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blood. For the blood is the life. These men had gone in jeopardy of their lives to bring the water. And when they brought it, he would not drink of it. He said, It is the blood of the men. And he poured it out unto the Lord.

What does the world say? It says David was a fool for his pains, a sentimental fool. For the world, which has taken him home to its heart because he was so human and longed for the water of the well of Bethlehem, sees no sense in the pouring out of the water when he got it. Of course, the men went in jeopardy of their lives. That is what men are for. And if we are to consider the cost of all the necessaries of life, the cost to other people, when should we have time for life's enjoyments?

'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool.'

Thou fool? What had he done? He had learned the value of water. Life was no plaything to him. He had toiled in youth and he had toiled in manhood. If he had prospered, he knew what it had cost him. 'I will pull down my barns and build greater.' Why should he not? But God said unto him, Thou fool. He had learned the value of water. But he had not learned the value of blood.

The Missionary Idea in the Gospels.

By Professor the Rev. George Jackson, B.A., Victoria College, Toronto, Canada.

From two different quarters the call comes to us to-day for a re-examination of the charter of missionary enterprise. On the one hand, the revival of missionary interest and effort, which received such unexampled expression in the Edinburgh Conference of last year, is leading men to investigate anew the whole ground of the missionary appeal. On the other hand, modern New Testament criticism, in its attempt to get behind the reporters of Jesus to Jesus Himself, sometimes questions our right to use—or at least to use in the old way—some of the texts which have long done duty in the missionary cause. The moment, therefore, seems opportune for considering afresh the nature and strength of the missionary argument as it is to be found in the Gospels. When we send our missionaries to press the Christian faith on the peoples of other lands, is our action in line with Christ's own purpose? Can the appeal to the Churches at home plead His sovereign sanction and authority? St. Paul, we know, was a missionary; his eager spirit broke the bonds of Jewish exclusiveness and drove him forth on the world's highways to make known unto all men the gospel of the grace of God; but Jesus lived and died within the narrow limits of the Holy Land. Then is it to Paul rather than to Jesus that we must look as the founder of missions? Here, shall we say, is another example of the way in which the strong and masterful personality of the Apostle has dominated the whole Christian Church; or, may we see behind St. Paul the figure of Another who said once, and who says still, to all who believe in Him, 'Go ye into all the world'? Such is our question. In seeking to answer it I shall, for well understood reasons, limit myself mainly to the first three Gospels.

I.

And at once it has to be admitted that our missionary 'texts' are neither so numerous nor so conclusive as perhaps we have been led to expect. There is, of course, the Great Commis-

sion given by our Lord to His disciples after His resurrection, and reported in varying forms in our first three Gospels and in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.[1] But when we turn back to the records of Christ's life and teaching during the years of His public ministry, we are surprised, and perhaps disappointed, to find that there is so little that we can set beside it. There are, it is true, not a few sayings and parables that foreshadow the universal mission of Christianity. Thus, for example, Jesus spoke of His disciples as 'the light of the world,' and 'the salt of the earth.'[2] He said that He would build His church and that the gates of Hades should not prevail against it.[3] When a woman anointed Him in the house of Simon at Bethany, He declared that that which she had done should be spoken of for a memorial of her 'wheresoever the gospel should be preached throughout the whole world.'[4] Still more explicit was His word that before 'the end' came 'the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations.'[5] And once, when His soul was suddenly and deeply moved by the faith of a centurion, there appeared before Him a vision of multitudes coming from the east and the west to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.[6] Of similar significance are the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven,[7] the seed springing in secret,[8] and of the wicked husbandmen—the latter with its word of solemn warning to the Jews: 'Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.'[9] But outside the Great Commission we search the story of Christ's life in vain for any such explicit or repeated injunctions on the subject of world-evangelization as may be found, for example, concerning the use of wealth, or the duty and practice of prayer. Nor is this all. Even the sayings which have just been quoted, including the Great Commission itself, cannot be received at their face value until we have made our reckoning with at least two difficulties which challenge the student of the Gospels to-day.

1. In the first place, there is a small group of Christ's sayings in which He Himself appears to disclaim all thought of a world-wide mission. Thus, when He sent forth the Twelve, He charged them, saying: 'Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.'[10] Again, when the Syro-Phœnician woman besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter, He answered and said, 'I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. . . . It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.'[11] Furthermore, it is undeniable, however we may explain these sayings, that they indicate with rough accuracy the limits—the self-imposed limits—of Christ's own ministry. He Himself went not into any way of the Gentiles. His intercourse with them was rare and casual. Other sheep He had which were not of the Jewish fold, but the shepherding of them He left to other hands.

These things the Gospels tell us; and we can well believe that it was to facts and sayings such as these that the Jewish Christians would make their appeal in their opposition to the larger gospel of St. Paul. The same appeal is sometimes made to-day by those who look upon missions rather as an after-thought of the disciples than a part of the original purpose of Jesus. Harnack, for example, concludes, especially from the saying concerning the coming of the Son of Man, that 'the Gentile mission cannot have lain within the horizon of Jesus.'[12] Do the facts warrant the conclusion? The single saying emphasized by Harnack undoubtedly presents serious difficulties of its own which it is impossible just now to discuss; but it is surely unnecessary, in order to give a reasonable explanation of the restrictions which Jesus laid upon the Twelve, and which He observed Himself, to say that the universal mission of Christ lay beyond the scope of His thought and purpose.

For consider: do not the very restrictions imply and reveal a consciousness on some one's part that the gospel which the Twelve were sent to preach was fitted for a wider world than Judaism? Why should Jesus say, 'Go not into any way of the Gentiles; enter not into any city of the Samaritans,' unless already to His mind or to theirs the thought were present: this is a message not for the Jew only, but for all men? But the disciples, we are sure, as yet, had no such thought. What Jew

[1] Mt 28[19. 20], Mk 16[15], Lk 24[47] *seq.*, Ac 1[8].
[2] Mt 5[13. 14]. [3] Mt 16[18]. [4] Mk 14[9]. [5] Mk 13[10].
[6] Mt 8[10]. [7] Mt 13[31-33]. [8] Mk 4[26-29]. [9] Mt 21[33-43].
[10] Mt 10[5. 6. 23]. [11] Mt 15[24] *seq.*; cf. Mk 7[27].
[12] *Expansion of Christianity*, p. 41 (footnote).

of Palestine in Christ's day would have planned a mission to Gentile dogs or half-heathen Samaritans? It is Christ's own thought which His words reveal. Moreover, is not the fact just named itself a sufficient explanation of the restricted commission? The Twelve as yet were manifestly disqualified for missionary labour in the region beyond. How could they, with their closely-clinging prejudices, be made the bearers of glad tidings to Samaritans and Gentiles whom they hated and despised? They were ready to call down fire from heaven upon them; they were wholly unready to preach to them the gospel of the kingdom of God. And still further, is it not reasonable to suppose that the limitations which at this stage Christ both imposed and observed were only prudential and temporary and with a view to the wider development which history was soon to reveal? 'Give me a fulcrum for my lever,' said the old Greek mathematician, 'and I will move the world.' And it was in Judaism that Jesus sought the fulcrum for the lever of His gospel. Or, to change the figure, just as a military commander, bent on the conquest of a great territory, will resolutely restrict himself, in the earlier stages of his campaign, to the securing of a safe and strong base of operations, and will do this, just because it is the conquest of the whole country that he is planning, so in the beginning did Jesus limit Himself to one small land, only that in the end His disciples might win their way to the uttermost parts of the earth.

2, Our second difficulty is of a more serious and embarrassing character, and cannot be disposed of so readily. It arises from the application to our Gospels of modern methods of critical inquiry. Let it be said at once that it is as vain as it is mistaken to imagine that we can rail off the New Testament literature and turn back the critic with a 'warning to trespassers.' In all our records of the past there is what is called, 'the contemporary equation.' 'Each document contains a standpoint as well as a subject.'[1] The white light of truth reaches us tinged by the human medium through which it has passed. And the equation, the standpoint, the colour due to the medium, have all to be taken into account. This is the task of criticism. Before the historical student can use his sources he must test them, patiently and without prejudice. And from this preliminary testing our sources, the Christian Scriptures, cannot hope to escape. Nor ought we to wish that they could. From criticism which is without bias, and which takes all the facts into account, we have nothing to fear, we have much to hope. And if, as not unfrequently happens, the critic does not know how to be fair—if he is ridden by theories of what he thinks 'must be' or 'cannot be,' if he seeks to re-write the facts rather than to interpret them; above all, if he is blind and deaf to the realities of the spiritual world,—then the remedy lies, not in the rejection of the critical method, but in seeking to give to it a juster and more self-consistent application.

How, then, does it fare at the hands of criticism with those sayings in the Gospels which we have been wont to use as our missionary texts? Let us take, first, the little group of sayings which were brought together at the beginning of this lecture, and in which is foreshadowed the universal mission of Christianity, and let us see how these are dealt with by a modern New Testament scholar like Harnack. In his work, *The Expansion of Christianity*, there is a chapter entitled 'Jesus Christ and the Universal Mission according to the Gospels.' It opens with this statement: 'We cannot but admit that Mark and Matthew have consistently withstood the temptation to introduce the Gentile mission into the words and deeds of Jesus.' But Harnack only reaches this result by a very liberal, and, as many of his readers will feel, a very arbitrary use of the critical pitchfork. Thus, for example, the sayings in the Sermon on the Mount —'ye are the light of the world,' 'ye are the salt of the earth'—and the words, 'for all the nations,' in Mk 11^{17}, we are told 'we may disregard'; but in neither case are we told why. Similarly, in Christ's words to the Syro-Phœnician woman, 'Let the children first be filled,' the 'first,' we read, 'is not to be pressed.' True; but neither is it to be suppressed. The warning in the parable of the husbandman—'The kingdom of God shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof'—refers not to the Gentiles, but to the 'nation,' as opposed to the official Israel; the statement that, before the end comes 'the gospel must first be preached unto all nations' is 'a historical theologoumenon,' put into the lips of Jesus, 'which hardly came from Him in its present form'; the saying that sprang out of the anointing at Bethany —'wheresoever the gospel shall be preached

[1] J. Moffatt's *Historical New Testament*, p. 9.

throughout the whole world,' etc. — 'simply represents a remark which readily acquired a heightened colour from the fact of the subsequent mission to the world.' After this it can hardly surprise us to be told that Mark 'was determined to keep the Gentile mission apart from the gospel'; that Matthew 'consistently retains the setting of the latter within the Jewish nation,' and that Luke's standpoint 'does not differ from that of the two previous evangelists.'[1]

Let us turn now to the more crucial question of the Great Commission. And here, again, we are met by the doubts or denials of criticism. Harnack is quite sure that Jesus never issued such a command as is contained in the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel, 'but that this reading of His life was due to the historical developments of a later age.'[2] In similar fashion Dr. James Moffatt, in his *Historical New Testament*, attributes the words, not to Jesus, but to 'the later spirit of the Church.'[3] Dr. A. B. Bruce, too, though he believes that a universal mission had its place in the mind of Christ, yet nevertheless inclines to the opinion that the words in Matthew's Gospel are not so much 'a report of what the risen Jesus said to His disciples at a given time and place, as rather a summary of what the Apostolic Church understood to be the will of the exalted Lord.'[4]

What, now, shall we say to all this? Obviously we cannot claim for Matthew that he has preserved for us the *ipsissima verba* of our Lord. Apart from the fact that this particular saying, like many of the sayings of Jesus, may in its form owe something to the prepossessions of His reporters, Matthew's account of the Commission differs from Mark's, and Luke's from both, so that any claim to verbal exactness is manifestly out of the question. What, however, we may and must maintain is that behind these varying forms lies the substance of the Great Commission. Dr. Denney puts the case with his usual moderation and lucidity when he says: 'How much the form of it may owe to the conditions of transmission, repetition, condensation, and even interpolation, we may not be able precisely to say, since these conditions must have varied indefinitely, and in ways we cannot calculate; but the *fact* of a great charge, the general import of which was thoroughly understood, seems indisputable. All the Gospels give it in one form or another; and even if we concede that the language in which it is expressed owes something to the Church's consciousness of what it had come to possess through its risen Lord, this does not affect in the least the fact that every known form of the evangelic tradition puts such a charge, or instruction, or commission, into the lips of Jesus after His resurrection.'[5] Of course, if any one has made up his mind beforehand that Jesus could not and did not appear to His disciples after His death in the way our Gospels represent—and it is not unfair to say that a good deal of contemporary criticism goes to work on this assumption—it will be incumbent upon him to get rid, in some way or other, of all the post-resurrection sayings which they put into Christ's lips. But no such presuppositions, whatever may be the intellectual necessities of those who make them, are any evidence against the genuineness of the evangelic tradition. 'Granting,' as Dr. Denney says, 'that the Resurrection was, what our only authorities report it to be, the manifestation of Jesus in another mode of being in which it was possible for Him, at least for a time, and when He would, to have communication with His own—granting this, there is no reason why He should not have said such things to them as the Gospels tell us He did say.'[6]

And when we turn the page, when, *i.e.*, we pass from the Gospels to the Acts, we find in the subsequent and almost immediate history of the Church every reason why He should have said such things. 'After the disciples were convinced that Jesus was no longer dead,' writes Harnack, 'they at once started to preach Him and His gospel with the utmost ardour. This was inevitable in the nature of things.'[7] Well, whatever we may think about 'the nature of things,' to no one who shares the New Testament feeling for Christ and His gospel, will either the ardour or the inevitableness of the disciples' preaching present any difficulty. But surely the most reasonable and adequate explanation of the abounding missionary activity, of which the Book of Acts is the record, is that behind it all lies the definite authority of

[1] The quotations are all from chap. iv. of Harnack's work. I am indebted for some pointed criticism of Harnack's position to two articles in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES (October and November 1907), by Dr. Weitbrecht.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 45. [3] P. 648.

[4] *Apologetics*, p. 463. See also *Expositor's Greek Testament*, vol i. 340.

[5] *Death of Christ*, p. 68. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 69.

[7] *Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 49.

Christ Himself. I do not mean that the history proves the reality of such a Commission as Matthew records, nor that without it the history would be inexplicable, but that the history is of such a kind as to lend additional credibility to the Gospel record. There is a further point to be kept in mind. Racially and religiously the Jews are the most persistently exclusive people the world has ever known. And when we remember that at first, as we have seen, that exclusiveness was sanctioned by Christ Himself, does it not become morally certain that nothing less than the strong impact of Christ's own command could have pushed the disciples out of the shallows of Judaism into the great deep of the world's life? In face of the opposition which met it on every side, how could the missionary idea have gained and kept its feet unless it had been able to plead some sure, clear word of His?

It has, indeed, been suggested that early Christianity owed something of its missionary enthusiasm to the legacy which it took over from contemporary Judaism. That there was an active Jewish propaganda during the period immediately preceding the dawn of Christianity is probably true. In no other way does it seem possible to account for the enormous number of Jews who were scattered throughout the Roman Empire at the beginning of the Christian era, and whose presence is one of the proofs of that preparation in history for Christ concerning which so much has been written. It may be an echo of that fervent time which has reached us in our Lord's reference to those who compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. But whatever may have been the character or the results of this movement—and we really know very little about it—it is impossible to recognize in it the true forerunner of the Gentile mission. When we remember what has been the history of the Jews, both ancient and modern; when we think of Pharisaism scornfully picking its way through a world of publicans and sinners; when we listen to the shout of execration which greeted St. Paul on the streets of Jerusalem at the mere mention of the the Gentile name—'Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live';[1] and when we remember that still, in this day of missionary societies, the Jew has none, that indeed hardly anything is more unthinkable than that the wealthy Jews of London and New York should unite for the conversion of China and Japan to the Hebrew faith—when, I say, we remember these things, it is vain to seek in Judaism for the headwaters of that great stream of missionary activity which flows in an ever widening and deepening channel through all the centuries of Christian history.

[1] Ac 22^{22}.

Hardly less mistaken are those who speak as if the real author of missions were St. Paul. The Church universal is too deeply in the great Apostle's debt to be in any real danger of forgetting him or belittling his work. But when it is suggested that Christianity is mainly the creation of his eager brain and fervent heart, the ordinary reader of the New Testament may be forgiven if he declines to treat the suggestion seriously. He knows too well how St. Paul thought of himself and of his relation to Christ, ever to be under the temptation to set him in the seat of his Master. How, he asks himself, would the Apostle have answered those who sought to do him this strange dishonour? No, St. Paul was an apostle even as the rest, *by the will of Christ.*

This, then, is the conclusion to which our brief discussion has led us: the source of Christian missions is to be found not in St. Paul, still less in the activities of contemporary Judaism, but in the declared will and purpose of Christ Himself. True, the sayings in which these find expression are comparatively few, and even these few may not have reached us in the precise form in which they fell from our Lord's lips. There is, nevertheless, good reason for the belief, which the Church has always held, that it was from Christ Himself that she received the charge to make disciples of all the nations.

II.

I can well believe that some may have listened thus far with a chilling sense of disappointment. 'What!' they will ask, 'is this all? A meagre handful of texts snatched from the strife of contending schools—is this all that the Gospels can contribute to the sacred cause of missions? How can we fight the missionary battle with weapons of no tougher steel than these? How can we kindle the missionary fire with only this scanty heap of fuel?' So not unnaturally the question may be asked. And certain it is, doubtful disputations about texts, inevitable as they may be, carry us but a very little way on our road. It is not in

an atmosphere of debate, where argument must be weighed against argument, and the balance of probability struck, that the great constraints are felt which make the missionary. But the truth is, the New Testament argument for missions is a far bigger thing than many of us have ever realized. We have so pinned our faith to a few over-worked texts that if some one threaten to take these from us it seems as if the whole case for missions had gone up in smoke. There is, indeed, good reason, as I have been trying to show, why we should still hold fast to our texts. But do not let us speak as if these were our sole, or even our main, missionary warrant. For my part I cannot pretend to be sorry, rather I rejoice, that our modern methods of Biblical study are compelling us—and that not merely in the matter of missions—no longer to put our trust in texts, but to seek our knowledge of the Divine purpose over the broad spaces and larger areas of Divine revelation. For the moment we abandon our old microscopic methods of Bible study, or, let me rather say, when we supplement them by the study of the Bible as a whole we begin to see that our so-called proof-texts are scarcely so much as the fringe of the great missionary argument. As Dr. Horton says, 'It is not that here and there are missionary texts, injunctions, or suggestions, and that a careful student might painfully extract from certain proof-texts a defence of missionary effort; but it is that the whole book is a clear, ringing, and everlasting missionary injunction.'[1] So that even if—though I do not think it at all likely—Harnack and his friends should turn out to be right, and we should have to surrender the few verses in which Jesus anticipates the world-wide preaching of His gospel; nay, even if we were driven to admit that the Great Commission itself is rather the reflection of the mind of the Church than the direct command of Christ, the missionary application would still press with unweakened force on all who bear the Christian name. This is the point which it will be the aim of the second part of this paper to make good. We are committed to the missionary enterprise by the very nature of the truth we possess. Because Christianity is what it is, because Christ is what He is, we cannot keep Him or it to ourselves alone. In this sense Harnack is right; it was 'in the nature of things' that the disciples of Christ should preach Him and His gospel with the utmost ardour. Even if Jesus never in so many words uttered the Great Commission, it is implied in all He said and did and was. Call it, if you will, the Church's inference rather than the Lord's command, yet it is an inference which only disloyalty could fail to draw; for the very make of the gospel declares that it is as much for everybody as it is for anybody.

[1] *The Bible a Missionary Book*, p. 181.

Thanks to recent Biblical scholarship, we are now able to see in the very *language* of the New Testament a symbol of the universality of its message. As late as but yesterday our scholars have been in the habit of treating the Greek of the New Testament as essentially a language by itself. Every one knew, of course, that it differed widely from the Greek of the older classical period, whether Doric, Æolic, Iolic, or Attic. It was equally clear that it could not be identified with the literary Greek which was in common use throughout the Roman Empire at the beginning of the Christian era, and in which all the early dialects had been merged. There seemed no escape from the conclusion therefore, which also fitted in readily with certain dogmatic prepossessions, that the language of the New Testament formed a class by itself; it was 'the language of the Holy Ghost,' unprofaned by common use, and to be distinguished from all other Greek, as 'Biblical' or 'New Testament' Greek. Within the last few years, however,—since the publication of the Revised Version of the New Testament—two facts have been brought to light by the industry and genius of scholars which have entirely changed the whole situation. In the first place, mainly through the unearthing and deciphering of a vast mass of papyri—'wills, official reports, private letters, petitions, accounts, and other trivial survivals'—discovered in the rubbish heaps of ancient Egypt, we have been permitted to see for the first time the popular colloquial form of the Greek of our Lord's day. As in the literature of the period we learn what the language had become in the hands of the cultured and literary classes, so here, in the buried papyri, we have it fresh from the lips of the common people, in the ordinary intercourse of daily life. And now comes the surprising and illuminating discovery, due in large measure to the brilliant labours of A. Deissmann and J. H. Moulton,—and this is the second fact to which I refer,—that it is in this same vernacular of daily life that our New Testament itself is written.

Hundreds of words, hitherto assumed to be purely Biblical, the half-technical terms of the new religion, minted afresh, if not actually coined, to serve its purpose, are now seen to be in reality 'normal first century spoken Greek.' We can assert with assurance, says Dr. Moulton, that 'the papyri have finally destroyed the figment of a New Testament Greek which in any material respect differs from that spoken by ordinary people in daily life throughout the Roman world.' In a word, there is no such thing as 'Biblical' Greek. 'The language of the Holy Ghost' is the language of common life. The New Testament is the book of the people, written in the language of the people, and to the people everywhere we must give it, or the very dictionary and grammar will cry out against us.[1]

All this is very interesting, and as a symbol of the universality of the gospel, it is full of suggestion. But we shall need to go much deeper than language if we are to discover in the gospel itself the missionary warrant of which we are in quest. Let us glance for a moment then, first at the teaching of Christ, and then at Christ Himself.

1. And at once we are confronted with a conception of Christ's teaching and its significance which, if it be accepted, will make short work of our whole argument. According to a certain school of recent New Testament interpreters, the central determining idea of Christ's whole life and ministry was eschatology. In other words, Christ taught that God's Kingdom was coming, that it was coming soon, that the Son of Man Himself was about to appear in the clouds of heaven and usher in the eternal reign of righteousness. Such, it is said, was Christ's expectation, and His ethical teaching must be construed in the light of it. If the end of all things were at hand, obviously man's great concern was to make ready for it; he must sit loose to all human joys and prepare himself for the impending change. Hence, we are told, the morality of the gospel is not final and absolute, a morality for all men, under all circumstances. It is rather of the nature of what the Germans call 'interim ethics'—a morality suited to the attitude of those who are awaiting a great and immediate crisis. Christ's teaching concerning His Second Coming cannot, of course, be discussed now; it presents, as every one knows, one of the thorniest problems in the whole field of New Testament interpretation; but this at least may be said: whatever Jesus may have believed about the future, it is too late in the day to suggest that His moral teaching is only of the nature of a temporary expedient to tide over a brief time of waiting before the end. For centuries the best and wisest men in the civilized world have gone to that teaching for their loftiest ideals of duty; they have found in it the sanction and inspiration of their noblest efforts; and it really will not do now for some one to come forward and tell us that, after all, we have been deceiving ourselves, and that the morality of the Gospels is simply a string of temporary precepts which owe their origin to a mistaken idea of Jesus. Whatever men may think about Christ, they know that in Him they have found the nearest approach to the Absolute in morals that this world has to offer.

And it is this quality of absoluteness, this timeless, eternal element in Christ's teaching, which constitutes for all who receive it the obligation to make it known. If its value were relative only, if it were of worth to one, but not to another, if it could appeal to the West, but were powerless to touch the East, the case would be different; but since Christ's words have proved themselves 'the living contemporaries of every age,' every age has a right to them; because they are suited to all, they belong to all, and to withhold them from any is to withhold from them a part of their natural human birthright. Take, for example, Christ's teaching concerning the Divine Fatherhood. If that is true at all, it is universally true, and therefore it ought to be universally made known. The missionary obligation does not depend on whether or not there is attached to the truth an explicit word of command, 'Go tell it to all men'; it is inherent in the truth itself, and wherever it is worthily realized it creates its own missionaries:

> I say to thee do thou repeat
> To the first man thou mayest meet
> In lane, highway, or open street—
>
> That he and we and all men move
> Under a canopy of love
> As broad as the blue sky above.

That is the natural logic of the matter, and I cannot get past so much as the first word of the Lord's Prayer without being reminded of it: 'When ye pray, say,' not 'Father' simply, still less 'my Father,

[1] See J. H. Moulton's *Grammar of New Testament Greek*, chap. i.

but 'our Father.' The fraternal consciousness is bound up with, it is a part of the filial consciousness, and he only has entered into the spirit of sonship who is eager to share with all his brethren the gifts of the Father's love.

But there is no time to speak of particular doctrines; let me emphasize again the timeless element in Christ's teaching. It is identified with none of those things which in their very nature grow old and pass with the passing years: 'It has no laboured law or exacting code, no stereotyped system or ecclesiastical institutions, no ceremonial, or priest, or temple.'[1] Christ's precepts are not provincial edicts, but imperial laws meant to govern the whole world of moral agency. His words of grace are as universal as the sunshine and the air. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away,' He said, 'but my words shall not pass away.' It was an astounding thing to say; if it were not that long familiarity has dulled our minds to the wonder of it, its boldness would take our breath away; but what is still more astonishing, the saying has come true—Christ's words have not passed away, nor can we conceive that they ever will. When will the Lord's Prayer be out of date? Different churches have their different forms of prayer, and once in a while they pass under the hand of the reviser. Even in the Psalter there are things that make us wince sometimes when we hear them in church. But no individual Church can claim the Lord's Prayer; it belongs to us all, and he would be a bold man indeed who should propose to lay revising hands on it. Can we so much as imagine a time when men will not need, or will not wish to hear, the beatitudes of the Mount or the Parable of the Good Samaritan? It is not simply that Christ was, as we say, 'in advance of His time'; many great teachers have been that, and yet, in the end, they have been left behind, and their words forgotten; rather it is that with Him the question of time hardly enters into the reckoning at all—'you cannot date the mind of Christ'—and it is this quality of timelessness which, by detaching His teaching from any particular age, has made it the possession of all the ages. And, again I say, all this involves the missionary idea. It is sheer perversity that can find the missionary 'marching orders' only in a single verse of St. Matthew's Gospel; they are writ large on every page of the New Testament. If we have we owe; we owe because we have; we owe to every man who has not. Discipleship to such a faith commits us to apostleship.

[1] *The Bible a Missionary Book*, p. 62.

2. From the teaching of Christ let us turn to Christ Himself. And, again, we note the universal and eternal in what He was no less than in what He taught. The local and the temporary are there, as indeed they must be, since Christ was born of a Jewish mother. But these things are not He, nor do they explain Him. We may know everything about the Jews and Palestine nineteen hundred years ago, and yet we may be hardly one step nearer understanding Him. The methods of the modern literary realist are not without their value, but not to them does the secret of Jesus reveal itself. This is what some of us in our study of the background of the sacred story are forgetting. Little by little the artist and the traveller, the historian and the scholar, are reconstructing for us the life of that far-off day, until we seem to know Jesus—the dress He wore, the language He spoke, the tools He used, the home He dwelt in—as we know a man of our own city. The landscape of Palestine, its hills and rivers, its towns and villages, its flowers and trees, are as familiar to us as those of our native land. And all this, of course, has its uses, but it has also its perils: we may lose the universal in the local, the Son of God in the Syrian prophet, the Lord of glory in the Man of Nazareth. 'Local colouring' is not to be despised, but unless besides we get the far vistas and wide horizons of the Gospels, we have not seen the true Jesus. He is no mere son of Abraham, He is the Son of Man, the universal Man.

Mark the perfect symmetry of His character. We pick out the characteristics of other men; who can name the characteristics of Jesus? All types of excellence meet in Him. We speak of the manliness of Christ; we are equally true to the facts if we speak of His womanliness. He is as strong as He is gentle; as brave as He is tender. The active and the contemplative may each find in Him their ideal. 'Lay emphasis on either side, and there is something in the Gospels to which you do injustice.'[1]

Mark the completeness of His sympathies. General Booth, it is said, in the earlier days of 'The Army' confessed that he was forced to make a choice; no man's arms are long enough, he said,

[1] See Johnston Ross's *Universality of Jesus*, p. 32.

to reach out to give a hand to the rich and to the people of the depths. Probably he was right; but Christ is confined to no class, and is cut off from none. Some one has remarked that Shakespeare, with all his myriad-mindedness, never seems to have entered into the mind of a little child; there are no real children in his plays, only grown-up men and women trying to talk like children. But who ever opened the Gospel page only to turn away with the feeling: 'This man does not understand me; my life lies beyond the reach of His sympathy'?

> He took the suffering human race,
> He read each wound, each weakness clear,
> And struck his finger on the place,
> And said, *Thou ailest here and here.*

We of the English-speaking world sometimes speak of Christ as if He belonged, if not to the Anglo-Saxon people, at least to the Western world. But He belongs to none save as He belongs to all; He is of the race, 'the one true cosmopolitan'; and when the East sees Him as we see Him, the East will claim Him for its own as justly as we claim Him ours. The East will not want our theology; but that is a small matter. When it has seen Christ it may be trusted to make its own.

> East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet—

so in the street we hear men say:

> 'But Christ is Christ, and rest is rest,
> And love true love must greet.
> In East and West hearts crave for rest;
> And so the twain *shall* meet,
> —The East still East, the West still West—
> At Love's nail-pierced feet.'

In all that has been urged in this paper concerning the universality of Christ and His teaching the appeal throughout has been to the Gospel records. But let it not be forgotten that this claim comes to us to-day interpreted and illuminated by the confirmation of the centuries. This is no untested theory that we are putting forward. The claim we make for Christ, stupendous as it is, has been vindicated in the world's great judgment hall. 'The Christian religion, born in Judea, formulated in Greece, organized in Rome, propagated by Teuton and Frank,' is yet 'neither Jewish, Greek, Roman, nor Saxon'; it has 'acclimatized itself in all lands.' Is there anything in human history which suggests even a faint comparison with the simple tale of facts furnished by the great British and Foreign Bible Society? 'Take any book ever written, the very flower of literature and the supremest effort of human thought, translate it into four hundred and twelve languages, from Sanskrit down to the rudest jargon of savages, and scatter it broadcast over the world. When that is done, and the books have sold everywhere and brought civilization and humanity wherever they have gone,'[1] then, but not till then, you will have a parallel to what has been wrought by the four tiny tracts which tell the story of the life of Christ.

What an impulse lies in all this for our modern missionary effort! Contrast our position to-day with that of the disciples at the beginning of the Christian era. They were as hardy pioneers voyaging through strange seas alone. They knew, indeed, what Christ had been and was to them, but in a sense theirs was a solitary faith; they were making an untried experiment, and when their hearts failed them through fear, there was no long history—that best cordial for drooping spirits—to tell them they were right. We envy them sometimes their nearness to the earthly life of Jesus, but had such a thing been possible, might they not rather have envied us our deep sense of comradeship with the past, our knowledge of what Christianity has proved itself to be over the broad fields of the world's life? We have, as they had, the will of Christ explicit in one great charge, implicit in all He said and did; we have also, what they could not have, the confirmation of the centuries. It is no doubtful venture on which we are bidden to embark. Not Scripture only, but Scripture interpreted and made luminous by history, calls us to the missionary task. On our bowed heads an awful past has laid its consecrating hands.

> To doubt would be disloyalty,
> To falter would be sin.

[1] J. H. Moulton, *Hibbert Journal*, vii. 765.