minds because it wants that “support of other kindred truths which belong to the essence of Christianity”—if this truth cannot be presented “more distinctly, mightily, livingly in Christianity” than in Mohammedanism, we shall not feel that Islam ought to be exchanged for Christianity.\*

Or, turning to that which was the detestation of the Moslem—that gigantic and multiform system of idolatry which all heathen nations practise—if we fail to recognise that idolatry, foolish and degraded as it is, is yet a stern human protest against pantheism, which denies the personality of God, and against atheism, which denies God altogether; that it is not, at bottom, an effort to get away from God, but to bring God near—to see a humanised God; if we fail to see that Christ justifies the longing, as well as fulfils the desire, we wrong the religious instincts of our brother, and cannot hope to rescue him from his curse and misery.

If we think lightly and contemptuously of non-

\* And one has but to trace out the *Idea of God*, as conceived in different religions, and by different nationalities, to see how single rays of the great truth have reached and illumined diverse minds, and, at the same time, how completely Christianity absorbs them all in the one perfect Divine Idea which it presents. The God of the Mohammedan is an Absolute Sovereign, the God of the Brahman an Absolute Intelligence, the God of the Buddhist (if he can be called theistic) an Absolute Calm, the God of Persia the Prince of Light, the God of Egypt the Invisible, the God of Greece the Ineffable, the God of the Roman the Righteous Law-giver. The God of the Christian embraces all these conceptions, and more—so that Christianity takes up the broken lights and lesser revelations, and realises the incomplete ideas and unfulfilled prophecies of all human systems.

Christian systems, and seek simply to substitute another *system* in their room; if we have not earnestly considered what they have to say, or what we have to tell them, we cannot expect to do them much good. We must ever remember that it is *Christ* who is contending for victory over the mind of India and China, and other waiting lands; and we should be supremely anxious, therefore, that *He* should triumph, and not necessarily the particular form of Christianity—certainly not its scholastic systems and sectarian differences—which have been dogmatically and historically developed in the West. Christianity is the *world's* religion; and is, therefore, capable of assuming the form best suited to each nation of the world:\* and if it is ever to be universally triumphant in the East, it must assume an Eastern form. In that mighty portion of the globe over which Brahmanism and Buddhism rule, lie, as it has been said, “the seeds of all highest, noblest culture, if only we can really address ourselves to that which is within the hearts of those who hold these faiths, if we can only tell them that which they crave to know.” Their own religious books echo the cry of those enigmas which have tormented them so long, and mutter only half a response to it. *We* must recognise that cry—that “confused cry of multitudinous tones”—as a wail for heavenly

\* It is obvious that very diversified *agencies* (as indicated in chap ii.) may be required, in the Providence of God, for bringing different nations to the point of accepting Christianity; for, as we learn from the connection of Judaism and Christianity, there is a “fulness of time” when peoples become ripe for the highest religion.

help, as an evidence that man is "*from God and to God*;" and if we cannot interpret it as such, the Brahman and the Buddhist are better as they are. Hinduism has not satisfied the people of India; Buddhism has not satisfied them; Mohammedanism has not satisfied them. Those stern demands of the human conscience carry with them a mighty witness to Him who can alone do for these millions of our race what their own faiths have failed to do.

A distinguished native of India, a Brahman Christian convert—the Rev. Dr. K. M. Banerjee, of Calcutta—has published a work called "*The Aryan Witness*," followed by two "*Supplementary Essays*," on the relations of Hinduism to Christianity and the Western branches of the Aryan family, in which he shows, by means of historical facts and theological dogmas, that the true Hindu, following out the proper development of the ancient Hindu doctrines, and accepting that religion which is most nearly related to it, ought, in mere consistency, to become a Christian. "*No one*," he says, "*can be a true Hindu without being a true Christian.*" Alas! for the consistency of our Aryan brethren; but if we hold, with Pascal, that Christianity has existed since the commencement of the world—if it is the continuation and conclusion of what professes to be the earliest revelation given to man, and may, therefore, naturally underlie all ancient forms of faith, the remark is profound and true.

Paganism waits, by a law of its own nature, for its

fulfilment in Christianity. In the providence of God the faiths of the ancient world have been constituted "preparations and predispositions," for the absolute truth which should afterwards be revealed. "A profound study," it has been said, "of the religious history of mankind will regard these ancient religions rather as testimonies than as rivals to the truth of Christianity." As such, they must be brought to the feet of Christ, to render Him a loyal homage. The star which guided the Eastern sages to the Babe of Bethlehem, must guide again from error and superstition the wise and foolish of the East, who wait the rising of the Sun of Righteousness. Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, all these must be satisfied; they inquire for something more, and look for something higher. There is unrest in every religious system apart from Christ. *Apart from Him*, they are fragmentary and fleeting systems, and this is their weakness and their sadness; their capacity of union with Him is their strength and justification.

This should be recognised by that class of mind we have before referred to, which inquires whether particular soils may not be adapted to particular religions, and consequently looks coldly on Christian missions. They are doubtless adapted to the cultivation of the religious *need*; but this need wants *satisfying*. Throughout these ancient systems there is ample evidence of that in man which *demand*s a revelation, but not that in man which *gives* the

revelation. As religious systems they wrought no deliverance. They remain unfulfilled. Their unrealised yearnings, their unsolved problems oppress the mind with the deepest sadness. In the Gospel alone can religious perplexities and spiritual instincts be completely satisfied.

Can we find a stronger motive than this for Christian Missions—can we think of a truer and worthier reason for giving the world the Gospel? Human nature and the human heart are *made for Christ*; and *He alone can ever explain the one and satisfy the other*. If history and experience have proved anything, it is this—the necessity of Christ to the moral well-being, to the spiritual rest and perfection of man.

Far and wide, though all unknowing,  
Pants *for Thee* each mortal breast;  
Human tears for Thee are flowing,  
Human hearts in Thee would rest.

Thirsting as for dews of even,  
As the new-mown grass for rain,  
Thee they seek, as God of Heaven,  
Thee as man for sinners slain.

Many and conclusive are the reasons that thus impel to Missionary service. Any one of those at which we have glanced should, we venture to think, be sufficient in itself; but, taken all together, they present a cumulative argument and motive that cannot be gainsaid. The command and the example of our gracious Lord Himself—which, after all, constitute the alpha and the omega of the whole matter;



the commencement and continuance of the work by the Divine Spirit ; the essentially Missionary character of the Christian Church ; the gain that comes to the Church herself in spiritual life and power, through the prosecution of the missionary enterprise ; the fact that Missions furnish the best vindication of our common Christianity, and give the world ideas which are infinitely worthy of dissemination ; that they contribute to the stability of our national and international policy, and spread the religion of progress and civilisation ; that they supply the nations with the purest morality, and the only regenerating power, by presenting for their acceptance the highest and only adequate religion, in which all other faiths find their fulfilment—such considerations as these must surely awaken the interest, stir the enthusiasm, and gain the devotion, of all thoughtful minds and earnest hearts.

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