

# Lectures On Missions

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## I. Missions in the Bible

The Bible is first and last a book of missions. It tells us the story of how God sent His Son into the world to redeem fallen mankind, and of how this Son sent His disciples out into all the world to proclaim the good news of His salvation. "Sent" is the key-word. Jesus says: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18). The prophets were missionaries, sent by God to teach His people the mysteries of the Kingdom, and to witness to all nations that there is only one God, the Lord God of Israel. The apostles were missionaries, sent by Christ to teach all nations and to baptize them in the name of the Triune God. The history of the Church, both in the Old and the New Testament times, is the history of the progress these missionaries made in their divinely appointed task of leading men to the true God and the only Savior. Thus we can say that any discussion of Christian Missions involves in reality the whole field of Church History and even of World History, since the story of the Church is so intimately bound up with the story of the world in general. A pseudo-historian like H. G. Wells may ignore the Church in writing his "Outline of History." But Edward Gibbon, who was no friend of the Church, had to say in his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire": "From the council of Nicea to the end of the seventh century, the peace and unity of the church was invaded by these spiritual wars; and so deeply did they affect the decline and fall of the empire, that the historian has too often been compelled to attend the synods, to explore the creeds, and to enumerate the sects, of this busy period of ecclesiastical annals" (Vol. V. p. 488).

We must, therefore, limit ourselves to certain phases of the work of missions which we can cover to some extent, though it be necessarily in only a sketchy manner. We shall not try to review the fruits of the Gospel in the lives of men and nations, the social changes it has wrought, the influence it has exerted on the course of events in the world, the efforts made in its name to reform a corrupt world and to establish civic righteousness, peace and justice on earth. Kenneth S. Latourette's "A History of Christianity" has attempted to do that, but with questionable success. For he attributes to the influence of Christianity many things which should rather be attributed to false teachings, pagan philosophies, and proud speculative attempts to reach God by human wisdom and science. To the advocates of the "Social Gospel," the Christian Gospel has meaning only according as it bears such visible fruits in society as we have just indicated. But to the true Christian, the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," (Rom. 1:16) whether the fruits of faith become visible in society or not. Only Judgment Day can and will reveal what the true fruits of the Gospel have been. Therefore we are interested chiefly in tracing the extent to which the Gospel has been proclaimed in all the world from the beginning, assured that the fruits were there, whether as "a savour of death unto death," or "a savour of life unto life" (II Cor. 2:16). The Gospel being what it is, Paul had to say: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world (Rom. 10:13-17).

And this may serve as a general theme for our lectures: "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." We shall see this truth as it is made manifest: I. In the Bible. II. In the history of the church through the first 18 centuries. III. In the story of the great Mission Century of the Church. We shall also consider briefly: IV. The Religions of the Heathen World; and V. Mission Principles and Methods.

The Gospel is by its very nature something which must be proclaimed by the Lord from whom it comes and by those whom He appoints to bring the Good News to the world of men. It can never become known in any other way. For the Gospel tells us, not something that man shall do, not something which he can spin out of his own God-given faculty of reason or out of mystical communion with the spirit world, but something that God does for the benefit of fallen man, something which He has from eternity in His secret counsels planned to do, and which He had to make known to men, if they were to learn about it at all. As St. Paul says: “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:7ff). This message from God is one which can be stated simply, in a few words, as in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” Yet it concerns the “unsearchable riches of Christ,” (Eph 3:8). “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. 3:16). It is something whose marvels even the angels desire to look into (I Pet. 1:12).

Still it is despised and ignored by the great majority of those who hear it. However, the fact that the Gospel is rejected by certain individuals or peoples does not mean that it has not been preached effectively among them. Nor is their ignorance of it proof of anything else than that they have failed to make use of the opportunities God has given them to hear and receive it. There are many people living within the sound of church bells and with Bibles ready at hand who are just as ignorant of the Gospel as the most isolated savage in darkest Africa. Our Lord Jesus had to say even of the most zealous members of the Chosen People of His day: “In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” (Matt. 13:14f.). Christ has told us to preach the Gospel to every creature and has sent His Holy Spirit to help us carry out that great commission. But He has not promised that His Gospel will be everywhere received with joy and believed. He tells us only: “This Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations” (Matt. 24:14). On Judgment Day it is the unbelief of men over towards the Gospel of God’s grace in Christ Jesus — not their sins nor their pagan idolatry — which shall condemn them. And their unbelief is without excuse. The history of the Church of God, or of Christian Missions, is thus the record as much of the manner in which men have turned gross hearts, dull ears, and closed eyes to its saving message, as it is of the triumphs and conquering sweep of the Gospel.

We find illustrations of this principle from the beginning of the Bible record to the end. God promised disobedient Adam and Eve that the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, the devil tempter who had led them into sin. Yet this promise, accepted in faith by Abel, led Cain to murder his brother. For when God accepted Abel’s offering of a lamb, but not Cain’s offering of the fruit of the ground, it was because Abel had true faith in God, while Cain with all his formal worship of God rejected His word and promise, as the Epistle to the Hebrews says: “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of the gifts” (11:4). Cain was the first Deist. He believed in the existence of God and worshiped Him. But he despised the Gospel concerning the Seed of the woman, whose heel was to be bruised while bruising the head of the serpent; and he would not bring the offering of blood-atonement by slaughtering a lamb, as believing Abel did. He as well as Abel knew about the promise. But even after he was punished for his crime, he and his family lived without the hope of redemption, without repentance and true faith.

Throughout the approximately 2000 years before the Flood, the Gospel of the promised Redeemer was proclaimed by believing patriarchs. We read that in the days of Seth men began to “call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen. 4:26). As Luther shows, this must refer to public preaching of the word, not merely to private

prayer and worship. The descendants of Seth were not so entirely separate from the descendants of Cain that they could not bring the Gospel to them; for by the time of Enoch they had begun even to intermarry with the godless daughters of men. Of Enoch we are told that he walked with God, and the Epistle to the Hebrews says: “By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him” (11:5–6). That he walked with God did not mean merely that he led a virtuous life, but that he lived a life of faith, —faith in the Savior in whom alone he could be counted righteous. Jude 14f shows us also that Enoch testified boldly against the unbelievers of his age: “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

Still later, as the world grew increasingly corrupt in spite of the light of the Gospel which they all possessed, Noah was God’s great messenger to men. He is called a “preacher of righteousness,” one who “found grace in the eyes of the Lord,” and who “was a just man and perfect in his generations and walked with God” (Gen. 6:9). When God spoke to Noah and told him that in 120 years He would destroy the world by a great deluge, because “the earth was filled with violence” (Gen. 6:11), the people had become so unbelieving that they scoffed at his warnings as well as at the gospel of a Redeemer who was to come. So Hebrews says of him: “By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (11:7). In that enlightened, cultured age when there were “giants in the earth,” “mighty men of renown,” (Gen. 6:4) men expert in the arts of war and of peace, surely there was no single individual who did not know about the promise given to Adam and Eve. Yet they all perished in unbelief. And our Lord Jesus uses the story of Noah’s world as an example of what the world shall be like at the end of days: “But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matt. 24:37ff.). Christ does not emphasize their sins and their wickedness but simply their careless unbelief toward the word of God, both its message of redemption and its warning of doom and eternal destruction to those who reject that message.

After the Flood, Noah and his descendants were given God’s blessings and the promise that He would never again destroy the world by a flood on account of the sins of men. And God kept the remembrance of that promise before them by setting the rainbow in the skies as a token of the covenant between Him and the earth. Yet it was not long before rebellion against God’s word and neglect of His promise made themselves evident. We see it in the story of Ham and Canaan and the curse pronounced on them by Noah; in the brief account of Nimrod who was a “mighty hunter before the Lord” (Gen. 10:9), and who according to tradition built the tower of Babel as a rallying point for those who followed him in his worship of idols and in his contempt for the Gospel of the promised Redeemer. When God confounded the language of these proud unbelievers and scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth, it was intended as a punishment which would work automatically to keep rebels from joining their forces against God and His Church. Wherever these people went, they brought with them the knowledge of God’s promises as well as of His judgments on unbelievers, even though they, as Paul says, “held down the truth in unrighteousness,” so that in most parts of the world, “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, ... and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man” (Rom. 1:21ff.). By the time of Abraham, men had in the main forgotten the lesson of the Deluge and of Babel and had become idolaters. For even of Abraham’s family we read in the book of Joshua: “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods” (24:2). So God “suffered all nations to walk in their own ways” (Acts 14:16), and called Abraham out of the midst of his idolatrous family to be both the transmitter of the promised Seed and the great missionary of the Gospel to the world. He was indeed not the only true believer; for we read

of others who confessed the true God: Melchizedek and Job and Abimelech, etc. But he was the one who was henceforth to be the standard-bearer of the Gospel and a model of the true faith, so that he could be called “father of all them that believe” (Rom. 4:11). And be it noted at once that he was such a model, not because of his righteous, virtuous conduct and life; for he sinned in many grievous ways; but because he “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal. 3:6). And his faith concerned the promise that in him and his seed should “all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:5). That seed was Christ (Gal. 3:16).

In order that Abraham and his descendants might fulfill their task as missionaries of the Gospel promises to all the nations of the earth, God placed them in the land of Canaan, the geographical centre of the great landmass of the earth, Eurasia and Africa. It was a land “flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:8), the most favored part of the Fertile Crescent which extended from Mesopotamia to Egypt. It was the crossroads of the ancient world, where caravans from the East met the ships of the Great Sea to the west and the traders from Arabia and Egypt to the south. From this centre, Abraham and his descendants would be able to reach all the peoples of the earth. Abraham himself traveled from Ur of the Chaldees through every part of the land of Canaan and to Egypt, setting up wherever he came altars to the Lord. When we read that he at these altars “called upon the name of the Lord” (Gen. 12:8, etc.), we must, with Luther, understand that he not only carried on his own private worship of God there, but also preached the Word to everyone whom he could reach—his large retinue of servants as well as the people among whom he dwelt, whether friends or foes. Some 25 tribes or nations are named in his story as having contact with Abraham in one way or another. Through him God testified to them of His power and grace. Some rejected his word; others accepted it. Pharaoh in Egypt drove Abraham out of his country, though he had to admit that it was Abraham’s God who “plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram’s wife” (Gen. 12:17). Abimelech in the land of the Philistines accepted the Lord’s warnings under similar circumstances with true penitence and sought to make friends with Abraham, the friend of God, saying: “God is with thee in all that thou doest: Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son’s son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned” (Gen. 21:22f.). Similar contrasts in the way Abraham’s testimony was received may be found in the King of Sodom and the Amorite chief, Mamre, who was confederate with Abraham (Gen. 14).

Abraham showed that he was a faithful missionary also in the manner in which he interceded for godless Sodom and Gomorrah. His intercession was in vain. So every missionary, however well acquainted he may become with the destructive vices and the foolish superstitions of the heathen, must emulate Abraham and intercede daily for them, if he is to carry out his Gospel mission with patience and hope. Yet he, too, cannot assume that his prayers are bound to be answered by a wholesale conversion of the people.

The story of Isaac and Jacob is the story of Abraham over again. They also erected altars and called upon the name of the Lord wherever they came, testifying to their faith to rulers and people alike. The Abimelech of Isaac’s day, like his father before him, confessed that Isaac’s God was the true God, and said to him: “We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee ... thou art now the blessed of the Lord (Jehovah)” (Gen. 26:28f.). Jacob traveled from Canaan to Mesopotamia and back to Canaan and Egypt and earned the name Israel, a prince of God; for as a prince he had power with God and with men and prevailed (Gen. 32:28). His dying prophecies bore witness that his faith, too, was centered in the promised seed of the woman which he foretold would come of Judah’s line. Joseph testified to his faith to one and all, from condemned criminals to powerful princes and Pharaoh himself. The Israelites in Egypt kept their faith in the God of grace, Jehovah, not only in the life-time of God-fearing Joseph, but also through the dark days of their bondage, as we see from the story of Moses, which the Epistle to the Hebrews summarizes in the words: By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king’s commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as

seeing him who is invisible. Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them” (Heb. 11:23–28).

In spite of such testimonies to the truth of God, it would seem that all the world, by the time of the Exodus, was sunk in idolatry, except for the Chosen People. And even they were continually compromising with the paganism about them, only a minority keeping faithful to God and His word. The story of Israel through the first centuries is thus a story of alternating apostasy and reformation, subjection to heathen tyrants and deliverance by the power of God from their enemies when they repented. Their gracious God showed His saving power in ways to impress all nations, as when the Red Sea opened to let the Israelites cross and closed again to destroy the Egyptian hosts; or as when the sun stood still upon Gibeon at Joshua’s prayer to enable the Israelites to defeat their enemies; or as when Gideon with a band of 300 men routed the armies of the Midianites. Hebrews again puts the whole story tersely in the words: “By faith they (the Israelites) passed through the Red Sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens” (11:29ff.). There was no lack of opportunity for the heathen nations through all the periods of the Exodus and the Judges to learn to know the true God, but there were only a few who were willing to believe in Him and follow Him, such as the people of Gibeon, Ruth of Moab, and others who in one way or another were incorporated into the Chosen People.

In the age of the first kings, David and Solomon brought the fame of the Lord and the knowledge of His word to the limits of the known world. In his second Psalm David describes the kingdom of God as one to be known among all the heathen in the Lord’s words to His Son: “Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” And in the 72nd Psalm we read of the same kingdom: “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth... Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him ... and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.” Of Solomon we read that “his fame was in all nations round about ... and there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom” (I Kings 4:31, 34). It was first of all “the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord” (I Kings 10:1), that the queen of Sheba came to inquire about. For his wisdom was primarily moral wisdom, the wisdom of God in the righteousness which was His gift to men. (Cf. Prov 8). And the queen confessed: “Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighteth in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice” (I Kings 10:9).

But the Israelites did not always fulfill their mission as God’s Chosen People to preserve His truth and spread it abroad through all the world. Even David, a man after God’s own heart, sinned so grievously that to this day the name of God is blasphemed because of him. Solomon, in spite of his divinely given wisdom, permitted his many heathen wives to lead him astray. They “turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God” (I Kings 11:4). He even built “an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, ... and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives (a thousand in number), which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods” (vss. 7–8). Like ruler, like people. The Lord had to punish the whole nation by letting ten tribes break away from the House of David, who thereafter worshiped forbidden idols and followed the Baalim of the heathen about them.

Only by sending the people great prophets to warn and admonish, to entreat and woo them with His promises, did God keep alive the true faith in Him as the God of all the earth, its Creator and Redeemer. The prophets exhorted them, on the one hand, to separate themselves from the heathen idolaters and sought to build up a wall between God-fearing Israelites and pagan unbelievers. On the other hand, they exhorted them to preach the word of God to the nations far and wide and rebuked them for the selfish, proud attitude towards the heathen, which so many manifested. Still, even a prophet like Jonah shared this self-righteous spirit: he tried to

flee from God when he was told to go to Nineveh and warn its people that in forty days their city would be destroyed. He did not want this pagan enemy of his own people to have any opportunity to repent, so as to escape the punishment the Lord announced to them. He was like so many to this day who do not want to “export their religion,” or who have the idea that the religions of the heathen are good enough for them, and that they neither need nor deserve to hear the Gospel of God’s mercy in Christ Jesus. But it is not man’s place to judge as to where the preaching of God’s Law and Gospel will bring its proper fruits. We are to carry out God’s commands and leave the fruits of our preaching to Him. Jonah was selfish and wicked enough to be displeased and very angry when God repented of the evil that He had said He would do unto the people of Nineveh. He would rather die himself than see Nineveh saved from the destruction he had prophesied. Yet we have Christ’s word for it that “the men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation (the Jews), and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas and behold, a greater than Jonas is here” (Matt. 12:41).

The story of Jonah and Nineveh is repeated over and over again in the history of the church. Those who have the word fail to appreciate and use it, and have to be driven to bring it to others, sometimes by persecutions or other forcible means. And those who would seem to be hopelessly lost in sin and idolatry are quick to receive it in faith, so that it can be said in every age of church history: “It shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God” (Hos. 1:10). It is thus that “the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered.” And finally, the very People of God, His Chosen, to whom belonged “the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises” (Rom. 9:4), had to be rejected as a nation, because of their stubborn unbelief; while Gentiles whom they despised became heirs of the righteousness which is by faith.

The writing prophets proclaimed the word of God, not unto the people of Israel and Judah, but to all the nations of the earth, warning the one as well as the other of the judgments that were to come upon unbelievers and promising the eternal mercies of God to all who repented and turned to God in sincere faith. One after the other of the nations of the world is named, even the land of Sinim, identified with China. Thus Isaiah first prophesied the utter confusion of Egypt. But then again he makes the remarkable promise: “In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt... And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord ... and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them... In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance” (Isa. 19:19ff.).

The glorious promises that the prophets proclaim to such Gentiles, as well as to the Chosen People, when the judgments of God upon them have brought them to repentance, concern not only the distant future, the coming Messianic age, but the whole history of the nations. Isaiah says: “Thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, ... even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer: their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people. The Lord God which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him, beside those that are gathered unto him” (Isa. 56:4ff.).

When Isaiah prophesies redemption for Jerusalem he makes it clear that God thereby will make his name known to all nations: “Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (Isa. 52:9f.). When the Chosen People rebel against their God, the Gospel will be brought instead to others who will hear it: “I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way

that was not good, after their own thoughts” (Isa. 65:1). Isaiah was called to proclaim judgment upon Israel, “until ... the land be utterly desolate,” (Isa. 6), except for “a very small remnant” (Isa. 1:9), which the Lord of hosts would save; and at the same time he was to proclaim salvation to all the world, to all whosoever would come and drink; so that Paul could argue that the “fall of them” (Israel) would become “the riches of the Gentiles” (Rom. 11:12).

Jeremiah was told by the Lord: “Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations,” not merely to apostate Judah (1:5). Ezekiel prophesied against disobedient Israel, but also against the various nations of the world. “They shall know that I am the Lord,” comes as a refrain again and again, showing that God did not fail to make His word known to the Gentiles, even those who would not serve Him in willing obedience. And so with all the prophets until Malachi who said: “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts” (1:11).

One result of the Babylonian Captivity was that the remnant that returned to the homeland was more faithful to the Law than the people had been before. There was no more of the idolatry for which the prophets had had to condemn them. Another result was that a majority of the Jewish people were scattered throughout the whole known world. Long before the time of Christ they had established themselves in all the chief cities of the world. On the Day of Pentecost, the Jews who came together to witness the gift of the Holy Ghost to the disciples were said to be “out of every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). At the Council in Jerusalem, James said: “Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day” (Acts 15:21). To show that this was not mere hyperbole, consider the manner in which Jews came even to China in this pre-Christian period. A colony of Jews, consisting of 70 families, made their way along the caravan routes to far Cathay, through the Chinese Empire, to the then capital of China, Kaifeng in Honan. There they maintained their separate life and religion for centuries. Remnants of them were found when missionaries first reached Honan a century ago; but they had few of their national characteristics left, except some knowledge of the law and the seventh day Sabbath. The last among them who could read Hebrew died a century before that. (This is referred to in histories of China as a prime example of the fact that China always absorbs its conquerors and elements which elsewhere retains their separate identities.)

These “Jews of the Dispersion” in general were more zealous for the faith of their fathers than were the Jews in Palestine. They on the one hand kept themselves rigidly apart from the heathen among whom they dwelt, maintaining their racial and religious identity as no other people in history has ever done; on the other hand they confessed their faith publicly enough to attract many Gentiles to their synagogues or places of prayer. There are no statistics to tell us how many of these Gentile proselytes there were. We do know that they came from all classes of society, that many of them were prominent in their communities, and that they became the mainstay of the Christian congregations that were gathered by the apostles throughout the whole Diaspora.

In the New Testament we find the same principles that we have traced in the Old Testament. The Gospel is to be preached to all men, though the majority rejects it. Christ told his disciples when He sent the twelve out on their first missionary journey: “When ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for that city” (Matt. 10:12ff.). Those who should have led the people to Christ were blind leaders who stumbled into the ditch with all their blind followers and therefore had to hear the tragic words: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43). Therefore the disciples were not to consider it their task to make a true believer out of every man they could reach with the Gospel, but rather to proclaim the message of God’s salvation to one and all, “whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear” (Ezek. 2:5). Most of the Chosen People rejected that message. Paul had to write: “The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained unto righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore?”

Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law” (Rom. 9:30–32). The Jews were so blind and deaf to the Gospel, though they had every facility for understanding it through their knowledge of the law and the prophets, that not even the most zealous labors and convincing demonstrations of the truth of the Gospel could make a dent in their hard self-righteousness and stubborn pride of race and creed. But the Gentiles, sunk in superstition, vice, and skepticism as they were, understood the Gospel at once and accepted it joyfully in many cases, so that Paul could say of a predominantly Gentile congregation which had been in existence only a few months: “Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: so that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything” (I Thess. 1:6ff.). It was not their high morality and their good works for which Paul praised them—they were still in need of admonition against every sin and vice of the heathen, —but their faith, faith in God’s message of a free salvation, which changed their whole attitude to both God and men.

Jesus tells us: “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matt. 24:14). But He also says: “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8). Outwardly the whole world shall know the Gospel, even as in the days before the Flood. But true faith in the Gospel shall be found only in the very small remnant, the hidden 7000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

To summarize: The Bible teaches that God has not only planned and provided a full salvation for all men, by the redeeming work of the Seed of the woman, but has proclaimed and published abroad the good news of that free salvation to all men at all times. If men are ignorant of the unconditioned Gospel, it is because they in their stubborn rebellion against God close their eyes to its saving truth. No man is eternally condemned for his sins, but only for his unbelief. And the corollary of that principle is that his unbelief is his own fault.

Hence it is the task of Christian believers and of the Christian Church to preach the Gospel to every creature, not in the expectation that all will believe, but remembering that the Gospel of Christ Crucified is ever and everywhere to the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness. When we proclaim the Gospel in its truth and purity, we have fulfilled our divine calling, the fruits of our labors, whether they result only in the hardening of perverse Pharaohs and Jews against God, or in the conversion of whole nations to the Christian cause, we shall leave to God, —who hath “mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth” (Rom. 9:18).

## **II. Missions from the First to the Nineteenth Century**

St. Paul wrestles frequently with the problem presented by the unbelief of the Jews over towards the Gospel of their promised Redeemer and Savior. But the other side of the coin to him was the great mystery that “God manifest in the flesh” should be “preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world” (I Tim. 3:16). Unbelief in the face of clear knowledge of the truth, faith freely expressed among those who heard the sound of the Gospel for the first time, —this thought runs through the Bible like a red thread. Paul says: “Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Rom. 10:19f.). His only explanation of the mystery is that the fall of Israel is the riches of the world (Rom. 11:12). The history of missions and of the church has been a continual repetition of the story of the Bible, —neglect and rejection of the truth by those who possessed it, ready acceptance of it by new peoples who had long walked in darkness and in the land of the shadow of death (Is. 9:2).

We can present only a few highlights of the history of eighteen centuries of missions in our brief review of that long period. But they should suffice to demonstrate the truth of these words of Paul and of our theme: “Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.” In the first Christian century,



the apostles and their disciples brought the Gospel to every part of the inhabited world. (We have no reason to believe that the Americas were populated to any extent before the Christian era.) On the Day of Pentecost there were Jews “out of every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5) who heard and believed the word of the apostles, and who no doubt brought it back with them to their homelands. Christ told His disciples to teach all nations. And that this was literally fulfilled is clear from the records we have of the activities of the apostles. Some discount the traditions which have been handed down to us, but there is no reason why they cannot be accepted as substantially reliable. St. Paul with incomparable zeal preached Christ crucified and risen again, from the deserts of Arabia to the coasts of Spain. St. Peter, hesitant though he at first was about preaching to Gentiles, carried on mission work from Judea to Babylon and the Black Sea region and to Rome. Andrew traveled not only in Persia and India, but also planted the cross in Scythia (Russia), wherefore he is counted as the patron saint of Russia. The Scots have a tradition that he also brought the Gospel to the northern parts of the British Isles, while unnamed missionaries brought it very early to Roman Britain in the south. Thomas, the doubting one, went to Parthia and India, establishing a church in the latter country which to this day calls itself by his name, —the Thomas Christians. One tradition tells us that he brought the Gospel even to China, the land of Sinim. In any case, it is history that the emperor Ming Di, in the year 60 A.D., influenced by a rumor of Him who was “born King of the Jews,”—as well as by a dream, supported by a saying of Confucius: “In the West there are great sages,”—sent ambassadors to the West to look for this new king who might teach them better things than the native religions of China could give them. His ambassadors got as far as India, where they were met by Buddhist priests who persuaded them that Buddha was the great Savior-god for whom they were searching. Thus Buddhism in its Mahayana form, —the most striking caricature of the Christian religion that the heathen world has ever produced, —was introduced into China by thousands of Buddhist priests and monks from India, eventually becoming the prevailing religion in the whole Far East. It is interesting to speculate what the result would have been for China if the emperor’s ambassadors had sought more conscientiously and successfully for “the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9).

The apostle Matthew preached, according to various traditions, in Ethiopia, Persia, Parthia, and Macedonia as well as in his native Palestine. Nathanael or Bartholomew is said to have preached in Armenia and as far east as India. The apostle Judas Thaddaeus labored in Arabia, Assyria, and Persia, making Edessa for a time his center. Matthias preached in the region east of the Caspian Sea, Simon Zelotes in Egypt, Cyrene, Libya, and Mauretania (Morocco). The evangelist Philip baptized an Ethiopian eunuch who had high influence in that African, though Semite-ruled, land. John Mark preached in Egypt as well as the areas indicated in the Book of Acts. Thus by the end of the first century A.D. the church of the crucified Nazarene had struck roots in every part of the known world. We have no statistics of this early period, no reliable accounts outside of the Book of Acts of the manner in which the Gospel reached the ears of the millions living on the earth at that time. But we can be sure that God in providential ways, —like that of Philip’s meeting with the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8)—saw to it that the Gospel reached all His elect.

During the first three centuries, the Christian Church grew strong and influential in many areas, particularly in the Roman Empire, in spite of persecutions and opposition of every kind. Emperors sought to destroy it as an insidious enemy of the State. Heathen philosophers used the weapons of dialectics and ridicule to undermine every article of the Christian faith. Celsus among them did as thorough a job as any infidel of later ages or modern times has ever been able to do in way of pillorying the Christian faith. But he was thoroughly refuted by Origen, one of the most scholarly, though also erratic, of the early Christian “fathers.” Jews like Trypho, whose slanders were answered by Justin Martyr, opposed and persecuted the Church wherever they had the power to do so. Other enemies of the truth in Christ Jesus sought to corrupt it from within the Church, —Gnostics with their bewildering array of philosophic speculations about the Logos and God; Arians with their rationalistic dissertations concerning the nature of Christ; other heretics who promulgated practically every variety of doctrinal aberrations that has ever afflicted the Church. From the beginning the Christian Church was at war on every front against enemies without and within. Yet it grew and prospered, until it even became good politics for a Roman emperor to declare himself a Christian and to lend the strong arm of a dictatorial government to the protection and dissemination of the Christian teachings.

But this apparently favorable development brought a host of evils with it. The church and its leaders not only used their influence at court to enrich themselves and to increase their own prestige and power in their communities and countries, but also depended on the sword of Caesar, instead of the word of God alone, to carry the Gospel to still heathen areas and lands. The Christian cross became the banner under whose sign Roman rulers went out to conquer their foes—*In hoc signo vinces*. The church as a whole became like the congregation in Laodicea, to whom Christ said: “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17). Gregory Nazianzen (quoted in Edman, p. 56) had to complain concerning the leading Christians in particular: “We repose in splendor on high and sumptuous cushions, upon the most exquisite covers, which one is almost afraid to touch, and are vexed if we but hear the voice of a moaning pauper; our chamber must breathe the odor of flowers, even rare flowers. —Slaves must stand ready, richly adorned and in order, with waving maidenlike hair, and faces shorn perfectly smooth, more adorned throughout than is good for lascivious eyes; some to hold cups both delicately and firmly with the tips of their fingers, others to fan fresh air upon the head. —The poor man is content with water; but we fill our goblets with wine, to drunkenness, nay, immeasurably beyond it.—” He continues with an account of the luxury of the Christians which might rather serve as a description of a sybaritic feast. The doctrinal disagreements, of which there were many, were debated in great church councils held under the auspices of the emperors who used their power to persecute anyone who dared to oppose their views. Contemporaries complained “that the roads were clogged with bishops galloping to and fro to attend conferences at imperial behest” (Edman, p. 49). The result was that heretics and orthodox took turns at going into exile or death according as the ruling emperor favored one or the other party in the church.

In spite of these evils, by the end of the 5th century the Christian faith had been spread in one way or another to the outermost reaches of the Roman Empire and had become the ruling religion in it. Missionaries had carried the Gospel also beyond the borders of that Empire, from Persia and India to the East; Abyssinia, Ethiopia and the Sudan to the South; among Goths, Vandals, and Huns to the North; and Franks and Irish to the West and Northwest. Many of them were far from orthodox in their preaching, yet they brought the light of the Word with them, so that the people to whom they preached had no excuse for not knowing and believing the Gospel. Thus Ulfilas, though an adherent of Arianism in its milder forms, translated most of the Bible into the Gothic language, which he reduced to writing for the first time. He was, perhaps, the first of the many missionaries who have gone among uncivilized peoples, where literature and the arts were entirely unknown before, and given them the Bible in their own tongue and taught them to read it. “More languages have been reduced to writing by Christian missionaries than by all other agencies put together” (Latourette, p. 100).

Perhaps most remarkable of all was the missionary work carried on by the famous Patrick of southern Britain, who evangelized the greater part of Ireland and founded a church there which for centuries let the light of the true Gospel shine, while older churches were being paganized and secularized under the stifling rule of Catholic popes and kings. He was steeped in the Bible and translated it in whole or in part into the language of the people. Not Rome, but Ireland, was for a long period the center of Biblical learning, the only place where Greek was studied and the Bible cherished.

Time is lacking to review the evangelistic work in other areas of the world within the first five centuries. In the countries counted as Christian there was, indeed, much ignorance among the multitudes, many of whom were brought into the Church by force or pressure of various kinds. The situation, however, was no worse perhaps than it is in State churches today, where everyone belongs to the Church as a baptized and confirmed member, while only 5 or 10% actually attend church and take part in its work. They had the source of all spiritual light at hand in the Bible, which was available in the language of the people in many, though not all lands. Latin was in this period becoming the language of the scholars in Western Europe, even as Greek long remained the Koine of the Mediterranean world.

The next period in mission history, from 500 to 1500 A.D., has been called the Dark Ages, a name given to it primarily by the scholars of the Renaissance, who revived the study of Greek and Roman civilization, in the light of which everything Medieval Europe had known and done seemed mere darkness. The church declined outwardly, indeed, and suffered greater losses of territory than at any other period in history, except

perhaps in the last 40 years since World War I. Latourette says: “In the 900 years between the opening of the 7th and the beginning of the 16th century, Islam won from Christianity a larger *proportion* of the latter’s adherents and territory than any other rival has ever succeeded in doing. 18th, 19th, and 20th century skepticisms and the fascist, socialist, and communist totalitarian states of the 20th century have not yet cost Christianity nearly so large a *percentage* of its professed followers as did Islam from the 7th through the 15th century” (II 287). Whole countries were torn from the control of Christians also by pagan Norsemen or Vandals and Huns, as well as by the sword and religious zeal of Islam. The Western Church Christianized these pagan invaders gradually, but the Moslems, with their Unitarian faith, proved as impervious to the Gospel as their fellow-Semites, the Jews. The Christian centers, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, were completely lost to Islam; Constantinople alone held out till the Ottoman Turks overwhelmed it in 1453. The Moslems did not force their new religion upon Christians as they did upon pagans, but in general treated them leniently as followers of the Jesus whom they also looked upon as a great prophet, second only to Mohammed. But the majority of those called Christians joined the Moslems when it no longer served their material interests to be Christians. In other words, the Church lost its dead timber and became a minority group in practically the whole area which for five centuries had been the pre-eminently Christian area of the world, in western Asia and northern Africa.

But this did not mean that the light of the Gospel was entirely lost there. There was enough spiritual life left to support Christian mission work in distant lands as well as at home, as we shall see. In the West, the power of the Bishop at Rome grew mightily through the decline of Rome as a political power and through the Christianizing of the invaders from the north and east. The religion of Rome was carried to new fields sometimes by zealous missionaries like Boniface, the Apostle to Germany, Ansgar, the patron saint of the North, and others. But in general its rule was spread by force of arms. Such Christian princes as Charles Martel and Charlemagne, as they conquered their pagan neighbors, would give them the choice of baptism or slavery and death. Kings rather than missionaries brought the Gospel also to the Scandinavian countries. V. R. Edman says: “It is doubtful if any other land had ever known the systematic compulsory conversion that was Norway’s lot” (p. 226). The ancient writing *Heimskingla*, says: “When King Olav (the patron saint of Norway) came to the *thing* (assembly) he bade them take Christianity, as he had done in other places. And since the king had there a very great strength of men, they were afraid of this; and at last the king gave them two choices, either that they should take up Christianity and let themselves be baptized, or otherwise that they should hold battle with him. And when the *bönders* (landholders) saw no hope in fighting with the king, the former choice was taken, so that all the folk were baptized” (Edman, p. 223). The sword was in many cases, however, followed by sincere attempts at instructing the people in the Christian fundamentals, though the light of Rome was, increasingly throughout this period, becoming darkness. As Edman says with regard to Norway: “One would reason that under such circumstances their Christianity would have been a veneer at best to be discarded at the earliest possible moment. On the contrary, as the result of patient teaching by native clergy, taught by English, Irish, and some Germans, the Norwegians became exemplary medieval Christians: —*Christianissimi* in the language of Adam of Bremen” (p. 226). And the Norsemen soon brought their new religion to their possessions in the isles north of Scotland, in Iceland, Greenland, and even Vinland somewhere on the New England coast of America.

One of the brightest chapters in mission history was written in the early part of this period by the work carried on from Christian Ireland to Britain, when it had been conquered by pagan Angles and Saxons, as well as to Germany and to other areas. The Irish missionaries were not subject to Rome and brought the real Gospel wherever they came, not the mere “churchianity” which Rome inculcated wherever it had power. First, Christian Britain brought the Gospel to Ireland by the zealous work of Patrick; then the evangelized Irish in turn brought the Gospel to England, now become pagan again, —a story which repeats itself continually in church history.

Another bright chapter was the work of the two brothers Constantine (or Cyril) and Methodius among the Slavs in Central Europe (Moravia) in the 9th century. “They proceeded on the sound missionary basis of reducing the Slavonic language to writing and of translating Scripture portions and the liturgy into the language of the people. —Their linguistic work accomplished more for the Slavic peoples than all the Romanist swords

dripping with human blood or the baptism of untaught, illiterate heathen” (Edman, p. 212). These missionaries came from the Eastern Orthodox Church, but in the end gave their allegiance to the Pope of Rome on the condition that their church should be allowed to use the native language in the liturgy, etc. But after their death it was not long before Latin replaced the Slavic tongue as the language also of their church.

It would seem repetitious to chronicle the Christianization of the many countries and peoples into which Europe was divided in the Middle Ages. We have heard enough about the kind of missionary work that was done to understand why the church degenerated so much as it did by the end of the 15th century. The many nominal Christians brought their pagan beliefs and superstitions with them into the church, with the result that their religion became a syncretistic medley of heathenism and more or less of Christian elements. At the same time, the light of the Word was brought to all parts of Europe, not only in the Latin of the scholars, but also in the language of the people to a large extent, so that it was possible for men at any time and place during that era to come to a saving knowledge of the truth in Christ Jesus. Consider as one example the address of Bishop Otto who was sent by Duke Bolislav of Poland to baptize the Slavic Pomeranians in his domain: “All ye my brethren have been baptized and have all put on Christ; ye have received from Him the forgiveness of all your sins original and actual: ye are clean and holy, having been cleansed and sanctified, not through any deed of ours, but by Him; for He has washed away the sins of the world in His blood. Beware then of all contamination by the worship of idols” (Edman, p. 216). There is the true Gospel of the Savior of the world. Yet when the people did not readily accept his teachings, Otto appealed to the Duke for “military persuasion.” This “Duke’s Mixture” of free gospel and fierce force in the work of missions, of outward conformity to Christian creeds and inner adherence to pagan beliefs and practices, was typical of Roman Christianity and explains why it became what it was through most of the Middle Ages, —a political and spiritual tyranny.

While Western Christianity under the leadership of Rome was extending its sway over most of Europe, the British Isles and beyond, Eastern Christianity was not as idle as we might think, submerged as it was through most of its domains by the power and faith of Islam. The Orthodox Church with its headquarters at Constantinople held possession of that capital for centuries after Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria had fallen to the conquering Moslems, and carried on mission work in new areas to the North. In the 9th century the Bulgars and other Balkan peoples adopted the Greek Orthodox religion. By the 10th century the vast territories of the Russian Czars had come under the control of “Orthodox” Christians. The invasion of Mongol tribes in the 13th and 14th centuries, pagan as they were, rather strengthened and deepened the Christian faith in Russia than overwhelmed it. During the Mongol rule, missions carried the Gospel to the far north and east of Russia, even to parts hitherto untouched by civilization. In the 14th century Finnish tribes and Lapps in the far north were brought into the Orthodox fold.

But branches of the Church condemned as heretical by the Orthodox Church Councils did the most extensive mission work during this period. The Monophysite churches in the 5th and 6th centuries brought the word to Egypt and Abyssinia or Ethiopia, where the Coptic Church stood with them, and established themselves strongly in Syria and Armenia. Their great missionary, Bishop Jacob the Rugged One, traveled widely, from Nisibis in the East to Egypt, and is said to have consecrated two patriarchs, 89 bishops, and 100,000 priests. The Jacobite Church (so named after him) in Syria, and the Coptic Church in Egypt and Ethiopia, are the only remnants left today of this branch of the church, after the Moslem attacks in the 7th century destroyed its powers.

More needs to be said about the missions of the Nestorian churches. They had their headquarters in Edessa in Mesopotamia, which they made for a time a center of learning worthy to be called the Athens of the East. In Persia under the Zoroastrian, and later, under the Mohammedan rulers, they suffered persecution at times but still prospered and grew strong, spreading out over all Asia from the Mediterranean to the China Sea and from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea and beyond. Cosmas, a 6th century traveler, reports that the number of churches in this area was almost infinite. Huns, Turks, Tibetans, Indians, and Chinese were brought the Bible by zealous bishops and missionaries. Latourette says: “Christians in the Sassanian (Persian Zoroastrian) and Abassid (Moslem) realms were more active as missionaries than were the Christians from any other land from the 5th to the 16th century in which the civil rulers were non-Christians” (History, II. p. 271).

Without the blighting influence of temporal power back of theft missionary message, it is easy to appreciate that their work must have had truer fruits spiritually than the work too often had in Western Europe under the State-Church and Church-State system of the Roman Catholic Church.

As an example of the work done by the Nestorians, we may take the record of their labors in China, which can be traced from the 7th to the 14th centuries. There are incidental references to their work in the writings of Medieval travelers, such as Cosmas the monk, the Friars William of Rubrick and John of Pian de Carpine, and the famous Marco Polo. But the most interesting record is the monument found in Hsi-An-Fu, the Capital of China in the 8th century. It is a large marble tablet, ten feet high and five broad, on which is inscribed in Chinese the story of the first Nestorian missionaries to arrive at that capital. Its date is set at 779 A.D., but its story begins in 636 A.D., with the coming of a priest named Olopen and a small band of missionaries. They were kindly received by the Emperor, Tai Tsung by name, who was one of the most enlightened rulers China ever had. The Emperor ordered the Holy Scriptures of the Christians translated in the imperial library. Olopen remained at the court for three years, teaching, preaching, discussing, and translating. The stone contains also an outline of the teachings these Nestorians brought, written in Chinese literary style, but confessing clearly the Triune God and the Messiah who “veiling his true majesty appeared in the world in the likeness of a man. The celestial spirits manifested their joy and a Virgin brought forth the holy child. —The most splendid constellations announced this happy event; the Persians saw the splendor and ran to pay tribute. He fulfilled what was said of old by the 24 holy ones (the OT prophets). —He purged humanity from its pollutions; —he directed the bark of mercy towards the palace of light and all creatures endowed with intelligence have been succoured. After having consummated this act of power, he rose at mid-day towards the Truth. Twenty-seven books (the New Testament) have been left. —The baptism by water and by the spirit is a law that purifies the soul and beautifies the exterior—” (Walshe, p. 12b. 1). The tablet goes on to review the history of the Nestorian Church through the 160 years after 636 A.D. It is made clear that Christianity spread through the provinces of China. The temples, we are told, “filled a hundred (all) cities and the families (the people of China) were enriched with admirable happiness” (Walshe p. 15). The church was favored by some emperors, persecuted by others. A church in Peking, said by Chinese writers to have been built in 638 A.D., was still standing 400 years later.

In the 11th century, a famous king or succession of kings called Prester John, whose headquarters were in Central Asia in the land of the Keraites, supported the Nestorian cause. In the 12th century, Prester John was powerful enough to invade Persia, but in the year 1203 A.D. his Christian kingdom was overthrown. Still, in spite of the many weaknesses among the Nestorian clergy and the constant pressure of such religions as Buddhism, the Christian truth kept spreading, so that in the 13th century Christians were to be found in the most remote provinces, and churches in all the principal cities of Asia.

After the Nestorians had been working in China for almost 700 years, John of Montecorvino, a Franciscan, established a Roman Catholic Mission alongside of them in Peking. He was given a friendly reception by the great Mongol conqueror, Kublai Kahn, like that given by the same ruler to the Nestorians. But he complained that the Nestorians slandered and opposed him, and said they had become so powerful in the land that they would not allow a “Christian of any other rite to have ever so small a chapel, or to proclaim any but Nestorian doctrine” (Walshe, p. 20). However, he survived the persecutions they directed against him—which actually reacted against the Nestorians, —and could report by 1305 A.D. that he had built two churches, baptized 6,000 people, and translated the whole New Testament and the Psalter into Chinese.

John eventually won many Nestorian Christians over to the Roman fold and in 1308 was made Bishop of Peking and Primate of the Far East by Pope Clement V. He was a far more capable man than any of the Nestorians at the time and gained the favor of the Emperors for his cause. At his death in 1330 A.D., the Emperor and his ministers appealed to the Pope to appoint another bishop; and by 1353 it could be said “the clergy all had their subsistence from the Emperor’s table in the most honorable manner” (Walshe, p. 23).

One great blow to the Nestorian cause in China as well as other Asiatic regions was the act of the Nestorian Patriarch in Persia in 1304, who entered the Roman Catholic Communion and sent in his submission to Pope Benedict XI. It seems that many Nestorians followed his example, so that the Nestorian work in China

after this time was practically absorbed by the more aggressive Roman Catholic missions. At the beginning of the 13th century there were 26 Metropolitans in Asia under the Nestorian Patriarch of Bagdad. But by the end of the 14th century they were mostly destroyed by the hordes of Tamerlane, the Moslem Mongol chief, who, from Samarkand in central Asia, swept over all Asia from the China Sea to the gates of Europe. The last authentic fact known with regard to Christianity in China is the martyrdom of James of Florence, Roman Catholic bishop of Hangchow in south China, in 1362 A.D. Many other Christians must have been martyred with him, for the church disappeared from the scene thereafter, and its story was almost forgotten. It was close to 200 years before any missionary work was done in far Cathay again.

To characterize this Nestorian mission work of almost eight centuries, we may quote the words of A. Mingana, the "modern historian of a lost civilization": "There are no grounds whatever for denying the incontrovertible fact that the glory of converting the peoples of Central Asia and of the Far East to the gospel of Christ, and the merit of implanting among them the Western civilization, based on the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, belong entirely to the untiring zeal and the marvellous spiritual activities of the Nestorian Church, which is by far the greatest missionary Church that the world has ever produced. Even we, hard critics and unprejudiced inquirers, who are writing centuries after the events, cannot but marvel at the love of God, of man, and of duty, which animated those unassuming disciples of Christ, —who in utter disregard of all discomforts of the body, and in the teeth of the strong opposition and the terrible vengeance of the wizards of Shamanism (in northern Asia) and the *mobeds* of Zoroastrianism, literally explored all the corners of the Eastern globe in order to sow in them the seed of what they firmly believed to be the true religion of God" (Edman, p. 253).

One may ask why this mission work perished so completely, while Western Christianity took on new life even before the Reformation. Sir Henry Yule says: "It is melancholy history. —How many Christians are there in what were up to the 13th and 14th centuries the metropolitan sees of Tangut, Kashgar, Samarkand, Balkh, Herat, Sijistan, and Marw?" (cf. Edman, p. 263). One explanation may be found in the Mohammedan conquest of this territory, including parts of China on the Northwest. No doubt syncretistic concessions to the native religions, indicated by some of the records left us, the fact that apparently no native clergy was established but all the work was dependent on missionaries from the West, that Christian education both of the priests and of the people was neglected, —these and other factors, plus a brutal persecution which was bloodier in China under the Mongol tyrants than in any other part of the world, may explain why the work which flourished so long eventually came to a disastrous end.

The story of missions in Asia through most of the so-called Dark Ages is prime evidence that the Light of the world shone even at times and in places of which we know little today. Christianity did not become the ruling religion in this region as it did in Europe; but there was nonetheless every opportunity for the people to hear the Gospel of the only Savior in the one area as well as the other. It would be hard to prove that the religion brought to the East by the Nestorians was any more heretical or corrupt than that of Rome. But we do find that the countries where Orthodox Churches had struck roots resisted the Mongol and the Turkish Moslem attacks better than the eastern Asiatics had done. Thus the Balkan states, with the exception of Albania, (to this day a Mohammedan country) resisted the temptations to join Islam, although they for a long time were under Saracen or Turkish rulers. The only Orthodox Church that remained under Christian rule was Russia.

It remains to trace some of the chief missionary activities of the next three centuries from 1500 to 1800 A.D. We are familiar with the revival of spiritual life in Western Europe at the beginning of the 16th century, the intense interest in the church and religion that was stirred up by the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-reformation. From that time on it was the European churches which not only showed most life internally, but also did most to spread the light of the Gospel to those still sitting in darkness. The Roman Catholic Church, with fanatical Jesuits spear-heading its attacks both on dissenting Protestants and on heathen peoples, sent its missionaries along with the adventurers who set out to explore and conquer the New World and open trade routes to the Far East for their Spanish, Portuguese, and French rulers. These Latin powers, which remained Catholic through the stormy Reformation period, were the first to occupy the Americas, from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi Valley, Florida, the southwest and Mexico, as well as the Central and South American coasts. They were in some cases more concerned to bring their Christian faith to the natives than to

gain control of their wealth. They planted the cross wherever they came and dotted our land with the names of saints and priests. They did the same in the Far East and in the rich islands of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Catholic Missions flourished particularly in the Philippines where practically the whole population was Christianized, except for the Mohammedan Moros in the south. These islands were brought into the Catholic fold by missionaries from Mexico, which had no commercial or political contacts with the Philippines. The absence of any military control of the islands may explain why they became so entirely Catholic and have remained such to the present day.

One of the outstanding figures in Roman Catholic Mission History is Francis Xavier. Though he was only 46 when he died, he had labored with extraordinary zeal and in ten years had founded churches and schools and baptized over 1,000,000 people in several centers in India, Ceylon, and as far east as Japan. He died in 1552 while attempting to gain entry into that mightiest of all strongholds of civilized paganism, China. He was soon followed by other zealous Jesuits, who were able by their knowledge of the sciences to gain the ear of China's emperors. The greatest name among them is that of Matteo Ricci. He adopted the policy of conforming as much as possible to the reigning Confucianism of the Court, identifying his God with the Confucian Shang Di, accepting the worship of ancestors and of Confucius as a mere civic rite without idolatrous implications, and taking the Chinese worship of Heaven and Earth into the Christian liturgy. Missionaries of other Orders, who arrived later, as well as some Jesuits, opposed this syncretistic program, with the result that a bitter controversy, called the "Rites Controversy," was carried on for over a century. The Popes took the part of the anti-syncretists, but the emperors supported the Jesuit position, naturally enough. Repeated "bulls" by the Popes only brought persecution on his emissaries, so that even a papal legate, the cultured and highborn LeTournon, was imprisoned at the instigation of the Jesuits in a filthy Chinese jail and died there. The controversy engaged the attention of the most learned men of Europe for years, and ended only when the Chinese emperor, tired of the squabbling of the foreigners, drove them all out and persecuted the native church until out of three or four hundred thousand members only scattered remnants were left in out of the way places. These were served by priests who entered the country secretly from the Portuguese-owned port of Macao until after a century had passed, when China was opened to the foreigner again by the so-called Opium War. Thus ended one of the most promising of the Roman Missions in the 16th to the 18th centuries. China was as ever the last to open its doors to the Christian Gospel and the first to close them again.

England, Holland and other Protestant countries entered the race for control of the rich resources of the New World and the Far East a century later than the Latin powers. They did not have the missionary workers ready to hand that the Catholic Church had in its monks and such Religious Orders as the Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans, and the Paris Missionary Society, —their work again being coordinated by the so-called Propaganda. Some of the Protestant rulers sought to provide for missionary work in the new areas brought under their control. But in the main, individuals, churches, and missionary societies carried on Protestant mission work, the last-named becoming eventually the chief agency for Foreign Missions. We can here only point to a few of the missions begun by Protestants in the period between 1500 and 1800 A.D.

Lutheran kings were instrumental in opening missions among the pagan Lapps in the far north of Norway and Sweden; among the natives of Greenland, where Hans Egede pioneered; among the Delaware Indians in the New Sweden colony, where John Campanius translated Luther's Catechism into the Delaware language, the first book to be printed in any American Indian language; and—most important of all—in southern India. The names of the pioneer Lutheran missionaries in India, —Ziegenbalg, Schultze, and Schwartz, —are among the most illustrious in all missionary annals. Their work, begun in 1706, has been continued to the present day.

John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians, carried on a notable work among the Indians in Massachusetts, on his own initiative, as did also other English pastors and missionaries in the various colonies. The Anglican Church formed in 1701 the *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* and through this agency established missions in the American Colonies and other English possessions. The Dutch East India Company sponsored missions in the trading colonies it established in India, Ceylon, the East Indies, Formosa, and Dutch

Guinea in South America; in so far acting more wisely than its British counterpart, the British East India Company, did to begin with.

But the most remarkable mission work was that done by the comparatively small group or Church called the Moravian Brethren or the *Herrnhuter*. Organized in 1727 on the estate of Count Zinzendorf, they sent two missionaries in 1732 to the Danish West Indies and two to Greenland. Within twelve years they had missionaries also among the American Indians and Negroes, in South America, in South Africa and a dozen other countries. They even sought to evangelize the Jews and Gypsies of Europe and the Moslems of Algiers, their motto being to go where the work was hardest and the danger greatest. By the beginning of the 19th century, this small church body had 26 stations in various parts of the world, 161 men and women in their service, and about 20,000 native Christians, several times the number of Christians in their home churches. Their work was a harbinger of the intense interest which would be displayed and the great advances which would be made in Foreign Missions in the next century, the Century of Missions.

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### III. The Great Mission Century

One of the most remarkable phenomena of world history is the tremendous expansion of the relatively small nations of Europe and the spread of their power to all the corners of the earth, particularly in the 19th century and up to the First World War. A beginning had been made in the 16th to the 18th centuries by the occupation of the Americas and the opening of trade routes to the Far East by the European powers. But the greater part of the migration to the Americas, Australia, South Africa and other regions took place after that time. By 1914, Europeans had not only filled the empty spaces in these areas, but had divided all Africa into colonies, China into spheres of influence, and other areas of the world, including all the islands of the Seven Seas, into dependencies or parts of their burgeoning empires. The British, French, Dutch, Belgians, etc., controlled far larger domains outside of Europe than in it. Russia, too, had extended its power across all of northern Asia and into Alaska and was threatening periodically to burst its seams to the south and west. Germany, Italy, and Japan (this last the only non-European power which was able to take part in the scramble for colonies and world trade) were late comers in the game and were not welcome in it. So they had to be eliminated by two bitterly fought World Wars, with the ironic result that all of the Western powers lost their hold on their subject peoples and have either already been ousted or are obviously on the way out. Russia fell into the hands of an Oriental-Jewish tyranny; France committed national suicide; Churchill succeeded in liquidating the British Empire; Holland lost its rich East Indies colony; and the United States has made extraordinary efforts to spend itself into bankruptcy by carrying all the burdens of the world on its shoulders. History will some day tell us whether we are witnessing the Decline of the West, as certain philosophers say we are, or whether there may yet be a revival and resurgence of the power and spirit of the West.

It is just as remarkable a phenomenon of history that the expansion of Christian missions throughout the world kept pace with the territorial and commercial expansion of the European powers and peoples. The period from the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 to the beginning of the World War in 1914 has been called the Great Mission Century of the Church. Since that time, the work of Christian Missions has continued to advance in some areas, but in others it has received mortal blows. The Church has been officially barred from all Communist domains, except in so far as it is willing to run the errands of its Communist masters and surrender all distinctively Christian tenets. Islam is still a barren field for Christian Missions in all its own territories, and is a deadly enemy and virile competitor of the Christian emissaries in its border areas from West Africa to the



Indies and most parts of Asia. Opposition of many kinds is being stirred up against the white man and his religion in hundreds of areas where once the native peoples were comparatively docile and friendly. The Church is suffering, too, from dry rot within, losing sight of the Gospel, even while busily at work spreading abroad the Word of God in the language of the people in every land and clime.

We cannot here review the work done in the various homelands of Christianity, although what we call Home Missions has always been a most important part of the missionary task of the Church. We shall confine ourselves to what is classed as Foreign Missions; and we can review that only very sketchily, giving fuller information on just a few points which may serve to illustrate the work done by missionaries in the heathen world. We shall first make some general observations with regard to the missions of the Roman Catholics, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and the Protestants, and then review the missionary scene in the various countries, beginning with America.

In the 19th century, the Roman Catholic Church continued to lose political control of areas long under its sway, such as the Italian States, France and its colonies, Mexico and the countries of Central and South America. But it retained its religious hold on the people to a large extent and gained in the end by the separation of Church and State that was forced upon it in many places. It experienced a revival of mission interest, the work being carried on by a large and ever-growing number of religious Orders and Societies. "Between 1815 and 1914 more religious orders seem to have come into being than in any hundred years" (Latourette, p. 1114). They had their representatives in every part of the heathen world, and their "missions attained a geographical and numerical extent never before equalled" (Id.). In many countries their workers and adherents far outnumbered the Protestants. Whatever we may think of their work from the strictly evangelical point of view, it must be admitted that they brought at least portions of the Bible with them wherever they came, so that it was possible for their hearers to learn to know and to believe in the only Savior.

The Eastern Orthodox Church made advances in this period chiefly through the growing power of the Russian government, since there the Church and the State were closely allied, up to the time of the Communist revolution in 1917. At times, this Church-State encouraged the translation of the Bible into the vernaculars of its many races and peoples and its free distribution among them. Again it would oppose such Bible work and would persecute Lutherans and other Evangelicals. There were leaders in it, like John Sergiev of Cronstadt, who were "steeped in the Bible" and revealed a true understanding of the Gospel and labored zealously for it. In 1870 the Orthodox Missionary Society was formed to raise funds for Foreign Missions, and serious efforts were made to convert the Moslems and other non-Christian peoples under the rule of the Czar. These also were given the Bible in translations into their own languages. Missions were conducted as far as Alaska and outside the Russian Empire, in Japan and other places.

When the Communists came into power, they took stringent measures against all churches and religions. They have sought by the most diabolical combination of persecution and persistent propaganda the world has ever seen to destroy all faith in God and to turn the Church into merely another propaganda arm of the Satanic system some blinded people would call Christianity in action. But the work of the Church continues underground to a much larger extent, perhaps, than we can know. Bibles are smuggled into the country, and it may be that true religion prospers more under the rule of "the Godless" than it did when it enjoyed the favor of an often very corrupt court. The end is not yet. There are many observers who believe that the Communist regime would have been overthrown long ago by the people, if it had not received support at critical times from the Western Powers, whose hands seem to be tied by some secret force, as soon as it comes to taking a common-sense attitude toward the oriental criminals who have vowed to destroy Christianity and everything connected with it.

But it was the Protestant Churches that expanded most rapidly during this period and showed the greatest zeal in spreading the Gospel, even as it was the Protestant countries that ruled the world. The people of England took the lead in preaching the Gospel to "the lesser breeds without the law" under their control. The English-speaking world, the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, etc., joined England in supporting missions in every part of the earth, including the farthest islands of the seas. By the beginning of our present century, over 80% of the mission work in the world was carried on by these countries. This did not mean that

Germany and other Protestant countries were remiss in their efforts. On the contrary, the Lutheran countries pioneered in strictly Foreign Mission work “from Greenland’s icy mountains to India’s coral strand and Africa’s sunny fountains.” But they had neither the men nor the resources to carry on work to the extent that the English-speaking countries did.

Interest in Foreign Missions grew strong particularly as a result of the religious revivals which spread over Germany, the Scandinavian countries, England and America in this century. Bible societies were formed in these countries as a missionary arm first of all, and they have done a tremendous work through this whole period in making the Bible or important parts of it available to practically every people under the sun. By its 139th anniversary, the American Bible Society had distributed over 450 million copies of the Scriptures; the British and Foreign Bible Society even more. The total number of languages in which at least one book has been translated now stands at 1084. In spite of the attacks of Modernism and unbelief on the Bible and of such bitter foes as the Communists, more Scriptures were distributed last year than ever before, —over 15 million by the ABS alone. Thus, although the Protestant churches had lost ground geographically by the middle of our century, particularly through the loss of China to the Communists, we can say that their work has continued to expand, and that the light of the Gospel is being brought to ever new areas, even by those who “darken counsel by words without knowledge” and deny the very light which they carry in their hands.

The American Indians were from the beginning a prime object of missionary interest for the white immigrants. They were a small minority, never more than half a million in number apparently (in North America); and they were divided into many tribes speaking different languages and with different cultures. Practically all of them had missions of various churches in their midst, and more money was spent on them per capita than upon any other racial group. Fifty years ago, 40% were counted as Christians, today 60%, —the percentage being about the same as among whites in general. Various Lutheran groups, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod, and others, have conducted flourishing missions among them also. It is interesting to note that a number of famous schools, like Dartmouth in Vermont, were originally begun for the Indians.

The Negroes in the U.S. have been much more numerous than the Indians and more of a problem. In 1815 the Negroes made up almost 20% of the total population, now about 10%. The work of Christianizing them was carried on chiefly by the Methodist and Baptist churches. The proportion of Negro Christians has increased *pari passu* with that of white Christians in the course of the century, beginning with about 12% before the Civil War and growing to over 50% today. The Protestant Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholics, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches also have worked among them but have gained few converts. Ninety percent of the Negro church-members belong to Baptist and Methodist bodies, most of these wholly Negro bodies, which the Negroes prefer since they can control them themselves, —something our anti-segregation agitators today might consider.

Successful mission work has been carried on also among Chinese and Japanese immigrants who settled in segregated areas to a large extent. The Missouri Synod has a growing mission church in New York City’s Chinatown.

The largest non-white element in America to remain impervious to the Gospel is the Jews. Over half of the Jews in the world, more than ten million, are now in the United States. Although only a minority of them is faithful to their synagogues, the rest being secularized, there have been very few converts to Christianity among them. A disproportionately large number are Communists or support the Communist cause in various ways.

In the British and Dutch possessions in the West Indies and Central and South America, Protestant missions are carried on from the beginning of their occupation. Some, like Jamaica, became almost entirely Protestant; others, like Trinidad, remained chiefly Roman Catholic from the time of the Spanish rule. In general the Negro and Indian population of all these islands belongs either to some Protestant mission or to the Roman Catholic Church. The English Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Moravians have all had large memberships. The ULC has a mission in British Guiana.

In Latin America, Protestant mission work was carried on at first mainly among immigrants from Europe, but later on also among the native Indians. These were either pagan or nominal Roman Catholics. The

Missouri Synod work in Brazil and Argentina has followed this pattern. Protestant work has been conducted also among Roman Catholics in Mexico, Columbia and other states at the cost of much opposition and even open persecution by the dominant Catholic Church. All of the larger church bodies in America have been represented in this field, as well as some smaller ones, like the Nazarenes, etc. Protestants are strongest in Brazil. They number over a million members in all parts of Latin America, the Protestant community being much larger. "Here Protestantism was making more substantial gains from a nominally Roman Catholic population than anywhere else in the world. They were several times greater than those being made from professedly Protestant constituencies the world around." (Latourette, p. 1291.)

North Africa became during the 19th century more completely Moslem than ever, so far as the natives were concerned. But there was a large immigration of Spanish, French, and Italians to this area, who brought their Catholicism with them. Protestant mission work among the Moslems and Jews gained very few converts. In Egypt and the Sudan Protestants had more success, gaining converts especially among the Coptic and Greek Orthodox sects which had maintained themselves there from the early days of Christianity. There are Lutherans working in this region as well as in the Cameroons near by. In Ethiopia, the situation has been much the same. The Catholic Pope at one time made overtures to bring the Coptic Church into his communion, but the effort failed; and Italian Catholics did not endear themselves to the Ethiopians by their war with them in the 1930's.

Palestine numbered many thousand Arab Christians until they were driven out by Jewish Zionists, besides a sprinkling of all branches of the church attracted thither by the places sacred to Christians. American Protestants were active there and American Lutherans have taken over the extensive work formerly done by the Germans, or as much of it as could be salvaged from the civil war. There were Protestant missionaries also in Syria, Lebanon, Armenia, Persia, Assyria, and other West Asia lands. Few converts were won except from the old Nestorian and Orthodox churches. "Now and then a Jew was converted and occasionally a Moslem. However Moslem law and custom made accessions from Islam almost impossible. Through personal contacts, literature, schools, and hospitals, thousands of Moslems were brought under the influence of Christianity and here and there a Christian leaven penetrated some elements of Moslem society. But very few declared themselves Christians by receiving baptism" (Latourette, p. 1210). They saw the Light of the world but would not receive Him.

In Australia, populated in the 19th century by immigrants from Great Britain in the main, the various Protestant communions, especially the Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Methodists, built strong churches which not only gathered in the immigrants but also carried on mission work among the scattered, and dwindling, native tribes and on the islands of Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, etc. The first group of Anglican missionaries came to New Zealand in 1814, other Protestants as well as Catholics somewhat later. They succeeded in converting practically the whole native Maori people to Christianity. As early as 1854 it was said that all but about *one* per cent of the Maoris were at least nominally Christian. The white population also claimed almost 100% church membership, 40% of them Anglicans. There are small Lutheran Synods in both Australia and New Zealand, chiefly of German antecedents, and they as well as other Lutherans are carrying on aggressive mission work in Darkest New Guinea, the largest unexplored and unevangelized territory yet left in the world.

The story of missions among the island peoples of the vast Southern Pacific is one of the most heartening in all history. Protestant missionaries brought the Gospel all through the 19th century to one group of natives after the other, from New Guinea on the west to Hawaii on the east, —the Melanesians, Micronesians, and Polynesians. Often within less than a generation almost an entire island or island group became professedly Christian. There are no more interesting stories of adventure than those of John Williams, whose missionary labors covered four and a half million square miles; or of John G. Paton, the apostle of the New Hebrides. During the last war, many of the islanders by their piety put to shame the Service Men from "Christian America," and these owed their lives in many cases to the help they received from the native Christians. Some soldiers were so impressed by what they learned of the power of the Christian faith among the natives that they on their return to the States prepared to enter the Christian ministry.

The large island of Madagascar lies close to Africa but belongs ethnically with the Malayan and Polynesian islands. There too both Protestants and Catholics from the beginning of the century carried on mission work very successfully. Missionaries and native Christians were persecuted for a time, and Protestants were put under various disabilities when the French took control of the country in 1895. Lutherans from Norway and America played a large part in evangelizing this beautiful island. By 1914 almost a fourth of the population was Christian and by 1950 about a third, equally divided between Protestants and Catholics. The churches have become largely self-supporting and take a good share in propagating their faith, though there still are many white missionaries on the island.

In Africa south of the Sahara, divided as it has been into over twenty colonies or states, the religious picture has been very complex. Naturally, Protestant missions were strongest in territory occupied by the British, Dutch, and Germans, while the Catholics were strongest in areas occupied by the French, Portuguese, and Belgians. The area now included in the Union of South African States was the first to be settled by white men, and during the 19th century it was there that Christianity made the most striking progress. The Norwegian Schreuder Mission, the first mission society organized in Norway, began work among the Zulus a century ago; the Norwegian Missionary Society later on in Natal. The Dutch Boers as well as the British did noble work among the natives. By 1914 Christians constituted a larger proportion of the population than in any other African country, about one third of the whole. By 1950 this proportion had grown to more than half the population, the large majority being Protestants. One of the striking features of the work there has been the large number of new sects formed among the Christian natives. These grew from 15 so-called "separatist" churches among the Bantus in 1914 to over a thousand by 1950, with over a million members. Nowhere else in the world has there ever been such a multiplicity of sects. All had African leadership and were in many cases organized as a protest against white control. Some were definitely syncretistic, combining Christian and native animistic elements.

The most famous missionary to Africa, David Livingstone, began his work in South Africa but moved on to explore hitherto unknown parts of "Darkest Africa" and was thus instrumental in the opening of missions in Central Africa: Nyassaland, Uganda, and the Congo region. By 1950 about a third of the people of Nyassaland were Christians, half of them Protestants, the rest Catholic; in Uganda, 40% were regarded as Christians, about a third of them Protestant. In Belgian Congo, as a result of the support given by the government, the large majority of those Christianized became Roman Catholics. By 1950 there were about three and a half million Catholics, while the Protestants numbered over a million. Thus about a third of the total population was regarded as Christian in that large and wealthy region.

Nigeria under British rule was open to all missionaries, but few converts were made in the predominantly Moslem northern Nigeria. In the pagan Southern Nigeria, several British societies labored together with Southern Baptists from U. S. A. The Synodical Conference work there is familiar to all. The romantic story of Samuel A. Crowther belongs here. He was rescued as a boy from a slave ship to which he had been sold for a few ounces of tobacco; was educated in the newly founded college in Sierra Leone and was its first graduate. He then became a missionary among his own people and was the first African to be made a bishop of the Anglican Church. By 1950 only about six per cent of the Nigerians were counted as Christians, two-thirds of these Protestants. A similar percentage of the people are Christian in Southern and Northern Rhodesia, where the Wisconsin Synod has opened work.

In Portuguese East and West Africa, the government favored the Catholics. A third of the population is now called Christian, three-fourths of these Roman Catholic. Tanganyika, the former German East Africa, had six percent of the population Christian, about half of them Protestants. The National Lutheran Council has cared for the former German work there since the war. French Equatorial Africa has come into public notice of late because of the medical mission work carried on by the famous Albert Schweitzer, Modernist theologian, authority on Bach, organist, philosopher, and medical doctor. He classifies as a Buddhist rather than a Christian by his view of Life as sacred in its every form, even that of deadly germs or poisonous insects, vermin, etc. And his mission work is in no way related to the Gospel of Christ, rather to Hindu Asceticism.

In this whole area of Central and Southern Africa, missionaries met uncivilized tribes who were without a written language and practiced an animistic religion of the most degraded type. They reduced the language to writing, translated and distributed the Bible and Christian literature, founded schools and gathered Christian churches. It is notable that they had far greater success, in spite of such handicaps, in converting the animistic heathen in the Pacific Isles and in Africa than they had in gaining for the Christian faith the more civilized peoples of India and the Far East. The “higher” a religion is, the harder it is to win people away from it to faith in Christ, —Jews and Moslems coming first in this scale, Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucianists next. So while India, China, and Japan remain overwhelmingly pagan, we can say that Africa in the areas outside of Moslem influence is predominantly Christian; and the work proceeds apace in spite of Communistic and Nationalistic disturbances in various parts of the no-longer-so-dark continent.

We move next to India, the great sub-continent that for so long was the brightest jewel in Britain’s crown but has now become its great problem child. During the period from 1815 to the present, Christianity in some form or other penetrated to every part of this huge complex of differing races, religions, languages, and cultures. At the beginning of the past century there were Christian churches in India which had been present there continuously for centuries, —such as the ancient Syrian Church which maintained contact with the Jacobites in Syria, a branch of which is called the Thomas Christians; the Roman Catholic Church which had maintained missions there from the 15th century; and a few Protestants who traced their origin to the Danish-Halle mission begun in the 1700s. At that time the Roman Catholics were estimated to have numbered over two million members, but by 1800 A.D. they were only half as many. They soon regained their losses, however, in the 19th century and by 1950 numbered over three million adherents. The Protestants grew more rapidly during this period, from a few thousand in 1815 to a million in 1914 and five million by 1950. However, the percentage of the total population counted as Christian was only about two and a half percent. Most of the Christians were in the southern part of the country, the Mohammedan north being, as elsewhere, an unfruitful field for missionaries. The great majority of the Christians was from the lowest castes and from hill tribes, whose religion was animistic, so that there too we must say that there were very few converts among the educated Hindus, adherents of the philosophical religions of India. It is noteworthy that the Christians, though the poorest of outcasts, became, under the influence of Christianity, superior in many ways to the “high and mighty” non-Christians. They had a higher percentage of literacy than the country as a whole, their average death rate was less than that of Moslems and Hindus, and such vices as drunkenness, divorce, and polygamy practically disappeared among them. Lutheran Churches of all lands have been active in India, including the Missouri Synod. The largest missions were those conducted by Anglicans and Methodists. All Missions have emphasized education as a means of gaining a hearing among the higher castes, but there have been few actual accessions to the Church from among them. There have come a number of syncretistic movements from them, which attempted to combine Hinduism with Christianity.

In spite of the many blessings obviously brought to the country and to individuals by Christian missions, they are being put under various disabilities now that the country has gained its independence from British rule. Missionaries have difficulty getting entrance permits. It may be only a question of time till the doors will be closed to foreign missionaries, and all work will have to be done by the native Christians themselves. The overweening pride of the upper castes and ruling classes makes them such as would rather rule over ruins than permit others to correct the evils from which this stronghold of false philosophy and unclean phallic religion suffers.

In Ceylon which was first under Portuguese, then Dutch, and finally British rule, a much larger percentage of the population is Christian than in India, —about ten percent compared to two or three percent. Protestant work is being carried on by British Baptists, Methodists, and Anglicans and a few American Congregationalists.

In Burma, where the Baptist Adoniram Judson pioneered, the Burmese proper were solidly Buddhist and few converts were made among them by either Protestants or Catholics. But the Karens, a minority race who were animistic in religion, proved fertile ground, and the Protestant work especially has grown rapidly in spite of the World War and the civil war between Burmese and Karens which followed it.

In the Malay peninsula in Singapore, the native population was solidly Mohammedan, and neither the Catholics nor the Protestants made many converts among them. But successful efforts were made to Christianize the many Indians and Chinese who immigrated into this prosperous area. The Protestant work is carried on in the main by Anglicans and American Methodists.

Siam or Thailand is a solidly Buddhist country where missionaries have had very little success. The Catholics have labored there ever since the seventeenth century, but number only about 40,000 today. The Protestants, American Presbyterians, are still fewer.

In Indo-China, which has been much in the news of late, the Roman Catholics have practically monopolized the mission work. Under French protection they were very successful and had over a million members, or five per cent of the population, before World War II. Certain villages and sections were entirely Christian, largely in the north that has now been surrendered to the Communists. Thousands of these Christians have had to flee to the South where they share the miserable lot of refugees and form another drain upon the American taxpayer.

In the East Indies, Christian missions prospered under Dutch rule to a remarkable degree, especially among the tribes who were animistic in religion, such as those on the Celebes Island and the Bataks of Sumatra. The missions were almost entirely Dutch and German. The Rhenish Missionary Society has done a great work among the Bataks, about a third of whom are now counted as Christians. On the island of Java a few thousand Moslems have been gained for the church. The influence of Christian Missions has extended far beyond its membership, through the schools, hospitals, literature, and so forth, which owe their existence to the Christian Church. Since the last war, the native churches have sought to become entirely independent of the foreigners. But Americans have had to help them, particularly in the old Rhenish Mission field among the Bataks on the island of Sumatra.

In the Philippines, as we have heard, the dominant religion through the 19th century was Roman Catholic. When U. S. A. took over control of the islands from Spain, Protestant missions were begun both among those still pagan and among the Catholics. In the Catholic Church itself a movement for independence from the Spanish priests who had ruled hitherto, resulted in the formation of the "Filipino Independent Church" which, to begin with, had Unitarian leanings but ended up by affiliating with the Protestant Episcopal Church. The Papacy took drastic measures to reform its church organization on the islands and made some progress in spite of the war and the civil disturbances that followed it. The Protestant Missions, carried on chiefly by Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Evangelical United Brethren, and some Methodists and Disciples of Christ, joined in 1948 to form "The United Church of Christ in the Philippines." The Missouri Synod has carried on mission work there since the last war.

In Korea, Catholic missionaries were active from the beginning of the century. Protestants came in the 1870's, chiefly Presbyterians and Methodists. They built a large number of self-supporting churches, which were active in bringing the Gospel to others. The war resulted in tragedy for Korea, ending as it did in the partition of the country, the surrender of the northern part to the Communists, and the civil war that left most of the country desolate. And the end is not yet. Through all persecutions and trials the native church has continued to grow; many of the refugees from the north have established themselves again in the south and have built churches to replace those lost to the Communists.

In Japan, Christian missionaries were admitted only after Commodore Perry in 1853 persuaded the Japanese to open their doors to foreign commerce. The Roman Catholics were enabled to take up again the work they had begun in the sixteenth century and found a number of people who had kept their faith secretly through the years that Christianity was officially proscribed. By 1912 the Roman Catholics numbered about 67,000 members. The Russian Orthodox Church opened a mission in North Japan in 1861 that was "numerically the most successful mission of the Russian Orthodox Church among non-Christians outside of the Russian Empire" (Latourette, p. 1330). It numbered in 1912 more than 30,000 members.

But it was the Protestant Missions that exercised the greatest influence in the new Japan. By 1913 the membership was 103,000, only half of one per cent of the population; but this was not a true measure of their importance to the country, which sought systematically to develop a Western-type civilization. However,

Buddhism and the native Shintoism, being promoted by the Emperor, kept their hold upon the great majority of the people. The disturbed period from 1930 on when the Western powers began resisting Japan's efforts at building an empire in the Orient, brought great difficulties for the missionaries, and our war with Japan meant the end of their work. It was continued, however, by native Christians who had long sought to make their churches independent of the foreigner. During the war the Emperor forced the union of all Protestant Churches into what was called "The Church of Christ in Japan." But after the war, the Episcopalians and Lutherans withdrew from this organization. The missionaries returned in increasing numbers, and new missions were started, among them several Lutheran missions. The United Lutheran Church has conducted a considerable mission effort in Japan since 1892.

In Formosa, the American Presbyterians have carried on mission work among the native Formosans. Since the war, millions of Chinese have sought refuge in Formosa, and a large number of Protestant missions, including that of the Missouri Synod, have followed them and are working successfully with the active support of Chiang Kai Shek and his government.

As said before, China was the last of the fortresses of heathenism to be opened up to Christian Missions. The first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison, arrived in 1807, but had to limit himself to literary work and to Bible translation. By 1843, there were only six converts in the mission. He had not gained access to China proper, but resided in the foreign "concession" near Canton and on the island of Macao. After the Opium War, five cities were opened for missionaries and traders, but it was not until after another war in 1860 that permission was granted to missionaries to travel anywhere in the country. After that time, both Catholic and Protestant missions grew steadily, though the many difficulties in the way meant that there was no progress comparable to that in other parts of the heathen world. The influence of Christianity made itself felt, however, in many ways not indicated by increase in the actual membership.

As an instance of the penetrating power of the Word of God, even when heard only fleetingly, we may tell the story of the so-called Tai-Ping (Great Peace) rebellion. A village schoolmaster near Canton, Hung by name, happened to hear a foreign missionary preach, several years before the Opium War, and was given a tract which explained the Christian beliefs and attacked idolatry. After the defeat of the Chinese by the British in that war, he studied the tract with new interest and came to faith in its teaching. He visited some American missionaries in Canton and, after studying the Christian teaching further, began to carry on mission work among his countrymen and was particularly zealous in destroying idols. Therefore he ran afoul of the authorities but was able with the help of his fanatical followers to fight them off and to gain control of the district in which he lived. By 1853, the movement had acquired large proportions, and its military strength was increased by the addition of several robber bands, including one led by a woman, who became interested in the new iconoclastic religion. In the meantime, their religious practices became more fanatical, like some of the Pentecostal sects today. They believed that Hung and two of his fellow-leaders represented in some way the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and consequently that their commands were law. As their power grew, they attacked one province after the other, laying waste much of the richest part of the empire. They established their capital in Nanking and bid fair to gain control of the whole country; but their campaign against Peking broke down, and Nanking was finally captured by the Imperial armies under the leadership of the famous English officer, "Chinese" Gordon, and the American, General Ward.

Opinions differ as to the character of the religion of the Tai-Ping rebels. There were those who thought that the missionaries should have joined hands with the rebels, and who deplored the assistance given to the corrupt Peking government by the foreign powers, —assistance which was by no means appreciated. The rebels professed faith in the Bible of which they had a translation. They used prayers and laws based directly on the Bible. In their services, hymns were sung and their liturgy contained the lines: "Our Heavenly Father, of His great mercy, did not spare His own Son but sent Him down to give His life to redeem sinners. When men know this and repent, they may go to heaven." An Englishman who lived and worked among them wrote about their piety in worship, their kindness to foreigners whom they claimed as "fellow worshipers of Jesus," and expressed wonder that Europeans generally should "prefer slaughtering the Tai-Pings to accepting them as brothers in Christ." One writer explains this strange behavior by the circumstance that the Tai-Pings had utterly

prohibited the use of opium, and that was the chief article of trade for the British merchants who determined the policy of their government. The British soldiers and navy took part in 43 battles and massacres, in which about 400,000 Tai-Pings were killed, and upward of two millions more died of starvation as a result of the operations of the allied troops. (Wheeler, *The Foreigner in China*, p. 221ff.)

It is in any case hard to prove that those Tai-Ping rebels were any less Christian than were the emperors and kings in Medieval Europe who gave the people the choice of baptism or death, or than the Pope who claims to be the Vice-Regent of Christ on earth. If events had been allowed to take their course without outside intervention, it is quite possible that China today would be a nominally Christian country, wide open to the labors of Christian preachers and teachers instead of being hermetically closed again to any Christian influence. The white man has not always fought on the side of the angels.

Missionaries of every church and every land found their way to China, particularly after the Revolution of 1911. The largest society was the China Inland Mission that by 1914 had over a thousand missionaries. Lutherans from Germany and the Scandinavian lands as well as from America, including the Missouri Synod, established themselves particularly in Central China but were represented all the way from Manchuria to Canton. By 1914 the Roman Catholics were said to number 1,500,000 and the Protestants about one third of a million. By 1947, the Roman Catholics numbered 3,500,000 and the Protestants somewhat less than 1,000,000, or a total Christian membership of less than one percent of the population of China. The Protestant missionary force numbered around 6,000, the Roman Catholic about half of that.

Then came the shameful betrayal of the Nationalist Government and the conquest of all China by the Moscow-trained-and-supported Chinese Reds. There is today not a single foreign missionary of any kind who is carrying on mission work in that land. The native church still maintains itself, though under severe persecution unless it will consent to serve the Communist State as a propaganda agency for world Communism and the destruction of "American Capitalism." We still need to voice the question attributed to Francis Xavier, when he four centuries ago knocked in vain on the doors of self-sufficient China: "O Rock, Rock, when wilt thou open to thy Master?"

*Sources quoted in the above:*

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#### **IV. The Religions of the Heathen World**

We have heard in bare outline the story of the preaching of the Gospel to all nations down through the centuries. We have seen how that preaching met with willing ears and hearts in some cases, but only with perverse hardening of hearts in others. We have seen also how God at all times "left not himself without witness" in the different parts of the world, not only by his creation and preservation of the universe and by the moral law written in the hearts of men, but also by making the Light of the world accessible to any who would receive it in faith. Even of the heathen who had not yet heard the Gospel Paul says: "When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping, things" (Rom. 1:21-23). They could see from the existence of the world that some great and wise Being must have created it. But they turned willfully away from the revelation God thus made of Himself and suppressed the truth concerning Him. "They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (Rom. 1:25); so that they are without excuse. Still more inexcusable



was their failure to make use of the opportunities given them individually and as a people to learn to know the true God through His full revelation of Himself in his Son, the Savior of the world. Here, too, the great majority of people have clung to some perversion of the truth instead of the simple truth itself.

However, in spite of his rejection of the true revelation of God, man remained incurably religious. For, as someone has said, man is “a religious animal.” Therefore we find the situation all over the world to be just what Paul found it in Athens, where he “saw the city wholly given to idolatry,” and said: “Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious (very religious)” (Acts 17). The heathen world is thoroughly religious. It is wholly given to idolatry. Its religious beliefs pervade its whole life, govern the conduct of the people down to the smallest detail and make them in a very real sense the most abject of slaves, “carried away unto the dumb idols even as they are led” (I Cor. 12:2).

There are certain characteristics of heathen or false religions that are essentially alike all over the world, though they appear in a thousand different forms. Actually as the famous Max Mueller somewhere said: “There are two religions, the religion of works, and the religion of grace by faith in Christ.” The church member who turns Christianity into a religion of good works is spiritually as far removed from the truth as the pagan idolater or the superstitious savage. The same self-righteousness and pride characterize them both. The Pharisaic mind, like the heathen mind, can see sin in others, but not in itself. The good citizen who lives an outwardly respectable life may appear to be poles apart from the cannibal or headhunter. But both follow the same principle; for the cannibal, when he eats his enemy, regards it as a good work by which he gains for himself the strength and virtue he needs for this life and the next, even as the Pharisee does his good works to earn eternal life. Every one who despises the grace of God in Christ is a pagan at heart, though he may be very religious and pious, very self-sacrificing and moral in his life and conduct. This, then, is the most important hallmark of heathenism and false religion, that it makes a man the architect of his own salvation. So true Christians cannot emphasize too strongly the deep, fundamental cleavage between grace and works.

Another general characteristic of heathen religion is its pantheism- the idea that God is everything and everything is God. Pantheism becomes in reality atheism; for if everything is God, then nothing is truly God. So Paul can say that the heathen with their many gods are “without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12). Christ teaches us to look upon God as a personal Being, distinct from His creation, whom we can call Father, and who revealed Himself to the world primarily in the person of His Son, God from eternity, yet born in the fullness of the time as a man. The heathen world puts in the place of this personal God an indefinable force or soul which pervades not only living things, but even inanimate objects. Its theories with regard to this world soul may be worked out by philosophers and religious thinkers so as to appear very reasonable. But the same ideas are followed by the rude savage and applied in his life in thousands of ways that represent the crassest superstition. It would take volumes to describe them in full. They are called Animism, when they refer to the beliefs and practices of uncivilized tribes; they are called Pantheism when they refer to the reasoned philosophies of either the heathen or the so-called Christian world. The animistic heathen believes that this all-pervading force, sometimes called *mana* or soul-stuff, is what makes him a living being; when he gets sick and dies, it is because the soul-stuff has left his body. The same soul-stuff is found in all other living things, whether animal or plant life, and even in what we would call dead matter, some objects having more, some less. So a stone or mountain top or a stick or a star has its share of soul-stuff and can influence a man’s destiny. This soul-stuff, like the scientific law of the conservation of energy, never dies; it only changes its abode from one thing or person to another. Consequently, the heathen all believe in the continuation of life beyond the grave in some way or other, though they do not believe in the immortality of the soul for the individual. Just as belief in some kind of god, or gods, is instinctive, so is belief in the after-life in even the most degraded barbarism. As Livingstone said: “There is no need to speak of the existence of God or of a future life, even among the lowest tribes, for these are generally accepted truths among them.”

It is not hard to see that this belief in an immortal soul-stuff lies at the basis of many of the other beliefs, practices, and customs of the heathen. One of the most common heathen ideas, found all around the world, is that of the transmigration of souls, familiar to us especially from its Hindu forms. When a man dies, his soul must find a home some other place. It may be in another person, or it may be in some animal, plant, or even an

inanimate object. Sometimes, as in Buddhism, the idea of retribution and reward is connected with this belief, so that one who has done good in this world may be given to return in some higher, more fortunate position in his reincarnation; while one who has done evil must return in a lower form of life where he suffers many torments. But among many peoples, the idea of punishment or reward in the after-life is entirely lacking. Everything with regard to man's life is put on a purely materialistic plane, with a blind Fate or impersonal, automatic force determining every detail of his life without regard to moral conduct. This transmigration idea is a great burden on society and is largely responsible for the poverty and misery that prevail in heathen lands. For example, in India monkeys destroy the crops that the starving people need, but are never molested because some ancestor or spirit might be dwelling in them. In West Africa, a team of agricultural scientists not long ago sought to help the natives by destroying the rats that infested the area, but had to give up because the natives began rioting when they saw all the rats lying dead.

The belief in the continuing soul-life for the dead leads also to ancestor worship, which is found almost everywhere in the heathen world, ancient and modern. When people die, they become spirits in the other world, who needs to be provided for by their descendants. So their descendants to several generations are required to bring offerings of food, clothing, and whatever they might be thought to need. The souls of the dead profit by the soul-stuff in these offerings, which therefore lose their value for men on earth. In China the transfer of these offerings to the spirit world is made by means of fire, imitation paper money and paper effigies of every kind being burned to provide for them in the style to which they had become accustomed. If the children fail in their duty, the spirits of the dead become "orphan spirits," who bring trouble and disaster upon their disloyal descendants.

The soul-stuff idea forms the basis also for fetishism. A fetish may be any part of an animal, plant, or article which is supposed to contain the mysterious power or soul-stuff in a special degree and so can help a person to build up his own soul-stuff. Taboo is the negative of this, —some article which must be guarded against lest it harm one's soul life. Just as we have to handle the force called electricity with care, if we are not to be killed by it, so the heathen regards the world as full of a mysterious power, which can destroy as well as build up and nourish a man. Therefore it needs to be handled with care in accordance with the laws and customs handed down from the fathers.

In many parts of the world the same belief leads to cannibalism, headhunting, scalping, etc. The savage eats his enemy because he thinks thereby to gain his soul-stuff. In China, men will eat the heart of executed robbers, thinking thus to gain some of their courage. Headhunters prize the heads of their victims because the head is supposed to be a prime source of this soul-stuff. Since the hair and nails that grow even in old age are thought to have a special amount of this soul-stuff, they are particularly prized and are guarded by the living lest they fall into an enemy's hands. Possession of some part of another person or of his image gives one control of him even to the point of causing his death. In China there were people who for this reason would be afraid of having their pictures taken. In the West Indies, so-called Voodooism claims to be able to destroy a person by sticking pins into an effigy of him. Weird tales are told of the power medicine men and priests wield over the people by their "black magic,"—a truly satanic power which must not be discounted as mere fraud but recognized as coming from the devil himself. (Cf. the article: "The Men with Deadly Dreams" in the *Saturday Evening Post*, August 1955).

Magic, too, is bound up with this pantheistic idea of an impersonal soul-stuff permeating everything. Just as the scientist seeks to control the forces of nature by scientific means, so the magician seeks to control what is actually to a large extent those same forces of nature by the scientific means known to him. It is not a matter of praying to the gods or evil spirits and asking them to help or to keep from harming men. It is rather a matter of forcing the mysterious powers of the earth to obey the magician's will. (There is much prayer in the Christian world which might classify as magic rather than true prayer, because it regards prayer as a means, in effect, of compelling God to do man's will.)

In many parts of the world, Animists do not make images of the object which they regard as sacred or possessed of extraordinary power. But some do so in order to have them conveniently at hand at all times. The Chinese represent the spirits of their ancestors by tablets on which the name of the ancestor is written, the name

itself having magical virtue. Other spirits may be represented by images, like the teraphim of the Old Testament, and be used for magical purposes rather than as objects of worship. There is, in fact, little real worship of the spirits, who are feared for the harm they may do rather than honored for the blessings they may bring. As a practical matter, the people live without God, and their religion is literally a worship of devils rather than of God. Cf. I Cor. 10:20.

In this connection, Joh. Warneck, says in *The Living Christ and Dying Heathenism*: “For us who know that we are safe in God’s hands, it is impossible to imagine what a dreadful power this fear is in the life of the heathen. There we see revealed the kernel of real heathenism, and all its theology and mythology are but the shell inclosing it. With this fetter every Animist is bound. The incessant fear of demons, and of their evil plots, and of the sorcery closely connected with their worship, by which these people are tormented, passes our conceiving. Alienation from God, who alone is to be feared, is the ultimate basis of this irrational fear. Heathenism has lost God, and consequently has been given up to the fear of specters whose power is real just in proportion to the estrangement from God.

“The fear of spirits is intensified by the authority of priests and magicians, who are supposed to cultivate fellowship with the spirits, and to have power over them. The magician tyrannizes over them... For he knows how to injure or strengthen the souls of the living by restraining or letting loose the spirits. He is a man greatly dreaded among most peoples.” Thus St. Paul says: “We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many), but to us there is but one God the Father” (I Cor. 8:4). But at the same time he says, “the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God” (I Cor. 10:20). And these devils he describes as “principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world” (Eph. 6:12), and calls their prince “the god of this world ... who hath blinded the eyes of them which believe not” (II Cor. 4:4).

One feature of Animism which is common to practically all heathen religions is fatalism or determinism. This is found in so-called higher religions, like Mohammedanism or Hinduism, as well as in the lowest devil worship. It is a characteristic also of modern materialistic philosophy. A man does what he does because he was born that way. He is the product of an inscrutable fate, or in modern terms, of his heredity and environment, and cannot be and do anything else than he is and does. On the one hand, the heathen bow with calm resignation to the blows of Fate, since they believe them to be fore-ordained and unalterable, —which may seem to be a virtue; but on the other hand, this belief makes them unwilling to exert themselves to become better or do better even in material ways. If they are destined to become rich, they will become rich regardless of what they do. If they are destined to be poor, nothing they do can change their fate. Here is one of the fruitful sources of the decay and progressive deterioration of society that are so prominent in the heathen world. No one has any sense of responsibility. Everyone does what everyone else does, and everyone bows in submission to what they all fear. The blame of all human short-comings is thrown upon Fate, to which the gods are subject as well as men. This belief also does away with mercy and kindness to the unfortunate. If people become sick or famished or are struck down by some accident, it is their fate, and nobody has any business trying to change it. The Chinese would do nothing to save a drowning man; if anyone interfered with his fate, he would become responsible for his whole life thenceforth. However, there is little consistency in heathen beliefs, and their conduct is not always governed consistently by their beliefs either.

One form of Animism is called Totemism, found from Alaska to Australia. Totems are usually animals or plants assumed as the emblem of a clan or family. A totem often represents the ancestor of the clan and is a kind of social alliance between a group of human beings and the animals or plants to which the totem belongs. Sometimes marriage is controlled by the totem. If the totem of one tribe is one that would eat the totem of the other, the two cannot intermarry. Thus gods, men, animals, and plants are thought to be united in one social organization.

In more civilized heathen lands like India, China, Japan, etc., this same animistic religion prevails and governs the life of the people in much the same way as in the barbarous regions. Thus in China, ancestor worship has been for milleniums the real religion of the people, both high and low. It was there long before the time of Confucius as well as of Lao-Tse, the philosophical founder of the Taoist religion. Combined with it was

a belief in all sorts of spirits, both good and evil, called Shen and Kwei respectively. In their ancient philosophy, the Chinese represented all good things as proceeding from a good spiritual principle called Yang, and all evil things from an evil principle called Yin. The Yang represented light, warmth, productivity and life, the male element, as well as the heavens from which these things come, and it produced the Shen or gods. The Yin was associated with darkness, cold, death, the earth, the female element, and produced all the Kwei or devils. The Shen-Kwei, both good and evil, animate every being and every thing. They constitute the soul of man, the Shen representing his intellect and finer qualities, the Kwei his body, evil passions, etc.

The world is crowded with Shen and Kwei. The gods are Shen who animate heaven, the sun, moon, stars, wind, rain, etc. There is a universal deification of anything and everything from sticks and stones to the heavenly bodies. Highest among all the gods is the Supreme Ruler in heaven, Shang Di. Some scholars find in this god merely the heavenly counterpart of the emperor on earth, or a personification of the Yang, the good Shen in the universe. They point out that the worship of Shang Di was combined with the worship of the Earth as the female consort of Heaven or Shang Di. Others find primitive monotheism in this Shang Di, although his worship was carried on only by the emperor and from the earliest known times was joined with the worship of six honored spirits and of the hills and rivers. This was the state religion of China. A reasonable theory calls the imperial worship of Shang Di simply a form of ancestor worship, Shang Di representing the first ancestor of the Chinese emperor. There is a similar situation in Japan, where the emperor was worshipped as the direct descendant of the original gods.

This religion is ordinarily called Confucianism, although Confucius who lived in the sixth century B.C. had nothing to do with originating it. He simply accepted it as part of the traditions of the ancients that he honored, and which he found commonly accepted among the people. He was a political rather than a religious reformer, and his own teachings are a mere moral philosophy, leaving religion out of account. In fact, he was agnostic. When someone asked him about gods, his answer was: "When we do not know men, how can we know the gods?" His fundamental moral principle was: "By nature man is good." (Cf. *Modern Progressive Education*.) Respect for parents and all those in authority took the place of fear and love of God as the moral incentive. In so far his philosophy is superior to modern Deweyism, which provides no incentive at all except the person's own non-existent moral goodness. But in time, this agnostic was given practically divine honors. Temples were built in his honor all over the country, and the scholars worshiped his tablet in the same way as they worshipped the tablets of their own ancestors.

Another philosopher, born fifty years before Confucius, called Lao-tse, wrote in a learned and mystical manner about the marvelous, unchanging "Tao" which pervades everything. This Tao corresponds somewhat to the ancient Greek philosophical term Logos, and is translated the Way, or the Word, or Doctrine. Lao-tse, too, was in reality an atheist whose followers soon made him a god. In practice, the Taoist philosophy was combined with the original animistic religion of the people, and its ancestor and Shang Di worship. It is characterized by belief in all sorts of spirits against which one must guard himself in many ways, and by the practice of sorcery and magic of innumerable kinds. The Chinese use firecrackers to scare away the evil spirits from the home or a wedding or funeral procession. They have so-called "spirit walls" or gates set up in front of an entrance so that the evil spirits cannot get in; for they are able to fly only in a straight line. A mirror over the door will scare them away when they see their own ugly image in it. The Taoist priests live by practicing all sorts of magical arts to drive away the spirits that cause disease and other calamities. Their hierarchy heads up in a pope who has great power over the demon-possessed. He exorcises the demon, entices him into a bottle, plugs it up, and keeps the demon imprisoned there indefinitely. Charms written on a piece of paper cure diseases if placed on the affected part or swallowed with a cup of tea. The Boxers thought they could make themselves immune to foreign weapons by Taoist incantations.

Combined with this belief in an omnipresent spirit world went belief in a hierarchy of gods among whom Shang Di was chief, while the Kitchen God, the God of Wealth, the God of War, and other minor deities practically monopolized the worship of the people. The Kitchen God, whose image is in every fireplace, has the duty of keeping an eye on each family and reporting once a year to Shang Di in heaven; so, to keep him from "telling on them," the people stick his lips together with honey or bribe him with offerings. Confucianists often

condemned the superstitious practices and customs of the Taoist religion, but still followed them when it came to curing diseases, cleansing a house of evil spirits, etc.

The third great religion in China is Buddhism in its Northern or Mahayana form. Buddha, a contemporary of Lao-tse and Confucius, was born of a princely family in India, but as a young man made the "Great Renunciation," left his wife and child and princely prerogatives, and led the life of a wandering beggar and hermit. He tried earnestly to follow the ascetic way of overcoming all the evils of life, for which he was highly honored by his people. But he found it was not the way to his goal. So he made the second "Great Renunciation" by renouncing asceticism, the accepted way of India, and practicing what he called the middle way to peace. His teaching, too, was an atheistic philosophy that made use of many of the Hindu ideas and practices, but in a new way. According to him, the gods of the Hindu religion as well as men are caught in the meshes of the material universe. All are involved in the "wheel of life," the transmigration of souls, and are subject to an inevitable fate. Salvation consists in getting rid of all desire for existence as the only way to escape sorrow and pain. Buddha's philosophy is thoroughly pessimistic. The four "Noble Truths" are: that life is all sorrow; that there is no escape from it in this material universe; that one must extinguish all passions and desire for life and happiness; and that the way to this state of extinction, which is called Nirvana, is by the Eightfold Path: right beliefs, right aims, right speech, right conduct, right means of living, right endeavor, right mindfulness, right meditation. Nirvana is not a heaven of bliss but a state where there is no longer any conscious existence; it is the cessation of being.

Buddha organized an order of mendicants among his followers, who devoted themselves strictly to his principles. They took vows not to destroy life, not to steal, lie, indulge in sexual intercourse, use intoxicating drinks, etc. To them as to Hindus in general, "life" meant all forms of life, and strict rules governed every detail of their actions. They were told how to build huts so that no animal would be inconvenienced or killed. A monk was forbidden to dig lest worms should be accidentally killed. Temples were built as refuges for animals and fish saved from death by pious Buddhists. Similar rules governed the life of nuns.

Buddhist ideas and practices underwent radical changes as the years passed. As said, Buddha was an atheist; but his followers soon made him a god about whom wonderful stories were told. He was pictured as a savior through whom men might gain heaven, Nirvana now having become a place of bliss and joy instead of mere non-existence. The pessimistic philosophy that denied the value of any life, whether of gods or men or animals, became one that promised peace and salvation to those who worshipped Buddha and trusted in him. This new form of Buddhism, called Mahayana Buddhism or Buddhism of the Great Vehicle, is the form that is found in practically all eastern Asia, including Japan. The original form, called Hinayana Buddhism or the Buddhism of the Little Vehicle, has long been found only in Ceylon, Siam, and Burma. This stressed a man's work, the efforts of each individual constituting his means of grace. The Mahayana system stressed prayer to Buddha as the great means of grace.

Buddha's religious teachings were spread all over the Orient by zealous followers. About a third of the population of the world is counted as Buddhist. In the last years there has been a revival of it in Japan and other Buddhist lands; and Buddhists are becoming prominent even in our own country.

Buddhism bears many resemblances to the Roman Catholic religion, such as the belief in purgatory and the whole cultus connected with it; the worship of Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy, corresponding to the Virgin Mary, etc. Consider the following comparison between the two in E. Griffis' *History of Japan*, p. 251 f.: "Buddhism had degenerated into a commercial system of prayers and masses, in which salvation could be purchased only by the merit of the deeds and prayers of the priests. Nevertheless, its material and outward splendor were never greater (than in the 16th Cent. when the Jesuits first came). Gorgeous vestments, blazing lights, imposing processions, altars of dazzling magnificence, and a sensuous worship captivated the minds of the people, while indulgences were sold and saints' days and holidays and festivals were multiplied... The priests of Rome came with crucifixes in their hands, eloquence on their lips, and with rich dresses, impressive ceremonies, processions, and mysteries out-dazzled the scenic display of the Buddhists. They brought pictures, gilt crosses, and images, and erected gorgeous altars, which they used as illuminated texts for their sermons... The transition from the religion of India to that of Rome was extremely easy. The very idols of Buddha served,

after a little alteration with the chisel, for images of Christ. The Buddhist saints were easily transformed into the twelve apostles. The cross took the place of the torii... In the roadside shrine Kwan Yin, the Goddess of Mercy made way for the Virgin, the mother of God... Nearly all the Christian churches were native temples, sprinkled and purified... The same lavatory that fronted the temples served for holy water or baptismal font; the same censer that swung before Amida (Buddha) could be refilled to waft Christian incense; a new convert could use unchanged his old beads, bells, candles, incense, and all the paraphernalia of his old faith in celebration of the new. Almost everything that is distinctive in the Roman form of Christianity is to be found in Buddhism: images, pictures, lights, altars, incense, vestments, masses, beads, wayside shrines, monasteries, nunneries, celibacy, fastings, vigils, retreats, pilgrimages, mendicant vows, shorn heads, orders, habits, uniforms, nuns, convents, purgatory, saintly and priestly intercession, indulgences, works of supererogation, pope, archbishops, abbots, abbesses, monks, neophytes, relics and relic worship, exclusive burial ground, etc., etc., etc.”

Some of the early Jesuits explained these similarities by saying that the devil had invented these imitations of holy things in order to keep his hold on the people. It is more historical, however, to say that these things came into the Catholic Church from heathenism at the time when mass conversions were being produced by military force rather than by the preaching of the gospel. The unchanged heathen brought their old heathen customs and notions with them into the church.

In practice, the people of China mix all three religions, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism together, so that it is hard to say which elements belong originally to which religion. Built into the face of a sheer cliff back of our home in Wanhsien, China, there was a temple dedicated to the chief gods of all three religions: the Confucian Shang Di, the Taoist Yü Hwang Shang Di, and Buddha; and the face of the temple bore the inscription: “The three religions are one.” They have been distinguished as follows: “Confucianism ministers to the moral man, Taoism deals chiefly with the problems of the spirit forces which play upon the present life of men, and Buddhism makes vivid the future life, and thus appeals to the religious sense ... Confucianism deals with the visible present, Taoism with the invisible present, and Buddhism with the invisible future.” Thus they do not conflict with one another, but can well be joined in one.

Buddhism is the dominant religion in Tibet where it has some distinctive traits, and in Japan into which it was introduced from China. The early religion of the Japanese called Shintoism, “The Way of the Gods,” was much like the early religion of China, including ancestor worship and worship of the ruling emperor as a direct descendant of the gods. Confucianism, also, was introduced from China and served to strengthen the loyalty of the people to their ruler, and the spirit of reverence for parents and superiors. There, too, all three religions were blended into one in the life of the people, though there were Confucianists and Buddhists who clung more strictly to the teachings of their respective faiths. A number of Buddhist sects arose in Japan centuries ago, among them the so-called Pure Land Sect, which emphasized faith in Buddha as the savior; he was worshipped by ceaseless repetition of certain formulas similar to the Catholic invocations of the Virgin Mary. The doctrine offered a cheap ticket to Paradise and became very popular. Another sect, “True Sect of Jodo,” lays emphasis on faith alone without any ritual or good works or act of self-sacrifice, such as are otherwise demanded by Buddhism. Faith will accomplish all, if one worships Buddha only and prays for nothing that does not concern salvation. In this teaching it has been said that Buddhism completed the cycle, denying everything that its founder affirmed, and affirming everything that he denied. Still another sect, called the Zen Sect, believed that the saving knowledge could be transmitted without words by contemplation alone. Buddha sitting in deep contemplation of his navel is their symbol. In order to become like Buddha, one must grasp the fact of “utter and entire void”. The motto was: “O, to be nothing! Nothing!” This branch of Buddhism became popular with the Samurai warriors of Japan. By its death was robbed of its terrors, so that they would for any good or bad reason commit hara-kiri, a sure way of maintaining their honor unsullied.

In India, besides the Hinayana Buddhism already described, we find an assortment of specifically Hindu religions and philosophies which are, on the one hand, the most high-sounding, abstruse religious thinking to be found anywhere; and are, on the other hand, the most filthy phallic (sex worshipping) religions to be found anywhere. Their ancient writings, called the Vedas, Brahmanas, and Upanishads, are a collection of hymns and prayers, theological treatises dealing in the main with ritual, and philosophical speculations, respectively. This

literature concerns a series of gods, chief of whom are Indra, Agni, Varuna, and Vishnu; but it reflects also animism and belief in evil spirits and in magic as the means to control them. The last named, the Upanishad, philosophizes about the Brahman or Atman, as the soul of the universe and is profoundly pessimistic, seeing nothing in store for man but an endless series of transmigrations, the “wheel of life,” from which one could break only by doing good deeds to build up Karma for the future, and by extinguishing all desire.

Later developments of this Vedic religion led to the formation of the caste system, with the priestly class, the Brahmans, at the head; the warriors, Kshatriyas, second; the farmers, Vaisyas, third; and the servants, Sudras, the fourth. Lowest of all the scale were the outcastes. It is a serious mistake to regard this caste system as merely a matter of social organization or to compare it with the negro problem in our country. It is completely bound up with the religion of the Hindus.

“The further development of Indian religion ... is in two directions. There is a philosophical movement, in which the Brahmanic ideas of god, the world, the soul and its changes are further worked out (on Pantheistic lines), and which leads to the six schools of Hindu philosophy. On the other hand, the gods have their history. Brahma remains the great god, but as his character is so undefined, he is little worshipped. Indra, the old national god, yields to Vishnu, the old sun god of the three steps (heaven, the air, the earth) who becomes the favorite deity. The stern and destructive Siva is a new figure, and seems to be partly an adaptation of a god of the savage aborigines: his worship is the most fanatical. These three, the Creator, the Upholder, and the Destroyer, form the Trimurti, or divine trinity of India, —a trinity arrived at not by unfolding the riches of the one great god, but by compounding the claims of three gods who are rivals. The doctrine of incarnation is also found here. Vishnu has ten avatars or incarnations in human form. He comes down to the earth when there is a special reason for his interference. In these avatars, especially in Krishna, the war god, whose exploits as a hero are told in the great epic, the Mahabharata, the need is to some extent met, of which both Buddhism and Christianity lay hold, of a divine figure who is not too far away from man, and who can be regarded with personal affection.” (A. Menzies, *The History of Religion*, p. 350 f.). In some modern Hindu sects, Christ is looked upon as one of the series of avatars.

We cannot enter into the distinctive doctrines of the six systems of philosophy developed on the basis of the Upanishads, called Yoga, Vedanta, etc. All of them make religion a matter of speculative thought, not a matter of life and conduct or the hope of salvation. The most popular worship among the people seems to be that of the gods Krishna and Siva, represented by phallic emblems. Even a man like Ghandi, educated in England, believed that the cow was sacred, and practiced the asceticism typical of Hindu fanatics.

There is also a Buddhist sect peculiar to India, called Jainism, which emphasizes asceticism. It has a very poor opinion of women who are several degrees lower in the scale of life than cattle, but it does permit them to become ascetics. “The belief that it is wrong to kill anything leads the Jains to the most absurd tolerance of vermin. At times they fear to move or to breathe freely lest they kill some of the small insects with which the very air of India frequently swarms. In almost every town where Jains live, animal hospitals abound. One at Kutch is said to have contained 5000 rats!! ... Hopkins declares that a religion that denies God, worships man, and nourishes vermin has no right to exist. Its one virtue, that of not killing, it holds in such exaggerated form that it becomes grotesque” (G. A. Barton, *The Religions of the World*, p. 176).

The last of the religions of the heathen world, which we can touch upon only very briefly, is Mohammedanism. Its beginning is dated 622 A.D., the year of the Hegira or flight of Mohammed to Medina, on which the Moslems base their calendar. The cardinal doctrine of Mohammedanism, which contains some Jewish and Christian elements as well as much Arabic superstition and paganism, was the oneness and uniqueness of Allah, The God. He was conceived of as a transcendent man, and as the absolute despot of the world to whose will all must bow. The Moslem view of God may be described as Deism plus fatalism carried to their ultimate. Mohammed is the last and greatest of the prophets to whom God made his final revelation to man. God being what He is, man must submit unconditionally to his will, whence the name Islam, which means “submission.” Mohammed believed a very material heaven and hell. In the former, the faithful would enjoy all the pleasures of the flesh without limit and without satiety; while in the latter, infidels would be tormented in fire of a definitely literal nature. The whole duty of the good Moslem is summarized in these five articles: 1.

Professed belief in Allah; “There is no god but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet.” 2. Prayer five times a day. 3. Alms-giving on a fixed scale. 4. Fasting during the month of Ramadan. 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca. His Bible is the Koran, which means “reading,” a collection of Mohammed’s teachings. It is a conglomeration of laws, dreams, and exhortations that make very dull reading.

The Moslem faith spread very rapidly and numbers today about one-sixth of the population of the earth. The varieties of Islamic thought rival those of the Christian Church, and the number of its sects surpasses that of the Church. To this day its adherents show themselves most fanatical in their beliefs, and it is seldom that the Gospel of Christ makes any impression upon their hard work-righteousness and their carnal assurance that a delightful heaven awaits them, without there being any need of the mediation or atonement of Christ, who is to them a prophet indeed, but of far lower rank than Mohammed.

Our review of the religions of the heathen world, inadequate though it is, should serve to bring out the hopelessness and fear under which the slaves of Satan groan. No man can paint in too dark colors the misery, poverty, heartlessness, and unmitigated wickedness of the heathen world in its every part. Those who worship false gods, whether in heathen lands or in so-called Christian countries, “having no hope, and without God in the world” (Eph. 2:12), are bound in the toils of their sins or a vain asceticism as they are. It is as such hopeless, lost souls that the missionaries of the Gospel must regard them, so that they will do their best to bring them the message of salvation in which alone true peace and joy may be found. Only in Christ will any man gain “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (I Cor. 1:30). It remains to consider the principles and methods of Christian mission work that the church of the true Gospel must follow in order to fulfill its duty as the bearer of the Light of the world to those who still sit in darkness and the valley of the shadow of death.

*Sources quoted in the above:*

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## **V. Mission Principles and Methods**

We have reviewed the history of Christian Missions and the religions and philosophies which compete with the Gospel for the faith and allegiance of the people. We need further to consider some of the principles which must govern us in our mission work, and the methods which we should follow in order to let the light of the Gospel shine undimmed and clear.

Since the Gospel is a message from God to sinful, rebellious men, and since He wants all men to come to the knowledge of the truth, it is clear that we should first of all seek to bring that message to those who have not yet heard it. Where people have the Scriptures in their own tongue, where churches which use the Bible are already planted, we should not seek to begin new missions, unless we have a very clear and definite call to bring them truths which are neglected or denied by the existing churches. St. Paul preached the Gospel “from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum” (Rom. 15:19), testifying to the fact of Christ’s resurrection both among those who already were Christians or had the Gospel, and among those who had not yet heard it. But he said to the Romans: “Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man’s foundation: but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand. For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you” (Rom. 15:19ff.). There were so many who had not yet heard the Gospel that Paul felt it was his first duty to preach to them. At the same time he tells the Romans: “I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I have purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also” (1:13ff.).



In a sense the world was truly his mission field. Although he had a special call to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), he did not neglect the Jews, but preached to them first, wherever he came; he “became unto the Jews as a Jew, that he might gain the Jews” (I Cor. 10:20). Consequently, we are to seize every opportunity that is offered us to preach the Gospel in its truth and purity, at the same time as we look for those fields white unto the harvest where there as yet are no laborers or only a very inadequate number of them. The Moravian Brethren were guided in their missionary activities by the principle: Go where the field is hardest and the rewards least promising. And we, too, should not look only for mission fields where the prospects, humanly speaking, are brightest for the speedy development of a Christian community, but should go where the need is greatest and the darkness deepest. As we have heard before, both Nigeria and Rhodesia are among the least evangelized areas of Africa, only six percent being counted as Christian. The Wisconsin Synod followed right principles in so far, when it settled upon Northern Rhodesia for its new mission field.

In this connection we need to consider the attitude we should take toward the many sectarian churches which, though they have the Bible, still teach contrary to its clear statements and offer the people only a garbled Gospel, a light dimmed by the smoke of human science and conceit. St. Paul had many opponents within as well as without the church, who caused him trouble and distress. To the Corinthians he said: “I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him” (“you submit to it readily enough,” RSV II Cor. 11:3–4). And to the Galatians he wrote even more sternly: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6ff.). Scripture is full of warnings against false prophets and false teachers who speak in the name of the Lord, though the Lord never sent them. At the same time, we are not to enter into another man’s fold and steal his sheep from him. St. Paul said also: “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the Gospel. What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice” (Phil. 1:15–18). He rejoiced in every preaching of the Gospel, even if it was done by such as were his enemies because of his uncompromising stand for the liberty of the Christian man. Therefore it is a Scriptural and Lutheran rule not to proselytize. Dr. Fritz’s version of Walther’s Pastorate, on the basis of such passages as Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2 and 4:15, says: “Therefore what is commonly called sheepstealing (enticing members to leave one congregation and affiliate with another of the same denomination) and proselytizing (visiting members of a Christian congregation of another denomination with the intention of persuading them to leave that congregation and denomination) is forbidden; for a pastor or any other Christian has no right to *break into* the flock of another pastor. This, however, should not keep any pastor or any Christian from bearing testimony to the truth when *called upon* to do so or whenever *opportunity presents itself* to do so; ... if we call on members of a non-Christian church, such as Unitarians, Christian Scientists, Modernists, and the like, with the intention of winning them over to the truth and persuading them to join a Christian congregation, we are not proselytizing; for such persons are not affiliated with a *Christian* congregation nor with a Christian church as such; being without the pale of the Christian church, such people are missionary material” (page 57f.).

It is essential to follow this rule not least on foreign mission fields where native Christians are only too ready to drift from one denomination to the other, if they think to gain any material advantage thereby. In every mission field, even where a certain church seems to have the whole territory to itself, it is easy for a missionary to become entangled in local feuds, if he is too ready to accept as a sincere conversion to the truth (as represented by his own church) what is only a defection from another church for personal or unworthy reasons, or an attempt to gain the help of a foreigner for one side of a tribal or local dispute. Appeals that come to a missionary from heathen or sectarian groups to open work in their area generally need to be investigated with a cold and fishy eye. The Missions of the Synodical Conference churches have had some sad experiences in this

respect, which they could have been spared, if the missionaries had used better judgment and followed correct principles. Missionaries should, then, keep on friendly terms with representatives of other churches, at the same time as they avoid all religious unionism and testify as occasion offers against the errors of sectarian churches.

A missionary in foreign fields needs to be on guard against temptations and dangers that do not trouble the Home Mission worker. If he is working among uncivilized tribes or such peoples as the Indians and Negroes in our own country, there is, for example, the question of living standards. The white man is not likely to survive very long, if he tries to live the way the native African does, or if he shares the unsanitary, insect-ridden life of the heathen with their many filth-diseases and dangerous epidemics. And a dead missionary, as Dr. Livingstone observed many years ago, is of no particular value to a Mission. On the other hand, a missionary, while steering clear of the Scylla of undue self-denial, must beware also of falling into the Charybdis of extravagance. There are many missionaries who live on a scale which is unnecessarily high, —so far above that of the native that it would correspond to the life of the millionaire in our land. When Paul said: “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (I Cor. 9:22), he did not mean that he would adopt all the social customs, respect the false beliefs, and descend to the moral level of the people among whom he worked, on the principle: “When in Rome do as the Romans do.” He meant that he would preach to each and every man, whether Jew or Greek, whether with the Law or without the Law, whether weak or self-sufficient, whether slave or free, in the way best calculated to win him for the only saving Gospel. So we must not think it necessary to ape the heathen in their manner of dress, or to follow their social customs that are, in the main, closely interwoven with pagan superstitions and beliefs, but should be ourselves and let Christian customs govern our own lives. There were, e.g., missionaries in the time of the Manchu Rule in China who wore long queues, the sign of subservience to the Manchus, thinking thereby to please the Chinese or to hide their foreign origin. Seldom did they succeed in that, but were rather ridiculed for it, especially if their queues were false and were only pinned on.

Missionaries need to bear in mind also the deep-rooted racial prejudices that exist everywhere in the world, the pride of race or national pride, which have their justifiable aspects. Internationalist propaganda to the contrary, patriotism is still a virtue. We must not treat the native condescendingly, as if he were a creature of a lower order because his skin is black or yellow and he lives in filth and in a stench that we would not like to see in a pigsty. To the native, the foreigner only demonstrates his weakness and unfitness for life in a hard world, if he is visibly affected by such things. It is a life-long task to acquire an intimate knowledge of the pagan’s mind and of the meaning of his customs and religious beliefs and practices, —knowledge which a foreigner should gain if he would do his work aright. And no man can really acquire this without first learning the language of the people. He will not be considered intelligent until he does learn it. For in every part of the world, men judge others by their ability to speak the language they themselves know. The missionaries who have done best work are those who have mastered the language of the people, so that they could not only gain the confidence of the natives, but also translate the Bible and other Christian literature into the native language, thus enabling them to drink from the eternal springs of God’s Word without a foreigner as intermediary. It is indeed possible to reach men by an interpreter, as is done to a large extent on our Nigeria field; but that is far from ideal. If we are to build an indigenous church, one that can stand on its own feet and take up the work of spreading the Gospel to ever-new areas, we must from the beginning use the language of the people. Else the Gospel will ever be a foreign thing to them, something to be dropped as soon as the foreigner and his power and influence are removed.

One lesson, which it may be hard for the missionary to learn, is that we should not introduce our western forms of architecture, dress, etc., among the natives, although we follow them in our own life. There were churches in China, for example, which represented the worst types of Western church architecture and which disfigured the landscape. On the other hand, there were those who adopted Chinese styles of architecture, including specifically pagan features. And there were mission publishers who thought they had to illustrate Bible stories as if they were enacted in China instead of in Palestine. St. Paul had to contend continually with Christian Jews who wanted to force upon the Gentiles all the laws and customs to which they themselves felt bound. He had to contend, also, with those who wanted to bring pagan superstitions and beliefs with them into

their new worship. Here the missionary must be sure that he is not yielding to syncretistic forces, at the same time as he avoids foisting foreign customs and conventions upon the natives.

The danger of falling into syncretistic ideas and practices is a very real one on every mission field. The Bible teaches us by both precept and example that the Christian must make a clean break with every form of idolatry and false worship. The story of Aaron and the Golden Calf, of the “high places” and images set up at Dan and at Bethel, of Elijah and the priests of Baal, and the prophetic denunciations of idol worship, —all must be understood as involving syncretistic worship of the true God under forbidden forms, combining the worship of God with idols. Paul refers to these Old Testament stories when he warns his new converts: “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play” (I Cor. 10:6ff.). Again he says: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?... Wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing” (II Cor. 6:14ff.). And yet, in spite of these emphatic warnings, there are all too many Christian missionaries who think it necessary to compromise with heathen religions and customs in order to win converts.

People who are unionists at home will be syncretistic abroad. The man who is willing to compromise the clear Bible teaching in order to get together with others called Christian and work with them for the advancement of the church (as is done e.g. in the World Council of Churches) will also be willing to accept heathen religions and philosophies as essentially the same thing as the teachings of the inspired prophets and apostles. Modernistic churches have in reality surrendered the fundamental Christian position and gone over to the work-righteous religion of the heathen. Therefore they propose to do mission work on the basis that they are not to bring the heathen something new or final, but that they together with them are to *search for* the truth, whether in the Bible or in heathen writings. This is, in fact, the spirit that *rules* on the major mission fields today. Some years ago, a Commission headed by a Harvard professor, visited the chief mission fields of the world and came back with a report advocating the procedure outlined above. On June 19, 1955, in San Francisco, a “Festival of Faith” was held as a sort of “pep rest” in preparation for the meeting of the United Nations, which featured a “Service of Prayer for Peace and Divine Guidance to the United Nations.” Dr. O. F. Nolde, a leader of the ULC and of the World Council, as well as of the International Missionary Council, presided. Prayers were offered by representatives of the Jewish, Baha’i, Buddhist, Eastern (Greek) Orthodox, Hindu, Christian Protestant, and Moslem faiths. The ritual contained sentences from Confucian, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Moslem, and Jewish writings. Fittingly enough, the Boy Scouts served as Guides for the meeting. The Roman Catholic Church took no part. (Will we have to learn self-respect and a proper attitude over toward errorists from the Roman Catholics?)

In China, as we have heard, the Jesuits began their mission work on an openly syncretistic basis, accepting ancestor worship and the Imperial worship of Heaven and Earth as a part of their religion. We have noted the affinities between Buddhism and Roman Catholicism also. But it is not only Modernists and Catholics who have followed this program. One of the first theological professors in the Union Lutheran Seminary in Central China, Dr. L. Reichelt, for many years conducted a special mission to Buddhists, in South China. His teachings were a frank amalgam of Buddhist and Christian ideas, and the ritual, church organization, and manner of life of his group were closer to Buddhism than to Christianity. Still more common is the tolerance in Christian missions of a multitude of superstitious, idolatrous practices and customs which the conscientious native Christian will bitterly oppose, but which foreign missionaries too often do not understand well enough to reject for their idolatrous implications.

Missionary churches that have been honeycombed by Modernism, the Social Gospel, syncretism and heresies of every kind cannot be expected to resist the anti-Christian movement called Socialism, which has gained control of such a large part of the heathen world. No doubt it will be only a very small minority which will survive the persecutions directed against any and all who refuse to follow the Communist line.

A principle which might seem self-evident, but often is set aside, is that the Christian missionary must preach the Gospel first and foremost. That is the *new* element that alone will attract the heathen to the Christian Church. They know the law, although they do not obey it. Like the Pharisees, they can see very well the sins of others, but their own sins they will deny. What they do is always right. They must learn to know who the true God is, how He has created the world and governs all things, how He has redeemed and acquitted ungodly men, before they will be able to break away from the animism, fatalism, and sorcery which rule them. They will not begin to understand what sin is and how they need to be cleansed from it until they have learned to know the true God in His Son, Jesus Christ. When we read the long catalog of sins against which Paul warns his converts, we realize that the Christians in his congregations also were very imperfect. Yet he addressed them as children of God by faith in Jesus Christ. After Paul had given the Thessalonians high praise for their faith in the Gospel, he still had to say: “But this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter” (I Thess. 4:3f.). So today, too, we cannot expect that new converts are going to manifest all the Christian virtues from the beginning. The process of sanctification is with them also a life-long matter. But they *should* know the Gospel and trust in Christ for their salvation.

Some missionaries make the mistake of assuming that the Gospel and the mysteries of the kingdom of God are beyond the understanding of barbarians, and that they need to be civilized before they can become capable of being Christians. Hans Egede labored in Greenland for many years, trying to bring European education and culture to the Eskimos before he gave them the Gospel, but with poor results. The Moravians who preached the Gospel from the beginning made much greater progress in Christianizing the Eskimos and thus civilized them also. Education, like sanctification, comes as a fruit of the Gospel, but is not a prerequisite for it.

As an example of the readiness with which the pagan mind can apprehend the Gospel teachings, we might tell this story from China. A Chinese gentleman had attended our chapel meetings for some time. Once when I sought to show how we must accept God’s gifts in faith, whether we can understand everything about them or not, and that our faith is the empty hand which receives God’s gift, he was reminded of a story which went, briefly, like this: A certain magistrate, when he took over the office in a new city, wanted to teach the people to trust in him as a man whose word was his bond. So he had a large stone placed at the gate into the city and announced that any man who would carry the stone to his yamen (official quarters) would receive \$10,000. Everyone thought this was some sort of hoax and refused to be taken in by such a foolish promise, until one day a stupid farmer (the word for stupid and honest is the same in Chinese) came in, read the proclamation, took the magistrate at his word, carried the heavy stone to the yamen and received his reward. This Chinese, yet unbaptized, was clearer on the part faith plays in our salvation than some Lutheran theologians are, who make faith a cause or ground of our salvation.

What are the mission methods a missionary must follow in order to fulfill his task properly? Principles always remain the same, methods of applying them may vary according to circumstances. There are generally recognized methods of doing mission work on the *home* fields that we need not review here. Some of these are useful on the foreign field, others not. The methods of the revivalist, for example, have little lasting value in a pagan land for the simple reason that there is in the heathen nothing to “revive.” There must first be patient instruction in the fundamentals of the Gospel, as well as the “evangelistic” preaching of the Word. Paul could build churches with Jews and proselytes as a nucleus, who were already familiar with the Old Testament. In the heathen world today we have to “start from scratch,” telling the story of the Bible, both Old and New Testament. A missionary might reach thousands with public preaching in street chapels, in market places, etc., and by distributing Christian tracts and Gospel portions. But the nucleus of his congregation will have to be formed out of those near him, servants and others with whom he has daily contacts. When a congregation finally has been gathered, it should be instructed in its rights and duties as a Christian church, no matter how small and incapable of functioning it may seem to be. Here is one place where men learn by doing. Natives should understand that this is now their work; they should be active in mission work, exercise church discipline,

etc. Too often the missionary seeks to control everything in the churches he founds, acting as a sort of pope. His power of the purse gives him the opportunity to do so, if he does not guard against the temptation.

The missionary in most parts of the world has another power which may be a temptation to him, that is, his connection with a powerful Western government which directly or indirectly rules the people among whom he works. It is under the protection of European "Christian" powers that missionaries have done most of their great work of bringing the Gospel to all the corners of the earth. And we should not question the fact that this has been a blessing to the world. St. Paul repeatedly made use of his Roman citizenship to save himself from violence and death. He relied upon the Roman government to protect him in his travels through the empire and never apologized for it. There were enough dangers and persecutions for him to face without seeking unnecessarily to add to their number. There have, indeed, been many representatives of foreign governments who were unfriendly to missionaries and who gave the white man a bad name among the natives, thus increasing the difficulties of the missionary work among them. But in general they have done what they could to protect their nationals, even when these went off on seemingly harebrained adventures among cannibals, headhunters, and fierce savages, over whom the government could exercise only a slender control. Still in recent years, modernistic leaders on the mission fields have joined revolutionary elements in agitating against foreign control, e.g. against the concessions and the extraterritorial rights so long held by Western powers in China. This is simply another part of their program of undermining and destroying true Christian missions.

We must recognize, too, that many people have been brought into the church as a result of the white man's political control over them rather than by the preaching of the Gospel. Seeing the wealth and wisdom of the white man, the natives have thought to gain some of that wealth and wisdom by joining the foreigner's church. Granted that their conversion was just as superficial as that forced upon many people in the Middle Ages by "Christian" governments, it still remained true that an opportunity was thus given to instruct the people in the Bible and help them gradually to a better life. When the "Christian" general, Feng Yü Hsiang, instructed his army in the catechism as a part of their military training and then baptized the whole army at once with a water hose, was he any worse than the medieval kings who baptized the people at the point of the sword! No doubt there are many "rice Christians" among the millions now counted as the fruit of mission work in all parts of the world; but before we criticize them, we might take a look at the superficiality, worldliness, and materialism which prevail in our home churches. When a man like the labor leader, Walter Reuther, whose principle it is that we must feed a man's stomach before it is any use to preach the Gospel to him, can be welcomed in Missouri Synod circles and praised as a Lutheran, we need to examine ourselves and consider how many "rice Christians" there may be among us.

The power that supports the missionary in his legitimate labors, however, can also be abused so as to involve him in difficulties of his own making. There are missionaries who have encouraged and supported Communist revolutionaries in their violent rebellion against their rulers. Some have listened to native Christians who claimed they were being persecuted for their faith's sake and have helped them in court, only to find out when it was too late that these Christians were engaged in some nefarious undertaking for which they deserved to be punished. There are those who have used their position as representatives of the Great Powers to act and live like kings with autocratic authority over their subject peoples. In some cases, missionaries have *earned* the respect and power they enjoy by their long labors for the people, especially among savage tribes in Africa or the South Seas, or among the oppressed peoples in India. But in other cases the missionaries were simply indulging the little pope that hides in the hearts of all men. In the end, undue dependence upon the strong arm of government may react definitely against the church, if the foreign government withdraws or is weakened in some way, as has happened in so many parts of the world during the last generation. In China, the Communists had no sooner gained control of the country than they made the missionaries their chief object of attack. Today the few Protestant and Catholic missionaries who are left are either in prison or are at least prevented from doing any mission work. The power of government is a two-edged sword that may wound those who rely on it as well as those who oppose it. It is, then, a poor way of doing mission work to call too directly upon the civil power for support. Church and State are separate domains, and both function best when they are not mixed together, whether at home or abroad.

Besides the direct preaching of the Gospel to the heathen, missionaries have used what we may call auxiliary agencies in their mission work. They have established schools, especially in such countries as India, China, and Japan,—in later years also in Africa—to give the natives the modern Western-type education they desire. In this way they hope to appeal to the higher classes and to gain a hearing for the Gospel among the leaders of the country. Such schools have been a blessing to the missionary cause when they were operated on a strictly Christian basis, but too often they have become completely secularized, although they were supported by mission funds. In China, students at such colleges were among the ringleaders of the revolutionary movement that aimed to eliminate the white man, even though they were receiving their education entirely at the expense of the church. Such modern education, divorced from religion, is no better from a Christian point of view than the education the Chinese or Hindus give their people themselves. They merely jump from the frying pan of heathen philosophies, which are materialistic and fatalistic, into the fire of modern secular philosophy that is no less materialistic and fatalistic. In short, schools to teach the Bible to the young and to train teachers and preachers for the church are a necessity. Schools to provide a modern education for the upper classes mean little to the Christian cause and may only become a means by which the church receives a mortal wound.

Another mission auxiliary is medical work. This, too, may be a wonderful aid to the missionary cause. Miracles of healing are wrought among the natives, which may have the same effect upon them today as the miracles of the apostles had in the first Christian century. We may say that in the providence of God they actually do take their place. But then intensive, personal Christian work must be done in connection with all the healing activities of the medical missionaries. If the medical work becomes an end in itself, if it is not used as a means of pointing the heathen to the Great Physician, it will surely become but a snare. Practically all Mission Societies have spent huge sums of money during the last decades on schools and hospitals, but their value to the Christian cause has decreased as the years have passed. Christ healed the people who did not trouble to thank Him, but he had praise only for those who confessed their faith in Him. So we shall, indeed, do all we can to cure the bodily ills of the natives we would reach with the Gospel, but we shall not rely too much on such cures to build the Church of Christ. Not gratitude for physical aid, but the Gospel itself opens the door of the heart of sinful man.

Another auxiliary to Christian missions is Social Service, such as famine relief, caring for the blind, the slaves and other unfortunates for whom the heathen world does nothing at all. Both in India and China, missions grew rapidly for a time in certain areas as a result of the famine relief work conducted by foreign missionaries. But in the end the results gained in this way melted away until only a remnant was left. Such things, including scientific aid to agriculture that some missions have dabbled in, are not a Means of Grace. They can build good will between the missionary and the people and give him open doors to the preaching of the Gospel, but they never can be the means of winning men to a true faith. It is a part of the modern Social Gospel to say that we must take care of the physical needs of an individual or people before it is any use to preach the Gospel of life and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. That Social Gospel is false both according to Scripture and according to sound psychology. In Christ's parable, Lazarus perished of sickness and hunger. Yet he had the saving faith and trust in God, as his name indicated and as his coming to the bosom of Abraham in Paradise demonstrated. The rich man had every earthly benefit, yet he lacked faith and condemned himself by his expressed contempt for the sacred Word of Scripture, the only God-given Means of Grace. In heathen lands, as in the home fields, it is the poor who most readily accept the Gospel, not those who live the easy, well-fed life of the rich and powerful.

inally, the foreign missionary must from the beginning plan his work with a view to eliminating himself eventually and building a self-supporting, self-propagating church. He will need to train teachers and assistants who can take over much of the detail work in the congregations he founds. The foreigner is to plant the church in such a way that it will bear fruit, growing inwardly and spreading its seeds abroad. This was the apostolic method. Paul spent only a few months or years in the various places to which he brought the Gospel; but he left helpers, men like Timothy, Titus, and Silas, to “set in order the things that were wanting” (Titus 1:5). The foreigner, by his very status as an outlander, is not qualified to serve indefinitely as the pastor of native congregations. The time may come when he will be a hindrance and source of danger to the native church rather than a support and aid. Paul lost no time in fleeing from cities where persecution arose against him; he left the

young Christian churches to take care of themselves, lest he only bring danger and trouble on them. So the missionary who would try to brave such opposition as the Communists stir up against him is not following Biblical example, but is more foolhardy and dimwitted than courageous and wise. A Christian should always be ready to suffer martyrdom for his faith, but he should never seek martyrdom or bring it upon himself by ignoring such admonitions as: “When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another” (Matt. 10:25).

It is, of course, no easy matter to find or select properly qualified men for leadership in the native churches. Here the instructions and admonitions in the Pastoral Epistles need to be followed carefully and completely. There are those among the natives, perhaps brilliant men intellectually, who may acquire a thorough knowledge of the Bible and yet prove in the end to be scoundrels who had succeeded in hood-winking the foreigner, while living a scandalous life to the great detriment of the church. Here is where more control of the affairs of the local church, including the appointment of native workers, by the native Christians themselves might help. They would know the character of their fellow Christians much better than the missionary could. Whatever weakness and mistakes may result from self-government in the young local churches, the dangers resulting from too much papistic government are bound to be greater in the end. In any case, there is no other way to build a living, indigenous church than to expect its members to take over and continue the work that the missionary has begun.

Even the most faithful missionary may not succeed in converting whole peoples to the Christian faith or in producing the fruits of faith that he would like to see among the native Christians. But if he has held aloft the light of the Gospel and called men to repentance and faith in accordance with the Word of God, he can be confident that the Lord of the Church will say to him in the final judgment: “Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matt. 25:23).

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