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CHRIST
AND THE
CHANGING
WORLD

by

W. J. NOBLE

LONDON
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I OFFER THIS BOOK
IN GRATITUDE
TO ALL MY OLD COMRADES
IN CEYLON;
AND ESPECIALLY TO THE BEST OF THEM,
MY WIFE.
PREFACE

This book claims to be no more than a small contribution to an inexhaustible subject. It has been written within very rigid limits, and considerations of time and size have made it strictly selective. If these brief and impressionist sketches lead to further study, and the conviction that should come from it, they will have fulfilled their purpose.

The quite unexpected atmosphere of erudition which hangs about the book must be due, I think, to the maps, the bibliography and the questions which are appended. These, it is perhaps superfluous to say, are not my production. With much else that cannot be particularised, they are the contribution of a few colleagues with whom it is my privilege to be associated in the Home Organisation Department of the Missionary Society.

The inclusion of the questions, however, makes it easier for the book to be studied, and it is hoped that, not only in study circles, but in fellowship groups and classes, in Wesley Guilds, in Senior Sunday Schools, and in other suitable places, advantage will be taken of these questions, together with the subject-matter of the book, so that the fullest value may be obtained. The helps towards study are relegated to the end of the book, so that while they are easily available they do not break the course of reading.

In all classes of readers, however, the book aims at producing that understanding of the main elements in the world situation to-day which will lead to the dedication of the whole life of the Church to the purpose of
God. How far achievement has fallen short of ambition is clearer to the writer than it can be to the most critical reader. Some, perhaps, will find in these pages that which will help their own thinking and give direction to their own prayer.

W. J. Noble.

London, April, 1925.
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In a room at the Mission House in London there stand an "Electrical Machine" and a Leyden Jar, once the property of John Wesley, who was experimenting with electricity when most people were in deadly terror of it; who followed all the discoveries of science and medicine, and wrote a number of prescriptions, some perilous enough; who was a practical student of social and industrial and national conditions, and followed their development with one of the keenest minds of his age. Wesley was a great preacher and scholar, but no man ever lived who more eagerly watched the changing life of his own day. He reached great numbers of people by personal contact, and he employed every method his age provided for extending his work. Horses, ships, books, pamphlets—he used every agency in his power, and wished for more and swifter means of conveying his Lord's message.

The world has changed almost beyond recognition since his time. It has shrunk with the quickening of travel; it has become one great whispering gallery through the application of electric power; all nations are involved in a common life whose responsibilities
can neither be evaded nor ignored. Two things remain unchanged—human need, better understood in all its varying manifestations, and Christ’s power, through every age proved amply sufficient for men of every tribe and tongue.

* * * * *

The early eighteenth century found Christianity in England more than eleven hundred years old. Through all those centuries its message had influenced the life of the people; it had had successes and failures; the tide had flowed strongly in days like those of Wycliffe and the Reformation; again it had ebbed till at times there seemed scarcely any religion left, though always small groups of people remained who prayed and watched for the dawn of a new day.

Such, no doubt, there were at this period, but the general condition of the country was so low as almost to reduce them to despair. Personal religion was scarcely to be found. The services of the Church were little more than a formality, and few of the clergy made even a pretence of caring for the flock of God. England was still chiefly a great agricultural country, and squire and parson hunted and drank together, while the people hungered for spiritual as well as material food. In the towns the poor herded together in conditions dreadful beyond description. Human life was cheap, and it was much easier to be hanged than not, since an offence now considered worth a reprimand might bring a man or even a child to the gallows. Ignorance, and the brutality which is its associate, were common amongst all classes. The rich cared for little but their own pleasures, which they pursued without regard to the cruelty or the suffering to others involved in them.

But there had begun to be heard those mutterings of the storm which threatened to break and overwhelm
THE CHANGING WORLD

the social order in one common ruin. Even with the fullest available knowledge of history, it is impossible to-day to realise the immediate peril in which England stood. The French aristocracy went down in a sea of blood, in excesses which, horrible though they were, had the excuse that it was only just that men and women who had treated humanity like beasts should be torn to pieces when endurance passed its limit. England was near enough to a similar disaster to cause men who loved their country to catch their breath when they thought of its danger.

The blow did not fall, and there were several reasons for it. The chief of them was a man, of whom impartial historians have said that he saved England from revolution. That is one of John Wesley's titles to the gratitude of his countrymen. Sick at heart with trying to preach in Georgia a gospel which he had never made his own, he had turned back home, found Christ for himself, and gone through England like a flame of fire. If he saved his country it was because he brought it back to a religion as practical as it was fervent—a passion for God that issued in righteous living. He enthroned Christ again in thousands of hearts.

And as soon as men and women joyfully submitted to that lordship, they discovered that they could only keep Christ by sharing Him. Then they, too, became evangelists, and re-echoed their leader's exulting cry:

"'Tis worth living for, this,
To administer bliss
And salvation in Jesus's Name."

But England could not contain such a Gospel. Men were compelled to enlarge their thinking, and nowhere is the change more noticeable than in those hymns in which they began to express their new faith:

"O that the world might taste and see
The riches of His grace!"
The new passion launched Thomas Coke on many a missionary voyage to the West before he adventured to the East on the journey for the conquest of Asia whose end he was never to see; it gave Francis Asbury to America, there to found a Church whose greatness has surpassed all men's dreams. It drove William Carey out to India, the first great British apostle to that land. The fire spread into all the churches, for the power of God leaps over men's boundaries. From the new England there came men and women who wore different denominational labels, but were at one in their love for Christ and their sense of the urgency of the message they had received from Him. It never for an instant occurred to these men that "foreign" missions were foreign, or extra, to their Christian duty and privilege. The Lord Who had saved them claimed all mankind, and they gloried in the Cross which was the symbol of a world's salvation. With magnificent faith they went out into all lands, carrying the gospel in which they rejoiced. One after another the great missionary societies were founded, competing only for the honour of bringing the world into the obedience of Christ.

It cannot be too often remembered, or too strongly emphasised, that the great missionary enterprise of the last century was one direct result, and perhaps the greatest, of the Evangelical Revival—the preaching of Wesley and his followers, and the flood of conversions which set God's seal on their work. It came, like all spiritual renewals, from a rediscovery of Christ, and the consequent reassertion of His power to meet the needs of men.

Yet no more then than now was the whole Church awake to its missionary privilege. Coke prayed through the whole night before the fate of his Eastern mission was decided by the Wesleyan Conference, and he had
to add to his eloquence "strong crying and tears" before he gained the assent of men who were well-nigh daunted by the task to which he bade them pledge themselves. Carey had similar difficulties with many, not only of the rank and file, but of the leaders in the Baptist Church. The men whose hearts were burning with Christ's passion of love for the world cried: "Oh, that all might catch the flame." The lack of missionary conviction amongst many Christians only seemed to stimulate their zeal.

Let their over-mastering conviction be noted. It was not benevolence, or the thought of human need, or the horror of a world dying without God. These had their place, and rightly. But the supreme passion was the love of Jesus, which constrained them to "preach Him to all." No less a motive would suffice. No other is of enduring value, then or now.

Such an adventure, glorious in its heroism and its devotion, can no more be engineered than any merely mechanical process can produce life. It was men and women deeply convinced of sin and then set free from its bondage, filled with the love of their Saviour, who went out with invincible courage to attempt and achieve the impossible in every land; or, in Carey's phrase, to "hold the ropes" for those who went down into the pit of heathenism. Great numbers of them owed their salvation to the preaching of John Wesley and his helpers, though they might remain in the mother Church or be attached to other denominations. For instance, Pearce, who was one of Carey's closest associates, owed his missionary zeal to hearing Dr. Coke preach at Cherry Street Chapel, Birmingham. Robert Moffat, when he removed from Scotland to Cheshire, came in contact with Methodists there from whom he received a conception of the greatness of the Kingdom of God which changed the whole current of
his life. How much Henry Martyn owed to John Wesley it would be difficult to say, but let this quotation from his biography stand as an indication:

"One day when Henry was eight years old the street east of his door was blocked with soldiers, and westward with 'numberless tinners, a huge multitude, nearly starved,' assembled to demand a living wage. Into the heart of the throng stepped John Wesley, and standing in front of the Coinage Hall, between the two opposing hosts, he preached his gospel to them all alike. Whether or no the child Henry listened to those sermons of the veteran, he was growing up in a world half-moulded by the Wesleys. Their hymns were the songs of his home, to which he turned again and again for solace in the remote places of the earth."

But those who to-day bear Wesley's name have special reasons to thank God for him, and ought surely to feel a special responsibility to that world which he claimed for his parish.

The fulness of the times had come, and the story of the last century is a sufficient answer to those who question the existence or the working out of God's purposes. Europe was on the eve of a new adventure of exploration which was to leave no land unexamined and to remake the map of the world. The outward thrust of the white races, and especially of the English, was destined to drive them to the ends of the earth, and to bring most of its peoples under their sway. China, remote, exclusive and mysterious, was to submit to penetration: India to come, perhaps for the first time in its history, effectively under one rule; Africa to be "partitioned" amongst European powers.

Upon much of this process the Christian reflects with very mingled feelings. In the event it has proved a strange admixture of good and evil. Attempts at good government of other races there have been in great numbers, but much, too, of the mailed fist, of oppression and spoliation, of the exploitation of those unable to

1 "Henry Martyn": by Constance Padwick (S.C.M.)
defend themselves, of the exhibition of men’s unbridled lust and greed, of the introduction of vices like drunkenness into lands where they were unknown. But at least the missionary has been able to assert his influence in many places where his presence has both spread his message and mitigated and prevented evil. Then, too, science made travel swifter and safer, and began to discover preventives of sickness, and all this has served the Kingdom of God.

It was in the mercy of God that right at the beginning of these astonishing changes there should have been given a new baptism of religious conviction to the Christian Church. This has ensured at least that the message of Christ should accompany or precede the political or economic penetration of other countries, and present a Gospel that not only summons man’s cruelty and sin to judgment, but affirms a universal brotherhood, and offers to every race the same spiritual redemption on the same terms of penitence, faith and the governance of life by the indwelling Christ. Without that accompanying Gospel, in all its varying manifestations, preached and practised by some merchants and civil servants and soldiers as well as by missionaries, the history of the nineteenth century would have been a tale of well-nigh unrelieved disaster, the sorrowful record of greedy “imperialism,” ruthless conquest, and commercial exploitation.

The servants of Christ have redeemed that history. In England, they were the foremost amongst those who stood for the abolition of slavery, for prison reform and the humanising of the old criminal code, for better relations between employer and employed, for the Christianising of all the life of the country, whether of Kingswood colliers or families with great and historic names. And every land has been entered by the peaceful crusaders of His army; every people touched
to new issues by His living presence. Some of the results, and those very far from negligible, are seen in the general life of the world to-day. New conceptions of brotherhood, of the unity of the race, of the responsibility of those advanced in knowledge and civilisation for those yet backward—these are due to the growing influence of the Spirit of Christ upon the thought of man.
Mud, mangroves (up to their knees in the mud), mosquitoes, malaria—these were a few of the things that stood between the early missionaries to West Africa and the people they wanted to reach. Add to them fevers both yellow and black, sunstroke, and general ignorance of climate, laws of health, people and language, and the list is formidable and almost terrifying. But it does not completely account for the missionaries or their work. There was a passion for West Africa that was the love of Jesus translated into particular terms; and there was a scorn of death which some people called heroic and some idiotic. At any rate these men and women of the early West African days simply took death in their stride and passed on to other service. Some of them died after only three or four weeks on the Coast; many lived less than a year, but there never was, there never has been, a shortage of volunteers, never a call that did not bring far more offers than could be accepted. They might be going to certain death, but that has never stopped people who thought the cause worth the risk. When men cease talking about "waste," and begin to see, however dimly, a little of the meaning of that kind of self-forgetting speculation with one's life, they are beginning to understand something of Christ.

That is not to say that it is of itself an excellent thing to die at the beginning of a missionary career. It only means that nobody gets anything worth while
out of religion or life on the "Safety first," or "Ca' canny" principle. Look before you leap, do as little as you can, never put your foot out further than you can draw it back—these may be excellent mottoes for business, though even that is doubtful. But they have nothing to do with religion. "He that loveth his life loseth it"—that is the sad epitaph of "safety first" in the affairs of the soul. The missionaries and their wives who went to West Africa were ignorant enough; they talked about "miasma" when they got fever, and it never occurred to them that the irritating little pest known as the mosquito was a deadly peril. But whatever the cost of their service, they were prepared to pay it, and they hazarded their lives for the Gospel without a second thought.

Those of them who survived the first attack of the country, and lived long enough to get into effective touch with the people, found that for the most part they were in the presence of pure savagery. The religion was fetishism—the worship of some inanimate object supposed to be endowed with magical powers or inhabited by a spirit—and a cruel, bloodthirsty business it was. Its priests ruled by terror and sometimes dominated even the chiefs, who usually sought their help and advice. Slavery abounded, with all its train of horrors. Life was held at the mercy or caprice of tyrants. Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. They were the victims of inhuman oppression, and spiritually they were enslaved by the most devilish of superstitions. The chiefs suspected that the decline of fetishism would mean the undermining of their own power; the priests saw their occupation gone in the success of the Gospel; the people were either too apathetic or too fearful to be greatly interested.

For many years missionaries preached and died
and were replaced, though the Church at home never kept the number at a proper level of efficiency. Some epic journeys were made, and some beginnings which have grown into great matters to-day. But it is true in the most literal sense to say that the biggest thing those early missionaries gave to West Africa was their lives.

This is not a history, and we fling a bridge across a hundred years. The darkness was slow to move, and even now it is but dawn. Yet dawn in the tropics is something far other than the slow infiltration of daylight that the northern climates know. It is dark, but even while you wonder if the light is coming, the sun has not so much risen as leapt into the sky, and it is day. So, in parts of Africa, is the Dayspring from on high visiting the people with sudden and happy surprises, and they who were once darkness are light in the Lord.

* * * * * * * * *

The people of Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, had had Christianity ever since the place was established early in the nineteenth century. A strange heterogeneous mixture they were—descendants of slaves set free, some from Nova Scotia, some from the United States of America, some from Jamaica, with constant additions as a British man-of-war ran down and captured a slaver off the Coast and bore its human cargo to Freetown for liberation. There must have been samples of almost all the blood of Africa there. But this community grew up to be self-contained. It had no common vernacular, and the only language in which understanding could be established was a sort of pidgin English which, with the improvements wrought by time and education, remains the common speech to-day.

But the people of Freetown neither had nor desired any dealings with the great heathen tribes that possessed
the land behind the coast. They rapidly acquired a Christian civilisation—which has governed their own life, but it did not include one of the chief essentials of a complete Christian civilisation—concern for the unsaved neighbour. Thus there was little done down to about 1900, to take the Gospel inland. Yet the seed travelled—blown, perhaps, by the wind of the Spirit. And suddenly the sterile years came to an end. A missionary or two had paid visits up-country, a few teachers were to be found here and there, but nothing, one would say, to account for the present result. Particularly is it astonishing when we remember that about 1900, when there really was a great opening for advance, the Church at home ordered retrenchment. The Freetown Church grew to manhood, and so set free missionaries, but they were not made available for the interior. As they left the Coast their places were not filled up.

And yet the message was spreading. For at the end of 1922 came the news that many of the paramount chiefs of the Mendi people were asking for Christian instruction. They represent tens of thousands—exactly how many it is difficult to say—but the movement was like the movement of a small nation. Some of the chiefs had had a little teaching—enough to whet their appetite. Others had been making comparisons between Christ and Muhammad. They had come to see that the old fetish-worship was doomed, and they were prepared to put it away. But, they said (with a deep and sure sense of human need), “man cannot live without a religion.” If they could not have the best they would have to take the second best. If they could not get Christ they would have to take Muhammad. The mosque was already built and waiting in some places, but still they would prefer Christ. They had pleaded with the missionaries to give them a chance of hearing
the Christian Gospel, and they were nearly at the end of their patience. Was it to be Christ or not?

The position was critical, and the danger imminent. The last thing of which the chiefs thought was to threaten the missionaries, but, indeed, the whole situation was full of menace. Christ or Muhammad? Here was a people whose spiritual home had fallen about their ears, and they were without shelter or hope. Close at hand there was a religion offering certain benefits and easy of access. It meant an end, though an ignoble end, to wandering and uncertainty. And farther off was the end which, they seemed to know, was the final goal of all their search, but they could not reach it because, though they had heard of it, they did not know the way. No wonder they were urgent and insistent. Beneath all the courtesy and the wistfulness of their speech there was an undercurrent of puzzled indignation which could not altogether be concealed, as if they were saying: "How dare you keep from us who are homeless the knowledge of our home?"

Not often, even on the mission field until recent years, has the Kingdom of God suffered this glorious kind of violence. "To seek and to save" has been the common order. But to-day the Church is being found by those whom, officially, she has not sought. Men and women are clamouring at her doors for entrance, like the Mendi people. Is it to be Christ or not? The plea of the Mendi chiefs could have only one reply, unless the Methodist Church was to be false to all her greatest traditions and unworthy of her heritage. Thus several stations have been occupied by missionaries; teachers and evangelists are being trained as quickly as limited resources will permit, and part of the present Mendi generation is being reached.

But even with the response made to the Mendi people, we are in effective contact with no more than a very
small part of them, and at the present rate it will take many years before they who have offered themselves for Christ's saving are brought into His knowledge and obedience. We have not absolutely failed to answer the call, but as for boasting, it is excluded.

* * * *

When that great missionary, Thomas Birch Freeman, half English and half Negro, first visited Kumasi in 1839, a live slave was buried on each side of the path, and the missionary passed between the graves as he entered. The King of Ashanti was taking no risks. It was All Fools' Day in the English calendar, but he could not be expected to know that, though it would perhaps have given him a grim, sardonic kind of amusement if he had. But to be on the safe side he had the way into the town properly guarded, not so much by troops, but more powerfully still. That was taking all reasonable precautions against any possible danger from so unusual a visitor, who had not come for trade, or to spy out the land for its military conquest, or to obtain a boon for himself, and was therefore a complete mystery to the king and his people.

The slaughter of slaves was as common in Kumasi as the slaughter of goats; it was part of the ordinary ritual of life. Birth, marriage, death, festival, sowing and reaping, consultation of the spirits—all involved the sacrifice of human life. It was not for trifling reasons that Kumasi was called the City of Blood. Other places there were with bad enough records—Badagry, on the coast, for instance—but Kumasi was in a class by itself.

It was not because the people were inherently so much more cruel than others. They were the victims of a system in which they had grown up and become entangled. There were so many gods and devils to be appeased, and it had long been known that, of all
offerings, the gift of human life was the most potent. Thus slavery and devil-worship combined to turn men and women into fiends. Their life was a haunted nightmare of tyrannical witchcraft, of lust and hate, of suspicion and murder. They listened to Freeman and to some of his successors; Christianity began to diffuse a little light in a very dark place, but more than once it seemed to be quenched, and often it burned very dimly. Kumasi, indeed, held out against the new Faith long after adjacent territory had been deeply influenced by Christ's teaching. Its orgies of slaughter yielded in the end only to armed force, and if ever a military expedition served a righteous purpose, it was that which, only thirty years ago, finally smashed the reign of horror that was Kumasi.

But, the spell once broken, incredible things began to happen. The Church on the Gold Coast had not been idle, for it has this for its glory—it has never ceased to work and to pray for the heathen of the interior. Missionaries, both European and African, have toiled for Ashanti, and when the old order, with its desolating terror, was removed, and the shadow lifted which it had cast over the life of the people, the light flooded in.

The result was seen in many ways, all of them interesting and many dramatic. There stands on, or close by, what was the chief slaughter place in Kumasi, a great Methodist Church, a hive of Christian activity, a city set on a hill, sending out light to the regions around. Just outside the city is one of the finest training colleges in West Africa, built at a cost of £23,000, of which two-thirds was raised by the African Church. It is filled with eager students, picked with utmost care, who are equipping themselves to be evangelists and teachers of Christ to their own people, and already the applicants for admission are double the number who can be accommodated, though the College was built with an
eye to the future. "Incredible" is surely the word, for all this would be as much beyond belief as the swiftness of its happening was beyond expectation. Add to it the tale of thousands of inquirers and converts, of a Church growing in strength and numbers, and striving for purity, and there appear at least the bare outlines of a second West African story of Christ's influence in a region which, by the magic of love, He has changed in a generation.

But the Kumasi Training College speaks, not most of achievement, but of promise and of endeavour. All that can be reckoned to-day is but the beginning of things far greater. If the College sends out its present number of thirty or forty evangelists or teachers every year, it will not nearly meet the demands. For the Ashanti people can be won just as quickly as the Christian Church is prepared to provide the necessary equipment of missionaries and institutions. That, indeed, is true of vast areas of West Africa, and as soon as we begin to rejoice over the triumphs of Christ there, we are checked by the thought of the work still to be done. A hundred years have seen the Gospel fairly started on its way—no more than that. To maintain its progress, to meet the ever-increasing demands for workers and supplies, will call forth all the consecrated energies of the whole Church. Any less response will not serve, and the Church at home is on her trial.

* * * * *

"There is always something new coming out of Africa," said the old Roman, and modern Christian history has given ample corroboration. It was only in 1923 that there began to trickle through from the French colony of the Ivory Coast, some strange rumours about Protestant Christians or inquirers. The tales grew until they could no longer be left unheeded, and gravely overburdened missionaries went to find out
just what was the truth. They saw no possible way of undertaking any fresh work, for their commitments in Dahomey were enormous, and their staff what a business house would call ridiculous—four white missionaries and a few African helpers to represent Christ in all Dahomey! But they went to see this new thing, though the French Ivory Coast is four or five hundred miles away from its sister colony, and Togoland and our Gold Coast District intervene.

A map of West Africa, indicating the stations of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, published in 1921, leaves the whole of the French Ivory Coast blank. But behind the unknown frontiers of that land there was preparing a work perhaps greater in volume than any single venture the Church has ever made. This was in brief what our missionaries discovered.

In 1913 a Kroo man named Harris, who had been a catechumen and convert in the Lagos District, appeared in the Ivory Coast, preaching everywhere a gospel of repentance from sin, the surrender of idolatry, and faith in Christ. He had no authority from any Church court, nor did he seek it. He travelled quickly from place to place, baptizing those who were willing to renounce the old life, urging them to continue in their new way, and telling them to offer themselves for teaching to the first Protestant missionary who visited them. Harris passed out of sight, and has vanished, nor is it certainly known whether he is alive or dead. His work, too, remained unseen, for in the preoccupations of war years and the depletion of staff, nothing was attempted in the Ivory Coast.

But in the meantime the people had not been idle. Some of their efforts at Church organisation would be amusing if they were not so desperately earnest and pathetic. They had been adjured to become followers of the Religion of the Book, and so, because Harris
carried an English Bible, they had put in the churches they had built, copies—generally large ones—of that edition. This was contrary to the law of the land, which forbids the use of any language save French and the vernacular. Thus their Bibles were often confiscated, and they suffered persecution. Again, they had appointed twelve senior men, whom they called the "twelve disciples" (an echo of a Gospel sermon, this), to be the spiritual rulers of the community. But they wanted more teaching and could not get it, so the "twelve" nominated a "preacher" whose duty was to travel down to a Coast town where our Church had a catechist, listen to the sermon, store up as much as possible in his memory, and go back and repeat it till it was worse than threadbare and until he could return for a new message. He himself was almost always wholly illiterate, the people were equally so, and the catechist probably not of very advanced education. What sort of a message would reach the people? That is not a conundrum, but a serious question well worth studying.

Whatever it was, it or something else had the most surprising results. For these communities of "People of the Book" in the Ivory Coast proved remarkably steadfast. They were almost abandoned for ten years, after one flying visit by an unauthorised and scarcely educated preacher; they were exposed to both the blandishments and the persecutions of the Roman Church, backed by the authority of the Government; that same authority suppressed their services and tried to stamp out their work; many suffered imprisonment because of their profession. But they have so completely abandoned fetish worship that in journeys extending over hundreds of miles no trace of an idol could be found; and they have held on through the years, ignorant as they were, but dauntless; "pressed on every side, yet not
straitened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed. . . ."

Is there any story in the Acts of the Apostles, or in all Christian history, that stirs the blood to a more generous warmth than this?

So, at long last (but not his fault the delay) came the missionary, and the people received him as straight from God. In scores of villages and towns they had built churches, small or great, in mud and thatch or stone and tiles, and these were offered in groups of half a dozen at a time if the missionary would only send a teacher. They did not want money, but were ready to pay for all their workers; they wanted men who would teach them of Jesus, concerning Whom they had heard a wondrous tale once, and had waited ten weary years for more. They cannot read, and thus they need careful teaching, and their children will fill all the schools that can be opened.

That they are teachable is beyond denial, and the humility of some of them is a rebuke to us who have known Christ all our days. "Please, sir," said one, "pray for us now, that God will forgive all the mistakes we have made in our ignorance, when we had none to guide us." But the forgiveness is not needed so much by them as by the Church at home, which did not care enough to make possible their evangelism. They did not know at home? That excuse has not been permissible in relation to Africa, or indeed any other of our fields, for many years. It was not that we did not know, but that we were indifferent. The missionary to whom the plea was made prayed for his people "with a lump in his throat." Perhaps he will pray for those at home, too that they may find forgiveness for their neglect and a new way of sacrifice.

Meantime, three additional missionaries are to be sent to the District. Training has begun of evangelists
willing to go out and preach Jesus. No less than 25,000 catechumens have been enrolled in that area—people who have waited ten years for this chance. Other thousands are waiting still. As in many other parts of Africa, the harvest of the Christian Church is limited only by the number of reapers who can be sent forth.

It has, however, to be added that the long period of waiting has strained the patience of some of the people almost beyond further endurance. The most recent knowledge from the field conveys a solemn warning that we may yet lose much of the harvest which is waiting to be garnered, unless the missionary staff is very quickly strengthened. There is no greater tragedy than that of a mass movement which turns back because the people cannot find their way to Christ, and there is a lack of teachers to be their guides.

Here, then, are three stories, told with ruthless brevity, of our present opportunity in the West African field alone. They do not need garnishing; the facts are enough. Christ is changing the face of West Africa, and offering the Church a partnership in a campaign which will cover the land with His truth. It can be done in a generation, if the generation is prepared to pay the cost. But it will not be cheap.
CHAPTER III

SOUTH AFRICA: THE NORTHWARD TREK

In the Public Gardens at Cape Town there stands a colossal statue of Cecil Rhodes. The sculptor has had the wisdom to present him in the rough garb which he affected, and not paraded in broadcloth or ridiculous in a toga. He stands leaning on one outstretched foot, and with one outflung arm pointing ever North; in his whole bearing is the eager expectancy of a man who sees "something lost behind the ranges," and counts nothing worth while but to pursue it till he finds it.

One may believe in the greatness of such a man without endorsing all his ideals or his methods. But the Christian, looking at that statue, may be pardoned for remembering that the Church was pointing and travelling North long before Rhodes was born, and that a wider imperialism than his preceded him on his journey from the Cape towards Cairo. It sought to plant the Cross, which is the greatest of all human symbols, since it stands for God in human life. And every man who has made that northward trek in Africa, whether missionary, empire-builder, explorer or merchant, has owed more than he knew to the Church and its pioneers—to Moffat and Livingstone, to Barnabas and William Shaw.

The journey of Methodism followed a threefold way—from Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban—and the men who founded the Church were men who leaped at the immediate opportunity, and ever stretched forward to embrace another. They spent their life on
wheels, but the wagons halted long enough for seed to be sown and to begin to grow. How it grew, they must sometimes have wondered, but there is nothing so tenacious of life and so vigorous in its development as the Gospel of Christ; nothing that so wonderfully survives hard conditions, and neglect, and even direct attack. The men who travelled and preached were content to note with joy that God gave the increase. All the story south of the Vaal River now belongs to the South African Conference, which has inherited and maintains a great missionary tradition. But it will not be forgotten how that tradition was begun and developed, and with what heroism men and women dared all things that they might reach and save the soul of South Africa.

The whole of this book, but the present chapter in particular, has been written on a map, as all missionary history ought to be both written and studied. Sweeping up through Cape Colony, Natal, the Orange Free State, ever to occupy new regions, the missionaries crossed the Vaal River in 1883 and claimed the Transvaal for Christ. South African Missions, in their last forty years, are the story of the crossing of three rivers—the Vaal in 1883 into the Transvaal, the Limpopo in 1891 into what is now Southern Rhodesia, and the Zambezi in 1912 into Northern Rhodesia. Let two facts be kept in mind—first, the distances, and second, the dates. Between the Vaal—at, say, Klerksdorp—and the Limpopo near Zoutspansberg there stretched some four hundred miles of trackless country. From the Limpopo to the Zambezi was a further five hundred.

Nor was it a march only which was undertaken. The country was occupied and possessed before further advance was made; not, of course, completely or efficiently, but bases were established and work organised.

1 See maps at end of book.
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Forty-three years ago men were just on the point of making that leap across the Vaal River which has created, in Methodism, the strongest spiritual and moral force in the Transvaal and Swaziland. But they were not prepared to be content with that leap. Their eyes and hearts were already straining and hungering after the North. These great rivers were not so much barriers as recognised stages in the advance, and the crossing of the first of them was the irresistible forward thrust of men who were determined to plant Christ's flag in Central Africa. The second brought them as far as Salisbury, across the Limpopo, and when, thirty-two years ago, the first Methodist service in English was held in that place, the missionary preached from behind a barrel to a congregation of four who sat on soap boxes in a borrowed hut. It is very much to the point to remember that at the close of 1924 the Transvaal and Rhodesia Districts returned 127 ministers (European and African), 33,169 full members, and a total Christian community of 121,766.

The missionary problem of South Africa began as the problem of great spaces; it is to-day more and more the problem of crowded townships and compounds. The spaces remain, and most of the people are scattered about on them, but vast numbers of the men have already done a term or two in the mine compounds or the townships, and that has made all the difference to them. The country is sparsely populated; India and China, with their teeming and fecund life, have no counterpart here. The total inhabitants of the Transvaal and Rhodesia are fewer than three and a half millions in a little over half a million square miles, or about seven to the square mile, compared with India's three hundred and twenty millions in 1,800,000 square miles, or 178 to the square mile. That, incidentally, is one of the missionary's difficulties in South Africa:
his constituency is so widely scattered that it is hard to reach with an economical use of time.

Probably the chief cause of the sparse population is the incessant warfare, tribal and other, which for generations wrote the only discoverable history of the country. Thus the African peoples have never occupied their territory in any really productive fashion, and when the white man arrived, he considered himself fully justified in entering into a land so obviously designed for him by Providence, and so rich in the reward it gave to vigorous labour. He had acquired the habit of taking what he wanted, all over the world, without too many scruples about the feelings of those on the spot when he arrived. And if it be urged (as it can be with much power) that he has done great good to the lands he has occupied, it is fair to hear the reply of those who accuse him of having done great wrong as well, and who allege that some of his methods have been ruthless and cruel beyond all decency. The African has been dispossessed of the best of his own territory, without so much as a "by your leave," and his protests have been either ignored or received with insolent contempt. To steal a man's land and then propose that he should labour on it for your profit is rather a refinement of cynicism, but it is a common enough story in South Africa. There have been uprisings, rebellions, wars, breaking out during all the white man's occupation of this country. Some of them were due to the people's sense of injustice, some perhaps to their turbulence. If they are over, it is not because the African peoples are satisfied, but only because they realise the futility of this method of protest. Deep in their hearts is the sense of injury and resentment, and for many of them, hate of the all-conquering and contemptuously superior white man is in danger of being the strongest emotion of their life.
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If the missionaries had done no more than act as an ameliorating influence between white and black, their presence and work would have had abundant justification. It has been something—it has been very much—to offer to South Africa a continual succession of men and women who had no desire for profits, and no purpose of exploitation, but sought only the highest well-being of the people. This has been of special value in the more recent development of the country. For it must be remembered that the white man has not only helped to create the problem of white and black in South Africa; he has added to it the brown as well. It was his demand for cheap labour that brought Indian elements in to complicate an already difficult situation. Having introduced them, the attempt to hold them in subjection through the generations has proved impossible, as any wise man could have foretold. It has led to serious local disturbance, and to an increase of the unrest of India, where the leaders of national thought feel very keenly the slight which, in their view, is imposed upon all Indians because the South African Union will not recognise Indians in that country as capable of citizenship, and hedges them round with restrictions which are felt to be insulting as well as unnecessary.

But these complications are small in comparison with the great original problem of African people in contact with the white races. One result has been the emergence, as in every country with similar conditions, of a "coloured" or half-caste population, despised by both races and compelled, as elsewhere, to fight for elementary human rights against the very men responsible for their existence. The moral peril in which "coloured" girls and women stand can only be hinted at, and there is little protection or help outside the Christian Church.

When diamonds were found at Kimberley, and gold along the great reef where Johannesburg now stands,
the whole economic structure of South Africa was affected more deeply than any one could have supposed possible. African men flocked to the mines for employment, and straightway learned new modes and standards of living. The old tribal life was threatened, and began to pass away or rapidly to change. A man could work in the mines for a while, and then go back with enough money in his pocket to get him wives and be independent for life. But that was only if he were sober and continent. The moral question can never be separated from the economic, and it soon became acute.

At present, the African population in the mines lives in "compounds," under conditions which for the most part are sanitary and reasonable. But no conditions can preserve the moral integrity of great masses of men taken from their natural life, with its excesses, perhaps, but also with its salutary tribal safeguards and restraints, and plunged into the life of a mining township or compound. Nor is this a matter which affects only a part of the population. In Johannesburg alone there is an African population of 250,000, most of which changes every six months owing to the conditions of service. There are less than six millions of Africans south of the Zambezi, which means that a number equivalent to the entire total of the men passes through the mines in a few years.

Mining stories are common enough, and they all conform to type. The hunt for gold or diamonds or anything else that may bring quick wealth has always stirred men's blood into fever. The discovery of these minerals has drawn together, as an ulcer does the poisons of the body, great numbers of men—and women—reckless of life and morality, and whatever improvement has taken place in recent years, something of the life apparently inseparable from the mining camp remains. The behaviour of thousands of white men cannot be
concealed from the African, who is only too ready to model himself on such examples as he sees. Indeed, the white man is willing to encourage him to some degree, for, though the supply of liquor to Africans is forbidden, there is in existence an illicit trade which has reached gigantic proportions, which Europeans direct and whose vast profits they draw.

There are times when South Africa, to the sober Englishman at home, looks more like a phantasmagoria or a nightmare than a reality of life. Its problems seem so acute and insoluble, its hatreds so deep, the division between white and black so profound, the moral issue so clouded, the professed relation of the government to the African so dubious or even shameful, the forces of irreligion so powerful and audacious. And in a book which sets out to describe the great opportunity of the Christian Church to-day, it may be wondered why this chapter appears. But the truth is that an opportunity is only a menace turned the right way round, or a menace is only an opportunity missed and allowed to go wrong. The life of South Africa, whether of the European or the African, has reached a point at which grave decisions must be made. The racial conflict will grow rapidly less acute or rapidly more so. The character of the European needs all the moral strengthening that the power of Christ alone can give, so that he will set a worthy example of living to his African brother, and, not less important, so that he will realise that they are brothers in fact, and not only in the easy phraseology of benevolence. That will bring a new relation and a new justice into being.

And what of the Africans themselves? Mostly they are still living a pastoral and tribal life, though with such modifications as have been indicated. There are tens of thousands, especially amongst the women, whose need of enfranchisement is bitter indeed. The life of
them all, men and women alike, is a horror of witchcraft and demonic powers, and not all the advantages of civilisation will deliver them from a single fear. There is only one way in which that shadow is lifted from the soul. From scores and hundreds of villages all through our Transvaal and Rhodesia districts there is coming the appeal of men and women who are eager to listen to what Christ has to say. Some strange stories of the grace of God have come out of South Africa. One tells of a man who travelled hundreds of miles to Natal seeking employment, fell in with a missionary, went back and preached the Christ he had found till there was a fine Christian community which stood fast through persecution, suffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods, went into exile rather than deny their Lord, and after many days offered themselves for baptism to an astonished missionary who happened to pass that way.

To-day, many a man finds in the mining compound a fortune other than that he went to seek, and takes back to his village the pearl of great price. In unexpected ways the knowledge of Christ is spreading over all that great country—we have not only crossed the Zambezi, we are five hundred miles north of it, and travelling farther every year. For the missionary cannot neglect the cries that reach him for teachers. He is trying to train the Africans who, themselves brought to Christ, will be able to instruct their fellow-countrymen, but the equipment is so meagre that it will not suffice for a tenth of the need. And South Africa, waiting for the word and touch of Jesus to give emancipation, has had to wait far too long, since the Church in England has not realised how loud and compelling the cry has become. Out of every thirty or forty villages in Rhodesia which have actually asked for the Gospel, perhaps one is receiving regular teaching. That is the measure of the response which is possible
until the Church at home realises its duty and privilege. There is also the clamant call from Portuguese East Africa and from districts in the Transvaal where success is within our grasp as soon as we are prepared to supply workers and equipment.

It would not be fair to close this chapter without a more specific reference to the Christian work done in South Africa amongst Europeans. It has been hinted already that their attitude towards the African population is strongly coloured by such association as they may have with missionaries, and this is a very real contribution by missionaries to Africa. But much other work is being done. Scarcely a town but has its place in some Methodist circuit, and in many of them there are strong churches, supporting their own work and helping the great cause of the Kingdom of God. Young English men and women go out to Africa to very different conditions from those which obtained years ago, for there is a most earnest attempt made to-day to meet their spiritual needs, to set before them high ideals of thought and life, to guide them in their attitude towards the perplexities of the political and religious situation. The benefit of this is both direct and indirect, and, altogether, is bringing about a new sympathy and understanding in Africa—that sympathy which is in Christ and in which is the only hope of permanent brotherhood and peace.
CHAPTER IV

INDIA: THE TOUCH OF A SAVIOUR

The missionary who first crossed the frontier and claimed the Haidarabad State for Christ has lived to see a Christian community grow from zero to fifty-three thousand. That is surely a "record," even in the tale of the modern triumphs of Christ.

It is said on good authority that the original intention was to begin work amongst caste Hindus, and that the outcastes were not so much in mind. Every Indian missionary has yearned over the caste people, recognising their intellectual gifts and their spiritual possibilities, and dreaming of the wonderful contribution they will make to the renewal of India when they are brought to acknowledge the lordship of Christ. They, the natural and admitted leaders, will bring with them the whole of the Hindu peoples when once they move toward Him.

But Christian history contradicts that theory, and God had prepared something better for us in Haidarabad. "God chose the foolish things of the world, that He might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that He might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose; yea, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are; that no flesh should glory before God." God chose. He did not make the best of a bad job; He did not take the mean because He could not get the proud; He chose
the foolish, and weak, and base, yes, and the non-existent, and out of His love and might He made of them a great people, bringing to nought the glory of man in his birth or his place.

That is the first surprise about Haidarabad, though it should not be a surprise to those who know their New Testament. The second is that Haidarabad is almost the last place any missionary would have picked out as a likely centre for a mass movement, or for any Christian success at all. It is not part of British India; it is the greatest and most powerful of the Indian Native States, with its own ruler and its own government. The Nizam and all the high officers of State, with all the most influential sections of the community, are Moslems, though the overwhelming mass of the population is Hindu. Islam is not very tolerant anywhere, and where it tolerates it is generally with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulder. It was not likely to offer a welcome to the missionary, even though he might propose only to evangelise the Hindu, and there was not much hope of success in a State whose government, by its religious tradition as well as its conviction, was hostile to Christianity.

All this is only to say that the builder and maker of the Haidarabad Mission is God, for it was undertaken under conditions that should have ensured its failure or, at best, a very modified and limited success. We went to the caste people, and they did not receive us. Hardly any of them are Christians to-day, and the few who had been baptized in the earlier years went back, and walked no more with us, when the first outcastes were received into the Church. Had the work been confined to them, its results, by analogy elsewhere, might have been reckoned in hundreds. That it was not so confined is just the mercy of God. We did not go specially to the outcastes, but there are tens of
thousands of them rejoicing in the liberty of Christ to-day. They flocked to us; they pleaded for teaching, and light, and help, and their plea could not be disregarded.

Nobody pretends that their motive was beyond criticism at the beginning. But motives are hard to estimate. The old sneer about "rice Christians" is always rather cheap, and there are no lips from which it can fall without revealing the meanness of the soul within. It was used often enough in the early days in Haidarabad. Certainly the outcaste had little to lose and much to gain by accepting Christ. He was no more than a slave to his caste master, burdened with a debt he could never pay, and falling deeper into that slough every year, until his family too were involved, and there was no hope of escape. When the rains failed, and famine came, he was left to die—he, and his wife, and his little ones. He had no human rights worth mentioning; he was the filth of the world, the off-scouring of all things. Little wonder that he jumped at any opportunity of betterment. He had been denied almost his humanity—the messenger of Christ came to him and proclaimed him brother and free.

"Rice Christians," said the Moslems and the caste Hindus, when they saw the outcastes succoured and saved by the missionary in the days of famine. They had let them die, for this evidently was the will of God, and outcastes were cheap enough anyhow. And when the missionary had fed them, and brought them through the time of scarcity, and started them again with a little seed for sowing, the superior persons who had looked on made their contribution in a sneer. That was how they began. To-day they are glad to help; this, too, they have learned at the feet of Jesus, though they may give it some philosophical term out of a treatise on political economy.
But the “rice Christians” were something more than that, even at the beginning, and for great numbers of the outcasts the phrase was a complete misnomer. They, the slaves of a vile economic system, and still more the slaves of a pitiless religious system, had begun to hear rumours of liberty. The answers of their own faith to life’s bewilderments were not at any time helpful or comforting, and when they heard of others that had deeper meaning, they turned to listen. If the missionary had brought them a succour and a tenderness denied to them by their own people, in time of cholera or plague or famine, it was not much wonder that they should be ready to hear his word when he spoke of the things of the soul. Listening, they shared the universal experience of those who find Christ. Heaven sprang up in their hearts; in Him they were a new creation.

This new life could never have survived the buffeting it has received, had it not been genuine. All the old devils of the former life—beyond counting and beyond our understanding of their malignity—harassed it. These outcastes had fallen almost as low as man can fall, in spiritual experience. They had made gods in their own image, and a glance at them showed to what a depth the thoughts of their hearts and their imaginations had declined. Nor was the kind of worship offered to the gods likely to purify or redeem their creators. Here, then, were men and women handicapped by the accumulated consequences of generations of evil, shackled so heavily with sin that their own religion had forgotten the name for it, much less the cure—and at the touch of Christ they stepped out of the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the children of God.

There has been time in Haidarabad, though the work is much less than fifty years old, to test the reality of the change. The first generation struggled upwards
to the light; the second is walking in it, free and strong. Out of evil and poverty and ignorance incredible has come a great Church of the Living God. Its members often live in hovels, though they are growing out of that phase; many of them are still living under very hard economic conditions, aggravated by rapacious money-lenders, but this, too, is changing; they have, it would seem, the dreariest of lives, but they have made them radiant in Christ.

Quantity counts for something; there is no virtue in a few just because it is a few, and to thank God for rare victories is not to make light of the great, sweeping movements. In 1914 Haidarabad returned a Christian community of 18,600; in 1924 it was 53,100. Those on the spot assure us that it will reach 100,000 in another seven or eight years. That will be the harvest of half a century, and one most notable feature is the quickening of the rate of progress. The work is in 600 villages; it has a staff of 900 trained evangelists (men and women) apart from missionaries and Indian ministers, and they are at their wits' end to meet the most urgent of the calls from villages which must be occupied without delay. The Haidarabad Synod has a "Waiting List," and it comprises 29,000 people who are asking for Christ and cannot at present hear Him. These people are more than willing to confess Christ, and most eager to be received into the Christian Church.

But that is at once the joy and the peril, the privilege and the responsibility of mass movements. It is impossible to take hundreds of people who are just emerging from paganism or animism, and, simply on their expressed desire, receive them into the fellowship of the Church. They bring with them practically the whole of their old ideas and superstitions and practices, and their acceptance would inevitably and dangerously lower the standard of Christian conduct. Before they
can be received into the membership of the Church, they must be shepherded, cared for, taught, loved into Christ. That involves a great and continuous expenditure of life. We lay hands suddenly in baptism on no man, and each has to be brought to know what is the meaning of the faith he desires to follow, and to prove his earnestness by his life, before he can be received into the complete fellowship of the Christian community.

That is why the waiting list is 29,000 strong, and more thousands are being added to it. The Christian community of Haidarabad is a reality; it does not exist only on paper or in reports, but even now it could be much larger if resources were available for swifter development of the evangelistic agency. It is not only the harvest of to-day that is to be considered, but the harvest of to-morrow, with possibilities that are infinite in blessing if the Church of God has the courage to seize them. For the Christian people in Haidarabad are worthy to stand by the side of their brethren from any land; they believe in their Lord and their Church; they support it with a noble generosity out of their poverty; they seek to preach Christ to their fellows and to extend His kingdom; they bring forth the fruits of holiness.

All this could not happen without reactions in other quarters. To see what Christ has done for the outcastes of Haidarabad is to get a new vision of the possibilities of human life. Even the caste people can no longer be blind to it, and they are beginning to turn to Christ themselves. It is not, as yet, with them a matter of thousands, or even hundreds, but amongst the lower castes, the sudras, there is something more than the promise of harvest. Nor has the Moslem failed to observe what is indeed plain before all men's eyes. He has realised that Jesus has done for the despised outcaste a miraculous thing, and he is fairminded enough
to admit the truth of the change. Thus he was never so approachable as he is to-day; never so willing to listen to the word of the Saviour Who can raise the vilest to a level of character which is not attained by those who hitherto treated them with unutterable contempt. The Gospel has been with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, and some Moslems in Haidarabad are beginning to wonder if, after all, Jesus may not be the solution of their problems of life as well.

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If a symposium had been conducted twenty-five years ago on the question: “Which is the hardest missionary field in the world?” a good many votes would have been cast for the Negapatam and Trichinopoly District of South India. There, Hinduism was entrenched with all its secular authority, all its long traditions, and its hold over the life of the people was supreme. Merely to travel through the country and note the hundreds of temples, many of them of enormous proportions, was to realise something of the magnitude of the task before the Christian Church. They weighed on the soul like a burden that threatened to crush all effort. It was not that the missionaries were of smaller calibre than those of other districts—there is a full share of the names of scholars, statesmen and saints. But they seemed, for the first sixty or seventy years of the occupation of the District, like men and women beating with their naked fists against a granite rock.

It may be debated whether the method of attack was comprehensive enough. Once again, most of the Christian propaganda was directed towards caste Hindus. There was an attempt—and how gallant only those knew who watched it—to sap the foundations of Hinduism, undermining it with Christian education. The Hindu men sent their sons to the colleges, for they
saw the advantage of a fine system of education led and directed by Englishmen of high character and qualifications. But when the education (which had never pretended to be other than definitely Christian) produced after many years its firstfruits in the conversion of two or three high-caste Hindu youths, tolerance turned to blazing hate. Murder was threatened and even attempted; bitter persecution fell on the heads of those who had accepted Christ; a wave of anti-Christian feeling almost emptied a great college, a church was burned, and it looked as if the work was irretrievably wrecked. There has been a wonderful recovery from that threatened disaster, and more caste youths have found their way to Christ in recent years, while their path to-day is not so hard to tread.

But, once more, God had prepared some better thing for us. Away in the west of the District Christ had been preached for years to the outcastes, and in 1909 it was recorded that twelve of them had been received by baptism. So small was the beginning. But, once moving, the tide rose with great rapidity. In 1914 the Dharapuram Circuit, where this movement had begun, showed a Christian community of 646; at the end of 1924 it was 7,921—multiplied more than twelve times in ten years. The total adult membership of Dharapuram and its off-shoot, Udamalpet, was only 486, but 4,351 were on trial and there were 973 adult baptisms for the year. That proves the extreme care with which converts are received into the full privileges of church membership. And in all that vast area, with its scores of villages and its thousands of people needing the most careful Christian nurture, there were two European missionaries, two Indian ministers, and sixteen evangelists. Amongst other matters, they were responsible for services in 78 places where buildings are erected for regular worship, besides the incessant touring
necessary for maintaining the evangelistic appeal and the ministry of teaching.

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This sketch, slight as it is, would be misleading if it stopped here, for there are other important factors in the life of India which cannot be omitted from any survey, however brief. While there are fifty or sixty millions of outcastes in India, there are two hundred millions of people within the caste system proper. There are almost infinite gradations, but the whole system is as rigid and intractable as thought can make it, and there is no passing from one caste to another. It is the most complete denial of human liberty and human right that has ever been made, and nothing was more certain, when India came into the current of the world's life, than that the caste system, on which her religion and society alike were built, would be challenged. Indeed, it had been challenged before, though without success. So long ago as the sixth century before Christ, Gautama the Buddha had sought to cleanse and reform Hinduism, and the abolition of caste was one of his proposals. Others have made similar if feebler attempts.

But when the Christian Church entered India, it was recognised that it could not exist side by side with caste. The battle for the equality of all men and women in Christ was fought and won by St. Paul in the first Christian century, and any surrender of the position then secured spells disaster. Here and there in India caste distinctions have been admitted in certain sections of the Church, but always with grave damage to the Body of Christ.

The men and women of Protestant Churches who have preached Christ in India have set forth one salvation through one Saviour, in Whom is neither Greek nor Barbarian, Brahmin nor Pariah. That has been hard teaching for the Brahmin, nor has he yet acknowledged
it as the rule of his own life. Nevertheless, to those whose memory goes back even so little as a quarter of a century, very striking changes can be seen. Some Hindus of liberal mind are advocating the uplifting of the "depressed classes"—the "untouchables," and a few attempts at education and social work have been begun. But the inspiration that has been their origin never came from Hinduism. It has only one cruel word for the outcaste—"Pariah you were born, and pariah you shall die." The spirit which has brought men of Hindu belief into works of amelioration is the spirit of Christ. Or, at least such works have arisen from the realisation of the extraordinary results of Christian culture amongst the pariahs, the fear that this whole community will be lost to Hinduism, and the desire to prevent so serious a defection.

But the influence of Christ has also touched the caste Hindus more closely and profitably than this. In the great secondary schools and colleges, and by means of men and women specially set apart for this work, as well as through the ordinary channels of Christian activity, there has been for many years a steady, patient approach to the better classes of the Indian people. There has been no pretence, no attempt to catch them by guile; the Christian way of life has been set before them plainly and openly, and Christ has been offered to them as Lord and Saviour.

The numerical results of the work amongst these classes are not considerable as yet, though they are far from negligible. But other results there are of great importance. The inevitable comparison of Christ with other religious leaders has set Him in a place unique and unapproached. He is to-day held in deepest reverence by thousands of the finest minds of India, who endeavour so to rule their lives as to gain His approval, though they do not call Him Lord. The
whole tone of life has been elevated, while even Hindus whose outward opposition has not lessened are striving to reform some of the grosser elements in Hinduism which have been revealed in all their vileness in contrast with the holiness of Christ. In the educated classes it is a very determined Hindu who to-day has anything but a shamefaced apology for, say, the system of temple girls, or the treatment of Indian widows. This new attitude towards life, and towards womanhood, is entirely due to the permeation of Indian thought by the spirit of Christ, and while many an Indian would be found who would endorse the dictum of a high-caste editor who said recently, “The only hope for India is in the acceptance of the ideals of Jesus Christ,” many more realise that it is the truth who are not yet ready to accept Him.

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It looked at the beginning like an advantage, but it has turned out to be a serious handicap, to Christianity in India that it is the religion of the ruling race. When chaplains went out they were “Sahibs” like other Europeans, and it was natural that missionaries should be placed in the same category. They shared the prestige of the Government, with all the spiritual peril which such elevation brings. A certain amount of misunderstanding could hardly be avoided, nor was it easy for men in their position to maintain lowliness of spirit. It speaks volumes for them that as a class they have not only resisted but overcome the danger in which they were placed.

This has real significance in many ways, and not least when the question of nationalism arises. It is a matter that can only be mentioned here, but, as in other places, the missionary in India has been and is a great reconciling influence, a mediator between
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government and people, and between European and Oriental. This is not the least of his services to India, and if there is any prospect of a peaceful solution of the problems of India, not a little is it due to Christian ideals of justice and right and love which are constantly presented to all classes.

There is a sense in which the ferment of India to-day is due to Christian causes. The vast educational propaganda of the last hundred years has been largely missionary; the teaching of English has given India one common language for its educated classes for the first time in history; the study of great classics of liberty (due first to the decision of the Government of India during Macaulay's Indian life) has turned the thought of the people towards self-government. But it was only a question of time before India began to learn, and to use her learning, and it is matter for profound thankfulness that she has got so much of it under Christian auspices and direction.

This is not the place to discuss Indian nationalism. Indeed, India is not a nation, but a great congeries of states, races, creeds, castes, many of them fundamentally opposed to one another, and sometimes it seems as if India's only common sentiment is objection to British rule. That would be an exaggeration, but it contains enough truth to make it illuminating. The variety of propositions made by the many leaders of India, and their lack of harmony with, not to say contradiction of, one another, shows how long is the road yet to be travelled before unity is reached, while the almost monotonously regular outbreaks between Hindu and Moslem are an indication of the magnitude and danger of the smouldering fires of religious hate. Nevertheless, India is moving towards a national mind, distant though the goal may be. But India will only be a nation when she is a Christian nation; she will speak with
one voice only when she speaks through the lips of Christ.

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A word must be added about the most recent and one of the most serious of India’s problems—the new industrial development. In three great areas at least there is coming a rapid change over the face of the country and in the occupation and the character of its people. From immemorial times the village has been the centre of India’s life—the village with its handloom, its primitive plough, its changeless, unhurried methods of production. That phase is declining, however, and already begins to give place to another for which India is not prepared. Bombay has thirty square miles of cotton mills and attendant buildings. It is said that in London six persons out of every hundred live in one-room tenements. In Bombay the proportion is 66 per cent.

Right across on the other side of the country, thirteen hundred miles away, there are miles of jute factories in the Calcutta district. There is in Bengal one of the world’s great coal fields, with a present production of over ten million tons a year. All these great industrial developments are being worked by hundreds of thousands of people, most of whom have come out of village life. Their presence under new conditions, their need, their moral and physical danger, the reaction on the whole of the country of this rapid change, all combine to create a problem for India and for the Christian Church which cannot be evaded and which requires immediate attention.

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The outstanding feature of India to-day is that she has been touched to finer issues by Christ, and has responded. Amongst her privileged classes, the response is yet numerically small. They do not know what they
have to gain by accepting Christ. Nor can they bring themselves to lay their caste pride at His feet, and admit their need of a gospel which makes no distinctions, which offers all men salvation upon exactly the same terms of penitence and obedience. But they are beginning to come, even on these terms, and the quality of those who are Christian is a promise of what India will one day bring to Christ.

But the outcastes are coming in their thousands, and once more it is being proved that the potentialities of human life are infinite, when linked to Christ. The pariah, out of whom Jesus has cast a legion of devils, has proved teachable. He who was despised and rejected by his own people is competing with them on equal terms, and showing himself on no lower level of intelligence and attainment. Most of all, his new life in Christ is bringing forth Christian character and integrity which are a reproach to his high-caste Hindu neighbours. It may be that India is to be saved from the bottom upwards, that, as before, "not many mighty, not many noble," are to be called at the beginning, but that the grace of God is to show what it can do with the most hopeless and abandoned.

That, at least, is what is happening, and it is at once the glory and the burden of the Church at home that it has had so great a share in this work. Faith, and devotion, and indomitable courage have opened the kingdom of heaven to thousands of new believers. The doors must be kept open. The new conditions, no less than the ingathering of the multitudes, create all kinds of new problems. One thing is certain: their solution is impossible apart from the Gospel of Christ, and can only be achieved by the patient and pains-taking application of that Gospel to India's need.
CHAPTER V

CHINA: THE LAND OF MANY VOICES

Everyone who has written about China during the last generation has used the illustration of the closed door, whether the subject-matter referred to politics, or commerce, or international relations, or missions. It was not that the invention of man was exhausted, but that the illustration really "wrote itself." It represented, in a convenient and intelligible picture, the policy of deliberate isolation to which China was committed almost up to a time within living memory. She desired neither trade nor friendship; she was sufficient unto herself, and wished for no association with an outside world of which all she cared to say was that it was barbarous. She had a tradition of culture that went back thirty or forty centuries, and that satisfied her, and she would not be at the trouble of examining any other form of development. Why should she, when she was possessed of the best? Thus when King George III sent an embassy, or a proposal for a treaty, he and his envoy alike were handled with a supercilious rudeness whose complete unconsciousness of offence was its most amusing feature and its best excuse. The Emperor of China could not be rude to anyone so far below him as the King of England, whatever words be used. At any rate he wished for nothing but to be left in possession of his own age-long dignity and seclusion.

Men of Europe wondered what was going on behind that closed door, and it was impossible that their curiosity should remain for ever unappeased. A few
intrepid travellers had brought tales, and others, including missionaries, had sought to enter. But there seemed to be no hope that China's defences would be penetrated with her own consent. Foreigners were devils, and their products what might be expected from such a source.

Even after the Treaty Ports were opened, in 1842, the situation was not much changed. Some who read this book will have vivid memories of missionaries from China standing in the pulpits of England less than half a century ago, and pleading in the public congregation that God would open the doors of that land. They had been turned back from the ports—these, which they had hoped would be bases, seemed to be barriers, beyond which there was no progress to be made. China, fighting all the way, protesting passionately against the outrage and violation which the West had inflicted on her, had been compelled to yield a little to the power of modern arms, and England had won her Opium War—a military victory with no credit or honour attached. But in the hearts of the rulers of China there was an unquenchable hate of the white man and all his works. Penetration had begun, but not with the goodwill of the people, who were sullen and hostile, and whose resentment sometimes flared into massacre.

But nothing could now prevent the increasing contact of the Western peoples with the Chinese, or the ferment which was one of its results. While from without there was a ceaseless attack upon the closed, or slowly-opening doors, within there had begun movements which were very shortly to shatter the political and national framework of three thousand years. China, changeless, imperturbable, bland, became with incredible swiftness a welter of conflicting theories and parties. Her ancient autocracy, which claimed to be of heavenly origin, sought for a while to keep pace with the rapid
developments of the new thought, but its joints were too stiff for supple movement. It issued edict after edict declaring all manner of liberties where before had been rigid suppression, but it was too late, and very soon it crashed to the ground, to be replaced by a republican form of government that calls itself democratic but is a mixture of oligarchy and military domination of the most absolute kind.

It may be asked what China has gained from all this, and perhaps the most complete answer is that she is awake. There are many who will doubt the wisdom of rousing her from sleep, for she was at least supine and harmless, while now she contains perhaps the most restless, eager, questioning people in the world. But the question is idle. The shrinking of the world in our own time, due to rapid communication; the spirit of adventure that leaves no land unvisited; the search for new markets; not last or least worthy, the compulsion of the Christian Gospel, made permanent isolation impossible. To-day China's schools and colleges are crowded with young men and women who debate every topic under the sun, who take nothing for granted and set every theory of life on its defence. Great numbers of them have abandoned all the ideas which come to them from the past, and are fiercely critical of every creed. They are steeping themselves in all the literature of the world, especially that of revolt, whether political, social, or religious. It seems as if their long seclusion has enabled them to come with fresh and alert minds and insatiable curiosity to every question that has occupied human thought.

There has probably been nothing comparable to this since the European Renaissance of the fifteenth century, though the rest of the world is far from realising what it is that is happening in China, and how deeply it is bound to affect the future of man. Here is a nation of
four hundred millions of people on the move. A quarter of the world's population is involved in the life of China, and though it would be a gross exaggeration to suggest that all of them are touched by the spirit of the new day, the facts show how rapidly the movement is spreading, and how it has seized upon those who are the leaders of the nation's thought and action.

With all this there has gone a rapid industrial development, great commercial enterprises springing up in the cities, and attracting to them tens of thousands of people whose whole life and tradition are of the rural type. Mills and factories and engineering works, built on European models and run with no less efficiency, are found in their hundreds. That they are competing seriously with European and American trade is a fact with which the West has had to begin to reckon; what concerns us here is that they are helping to change—and unhappily, seriously to damage—the life of the people. The factories reproduce more than all the worst features of the Lancashire mills of a century ago, and there is no law to restrain those who do murder for gain. Men, women, and especially children, are drawn into a pitiless system that maims or kills or wears them out, and turns unsatisfied for fresh supplies of human material from the villages. The youth who has gone up to the cities for employment, if he escapes with his life, returns only too often carrying the seeds of physical and moral disease, while he is impatient and even contemptuous of the old ways and the old ideas. Thus the double line of traffic between the villages and the cities is crowded—one way with those who go to look for fortune—simple, hopeful, innocent—and the other with those who return, too often broken, or cynical, or disillusioned.

Nor must it be forgotten that to the complex situation thus created there is to be added the influence of an indefinite number of military lordships which are little
better than organised brigandage. The Government scarcely makes a pretence at governing, and its edicts hardly carry a rifle-shot beyond the walls of Peking. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are said to be the inalienable right of every human being, but China has at present too little scope for the last of these, while the first two may be at any time in jeopardy. The cup of revolution makes a heady drink, and China is not yet willing to turn to sobriety, but meanwhile, amongst the disputes of her claimants to power, the people suffer the spoiling of their goods and go in peril of their lives.

All this makes a study in sombre colours, but it is not the whole picture. The things which have been mentioned are so obvious that they cannot but be noticed. But, to return to a word used a few pages back, the most salient fact of all is that China is awake, and tingling with new life. She is reaching out for all kinds of experiences, and is bound to be entangled in some that are hurtful, before she learns to select and use the best. It is of these latter that something must be said now. For amongst the influences that are acting so rapidly and effectively upon the life of China, none is more powerful than that of the Christian Church.

Until near the end of the nineteenth century, though considerable numbers had been won to Christ, His faith remained to the great mass of the people a foreign faith, as the missionary was a "foreign devil." Away from the treaty ports, no Chinese Christian was safe, nor was the missionary in much better case. There was the usual sneer about "rice Christians," and it had perhaps even less than the usual amount of truth. At all events, there came a day when missionary and convert alike were called to stand for Christ at the hazard of their lives, and thousands of Chinese died rather than betray Him. The nineteenth century went down in blood, for no other modern Church, except
possibly Korea, has had to suffer such martyrdom as China has seen. By all human estimates, the religion of Christ should have been wiped out to its last convert, and there should have been a rush for recantation amongst those who were given the opportunity to deny their Lord. It did not so happen, however, and once more the blood of the martyrs proved the seed of the Church. So far from being a mere coincidence, it is in the strictest sequence of cause and effect in the spiritual realm, that since the Boxer massacres the Christian Church in China, previously slow of growth, has progressed by leaps and bounds. It is on the way to becoming a great national Church, even though up to the present time the Protestant Church membership is only slightly over 400,000, or one per thousand of the whole population, while the Protestant community is probably a million.

That this should be happening presupposes an astonishing change in the attitude of the Chinese to the missionary. Men who were twenty years ago hounded out of towns and villages with missiles and curses, are to-day received in those same places not merely with courtesy and honour, but with real friendliness and welcome. That is a change wonderful enough to be called miraculous. It is, indeed, one more of the miracles of the love of Jesus. Everything was against it—prejudice, ancient custom, reluctance to alter religious practices, a justifiable hatred of the European whose relations with China had taught her to fear but not to respect him—these were some of the obstacles. Yet one generation has seen them surmounted. China during the last twenty years has passed through an agony of suffering and torture; brigandage, banditry, oppression, outrage, extortion have been almost universal. Bloodshed and rapine have ceased to be extraordinary, and the lives of millions have been
shadowed by a terror which only too often has been justified by the event.

But through all this there has been given the opportunity to make a discovery, and China has not been so blind as to miss it. In her time of need, she has found that if there is one man or woman to whom she can turn with the certainty of receiving unselfish kindness and disinterested friendship, who will give succour and help without money and without price, it is the man or woman who has come to offer her the message and the love of Jesus. Mission hospitals have been full of wounded soldiers and civilians, without question or discrimination; mission compounds have sheltered refugees; mission institutions have cared for and protected women and children; and all sides have come to recognise their value and to respect their sanctity. Mission staffs have organised famine relief and special work in curing or preventing disease over wide areas.

Then, again, there has been the steady and continuous influence of evangelism, and the work of schools, both primary and more particularly secondary, permeating the thought and life of the people, while the hospitals, in addition to their extra labours, have never ceased to minister to every kind of human need. And behind all this, its unfailing inspiration, has been the passion of the love of Christ which cannot be hidden from those who are in contact with it.

The result is that China to-day is—not Christian, but—ready to listen to the voice of Christ. She has come to believe in and even to love His messengers. But His is not the only voice which she hears, and some of them are so strident and clamorous, or so subtle and persuasive, as to make His appeal difficult to hear and yet more difficult to follow. Christianity for China is at present just another of the untried paths along which she is invited to walk, and though those who
know its power are sure that here is the path of safety and righteousness and true progress, China is not willing to take that conviction at second-hand. She must test it and make it her own, and it must take its chance with the other appeals. The Gospel according to Mark is not at first sight as interesting as the gospel according to Karl Marx, and it does not promise a social millennium in a week. Nor has it the crass assurance of some of the Bolshevik doctrines. Thus it starts handicapped in some quarters, and the results are only too painfully obvious. Witness the organisation of "No-God" societies in Canton and other places, where young China is asserting its independence of the past and its right to make its own future without being hampered by any of the trammels of tradition or reverence.

Nor is this spirit confined to the great cities or university centres, for undergraduates or graduates go back home to the towns and villages, and there, says one missionary, they are making sceptics and atheists far more quickly than we can make Christians. There is at the moment some recrudescence of anti-foreign feeling in China, and it has even been directed against the Church in some quarters. It is due chiefly to communistic propaganda in the universities. Some students go down from Peking University with nothing in their hearts but ridicule for all that their fathers held dear. When a Chinaman abandons that view of the past which finds its visible sign in all that is understood by the worship of ancestral tablets, he has indeed cut all his moorings and gone adrift. He is left with no religion until he can secure something that takes the place of the powerful influences he has surrendered. And if he declines into atheism, he is likely to be the most powerful and least scrupulous opponent of all that is good. The educated student sneers at the age-long beliefs of his village, and since respect for parents is at a discount
with much else to-day, though he may not obtain a following he creates grave uneasiness. But he is more likely to secure a ready discipleship from village youths who are dazzled by the glamour of his university attainments, and thus he contaminates the spiritual life of the nation.

This is only one illustration of the handicap which Christianity has to bear in China to-day. There are others—notably the introduction of Western habits, such as drinking, which are irredeemably evil; the flocking of great masses of people into town life and its temptations to vice; the uncertain tenure of all place and power, drawing men to make all they can by any means, before they are thrust down from their seat; and the opportunities for sudden wealth which are put in the way of the cunning. The whole makes a formidable barrier to be crossed.

But the Gospel of Christ has one advantage beyond all reckoning. Men and women in China have come to respect Him through His missionaries, and in general they are willing to give Him a fair and even sympathetic hearing. That, let it be said, is all that He asks, and when He can secure it His cause is safe. China has seen too much of Christ's love and power in the last generation, to wish to treat Him lightly or to turn from Him with easy disdain. Already many of her finest intellects and most commanding personalities have confessed their allegiance to Him, and many others draw from Him the inspiration which guides their life, though they have not become His disciples in the fullest meaning of the word.

Those who know China best use another illustration of her beside that of the closed and opening door. They speak of the whole life and thought of China being to-day, not merely plastic, but fluid. They warn the world, and especially the Christian Church, that this state of things may go on for another five years, and possibly so
much as ten, but by that time the fluid thought and life will have run into such moulds as have been provided. The nation will settle down with its thought hardened for perhaps another century. There never was in all Christian history so much opportunity and so much peril assembled in one time or place as China offers to-day, and the opportunity is passing almost before Christians seem to have realised its presence or its urgency. China is at the cross-roads, and on her decision depends much more than her own immediate future. She has the numerical power and the intellectual force to fashion the life of Asia, and deeply to influence that of the whole world. When the rapidity of her development in the last fifty years is remembered, it cannot be denied that, as the life of peoples is reckoned, she may to-morrow be speaking with a compelling voice in the councils of the nations. A great leader to draw together her scattered forces and her conflicting elements, a great inspiration to weld her into one, and there would be seen yet another miracle at which men might well stand in amaze.

What if that inspiration were Christian? It is not impossible. China has had prayer, and effort, and sacrifice, and martyrdom that have opened all her doors to Christ. Through those doors, if the Church of to-day will pour her peaceful crusaders in vastly increased numbers, her devotion and her prayer, the finest of her youth and enthusiasm, China can be won, and that result will change the history of the world. But China allowed to drift into materialism or atheism offers a prospect too terrible to contemplate. A great Christian worker especially distinguished for his efforts to preach Christ to the slum population of Great Britain said in a prophetic word before he died, that the future history of the world depended more than anything else upon how Christianity was presented to China.
CHAPTER VI

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

An attempt has been made in the foregoing pages to refer briefly to some of the changes and developments of the world to-day, and to relate them to Christ. The illustrations given are typical; they do not pretend to be exhaustive. It would require a book many times the size of this to deal adequately with the whole situation. But perhaps enough has been said to show the greatness and the urgency of the problems of our own day.

The social order is suffering upheaval in every part of the world, but especially in lands where for generations it has been fixed and stable. There was a time when, in India for instance, every man knew his place, nor sought to move from it. Religion had settled the matter and none was so impious as to disobey. But when a Brahmin and a Pariah may almost literally rub shoulders in a municipal council or a railway train or a departmental office, and when the son or grandson of a Pariah is able to carry away the prize in a competitive examination from a Brahmin, the old order is gone for ever. Humanity and not privilege has become the basis of life. And, however great the disturbance, can it be doubted that the result is for the general good?

It is always difficult to appreciate adequately a period of radical change, and most difficult of all for those who live in it and are part of it. Thus a superficial view of China to-day would show only the appalling
disorder, the wanton wreckage of life and property, the riotous unconcern of its youth. But nothing could be less just than such a view, for it leaves out of account some of the most hopeful features—the new sense of liberty and of human dignity that is growing, the emancipation from the paralysis of the past, the ardent search for knowledge and truth.

South Africa, again, is full of portents, and many of them seem to be evil and dangerous. But it is something that there is the new and honourable (though long overdue) recognition by many white men of the rights of the African, and a realisation that for both races there is hope only in the application of the principles of the Gospel.

It is possible to slip into a very dismal pessimism as one looks out over the factory chimneys of Bombay or Hankow, or contemplates the seventy miles of the Witwatersrand Reef. They may be made to appear nothing but loss to the real interests of humanity, whatever they produce in money. Gandhi's pathetic cry for the restoration of the handloom in the Indian village, and his crusade against the cotton of Lancashire, have their counterpart in other lands. Such desires are not merely reactionary; they are a plea, however unavailing, for the saving or the restoration of all that was good in the past. But life goes on relentlessly, and there is no return to a simpler day.

Still less is that return to be considered possible when we remember the increasing association of men and women of all races with one another. It is only in the slightest and most allusive way that this book has touched on the race problem, and that has been of set purpose, for it has been dealt with by experts elsewhere. But it underlies all our thinking, for more than half the upheaval of the world to-day comes from the mingling of races in fellowship, in competition or in
conflict. Europe has settled in Asia and Africa, and, at least partly, has given their peoples its own education. It has found them eager to learn, so that they are applying their political knowledge to new revolutions; dexterous, so that they are handling with ease the machinery which their fathers would have found the work and the habitation of devils; competent, so that they are turning their knowledge to good, or at least profitable, use. Nor is it wonderful that they should now ask the white man either to leave them in possession of their own land, or to remain on terms very different from those which were in his mind when he came.

And even these problems, vast and intricate as they are, do not exhaust the list or indeed mention the chief of all. The social, the industrial, the racial ferment—all these are important, but more significant than them all is the spiritual upheaval of the world. Men and women of the old faiths are beginning to doubt the answers they have been given from time immemorial to the bewilderments of life—those common questions of sorrow and loss, of the present and the future, of conduct and character, which all have to face. It is not any longer a sufficient, or even a silencing, reply to use words like "Karma" or "Kismet," or to speak of a man’s fate being written on his forehead at his birth. For a rumour—and sometimes more than a rumour—has reached men that there is another answer than these, and they are demanding to be told what it is. They have heard that Jesus has something new to say, and something wonderful and satisfying, and they are seeking His reply.

It would be strange were it otherwise. For the century and a quarter of modern missions, Christian men and women, in pitifully small numbers but with unconquerable courage and unfailing love and patience,
have been trying to communicate Christ to the world; not His teaching only, or His ideals, but Himself, through their own consecrated personality. "The Kingdom of Heaven," said He, "is like leaven," and the ferment has begun to work. There are those so blinded by prejudice as to deny it; they will say, for instance, that India to-day is not much different from India fifty years ago. But the careful observer sees the whole organisation of Indian life beginning to show signs of change. Even on the surface this is apparent, and underneath there is a spiritual movement which, perhaps before it is expected, will bring about a convulsion and a new ordering of life towards God in Christ. The best men and women of India to-day, even those outside the Christian Church, are admitting that the only hope for their land is in the acceptance of the ideals of Christ. Some of them are engaged in the impossible and pathetic task of trying to put into practice the Christian ethic without the inspiration and stimulus of the Christian Saviour. But that is a situation which cannot be permanent. It is bound either to go forward to the acceptance of Christ as Lord and Master, or to go back to stark materialism or atheism. Ultimately men have to face Christ, with all His implications, and say "Yes" or "No" to Him.

The truth is, every great movement or change in the world to-day is awakening men to see more and more clearly their need of Christ. At a time when races and nations are in flux, when all manner of nostrums have been tried and rejected, when Europe talks of pacts and security, and Asia of self-determination, and Africa of the fundamental rights of man, they are all expressing in different fashions their sense of the failure of one scheme after another to produce happiness and justice. More than that, it is becoming clear that no scheme is of value until it has the proper
human material upon which to work. It is only in the new life in the individual soul that there is hope of progress. And that life comes from Christ alone. Buddhism, with whatever great teaching in its scriptures, is sterile, reduced to bolstering itself up with pseudo-nationalism, and to conducting bitter anti-Christian propaganda, instead of spreading itself as a living faith. Confucianism, whatever its historical record, has ceased to produce men and women of integrity and of selfless devotion to the service of their fellows. Hinduism has three hundred and thirty millions of gods, and not one of them worthy of pure adoration and reverence. The pagan faiths, again, only lead men deeper and deeper into darkness and cruelty, nor does Islam deliver them from either the one or the other.

It is this which constitutes the opportunity and urgency for the Christian Church to-day. Men are asking in increasing numbers: "Who will show us any good?" Some put the question defiantly, some wistfully, some with a simple earnestness that shows their need and their desire. But the question is universal, and it admits of only one reply. That reply is in the hands of those who name the Name of Jesus. Whether the problems are due to man's greed, or to the expansion of races, or to the inventions of our day, or to that going forth of the spirit of man in adventure which is one of the proofs of his greatness, or to the permeation of the mind of the world by the Spirit of Christ, or to any of a hundred other causes, they are all to be solved in Him. It will be some time before this is universally admitted, because the acceptance of Christ involves conditions that are too exacting for man's ready agreement. It means often a complete reversal of his ideas and ambitions. But already the deep concern of serious men, and the general admission of the failure of their schemes for the world, are a step
towards the inevitable result. Thousands of people in many lands have come to realise that they must have Christ if their life is henceforth to have meaning and value.

That is one side of the question, but on the other there is the claim which this need establishes on every Christian. Our great and precious heritage in Christ is a responsibility as well as a privilege. The possession of Him which is our rejoicing was won for us by men and women who counted no cost of life and service too great to win our land to Christ's allegiance, and that lays us under a debt which, though we cannot repay it to them, we must try to acknowledge by following in their steps. Indeed, the whole life of the Church is involved in this; the Church is not an end in itself, but only God's instrument for bringing in His Kingdom. If it fails in that, or if it conceives its mission in any narrow or limited sense to that extent it is guilty of disloyalty to its Lord. The Church can only keep Christ by sharing Him; it can only save its own soul by casting it away in the service of Christ's redeemed world.

But even these considerations, great and compelling as they are, must not be the first or the chief. It is no unworthy motive that impels a man or a Church to say: "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," and it is utterly true. The sense of indebtedness to Christ, and of the urgency of man's need, may well lay upon Christian people a burden of evangelism which can only be discharged by a lifelong devotion to the work of seeking the lost that they may be saved. But at the back of all this is the supreme motive. "The love of Christ constraineth us." Nothing less will suffice for the greatness of this work, for nothing else will carry us through. At the heart of every endeavour there must be that passion of love for Christ which only asks
to be allowed to spend and, if need be, to die, for the sake of those for whom He died.

It is only with this passion that, as a Church or as individuals, we can dare to face the task of to-day. God is calling His people to an adventure so much greater than anything in Christian history, that they may well tremble to embark on it. But their own salvation and the hope of the world depend upon their loyal acceptance of the call. They are committed to it by every consideration that makes them Christian, and to refuse it is to be branded as traitors. It cannot be undertaken except in that spirit of love for Christ which leads men and women humbly and entirely to abandon themselves to Him, and gladly to follow in His way. It is the way of sacrifice, and perhaps of a greater sacrifice than the Church of to-day has realised. It demands the gift of life, for Christ asks for His purpose of saving the world the best that the Church possesses. Its youth is called to the adventure—to put away ambitions which may be legitimate but which cannot be entertained in competition with His summons to a far greater quest. Money, power, career, worldly success—to how many hundreds in this land is Christ calling that they put away these lesser things and embark with Him on His crusade of love for the souls of men and women in bitter need? The definite challenge of missionary service is more urgent than ever before, and the youth of the Church cannot evade it. The finest intellect and culture, the flower of young manhood and womanhood, are needed and must not be withheld. Nor can parents stand between their children and Christ’s claim on their life, and any more call themselves His followers. It may be their share of the sacrifice, as it will be the crowning glory of their own experience, that they have given of their best and dearest for the winning of the world.
But the call does not die away when it has reached those who can go and those who can give others to go. It comes to everyone, for the present opportunity compels every man and woman who believes in Christ to ask definitely: "What is my share in the Kingdom of God?" Somewhere or other that means service—some specific work undertaken for love of Christ, and carried out with faithful devotion. None who is failing in that service is fulfilling Christ's will, for while there is an infinite number of channels of service, there is only one kind of discipleship, and that is the discipleship which offers Him complete and unquestioning obedience. It is impossible to contract out of service by gifts of money, however large, or to seek to substitute them for the gift of personality which is Christ's medium of expressing Himself to men and women.

Let it not be supposed, however, that this indicates a low or mean place for that necessary financial support without which the winning of the Kingdom is hampered at so many points. Money can never be the only gift of any life, but great numbers of people not only make it their only gift, but even of that they offer a contribution that is trifling and unworthy. Part of the challenge of the new day of Christian opportunity throughout the world, is to a fresh examination of the meaning of stewardship, an inspection of personal expenditure, a rigorous and scrupulous inquiry into the relation of necessities and luxuries—not undertaken under the perilous and deceitful method of habit, but with the sacrifice of Christ and the need of the world kept steadily in mind. The missionary income of the Church to-day could be doubled with the greatest ease out of the luxuries of Christian people, and none would suffer loss or indeed truly miss one of them.

But, like all others, this is ultimately a spiritual question. The arguments that are used to bring home
to Christians their duty to Christ's world are arguments that for the most part should not be necessary. They are in the second line. The only impulse that is universally and always effective is that of the love of Christ, which is but to say that a full tide of spiritual life in the Church will flow forth in every enterprise, at home and abroad, which has for its purpose the fulfilling of God's will. The hindrance to the work of the Kingdom is not lack of money or imperfection of organisation; it is lack of religion. When the Church is prepared to go all the way with Christ, to share His travail, to know the fellowship of His sufferings, it will see His cause prosper.

All this takes for granted, as it surely necessitates, a life of prayer. Perhaps this is the hardest part of our task, for prayer that will prevail must not only be constant and informed, it must have that desire to find and do the will of God, which goes down to the very heart of life, roots out all selfishness, and sets the whole personality upon the line of God's purpose. This is no easy road; only those who have sought to tread it know its difficulty. But it is the way that must be followed if Christ is to come to His own in the life of the world. There are many—too many—who will company with Him for some part of the way, but turn back and walk no more with Him when it grows too steep or too bleak; many who will keep His commandments so long as the effort involves only a slight dislocation of their ordinary, comfortable, easy-going habit of life, but who recoil from Him in dismay when He demands their all.\(^1\) But less than that He will take from none—a response from His people in keeping with the greatness of His sacrifice and the

\(^1\) "Many follow Jesus as far as the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the chalice of His Passion."

'A Kempis, Imitation.
depth of the world's need. That is the price of discipleship; that is the man's contribution towards the saving of man.

To put the issue on a lower plane is to dishonour Christ and His Church, and to limit the possibilities of consecrated human life. Not to one and another here and there, but to every Christian who claims the Christian privilege there comes to-day this unmistakable call. It will require the mightiest sacrifice, the completest dedication, if it is to be answered. The gift of life to God in other generations has forged a golden chain of devotion and service of which one end is fastened to the Cross, while to the other men cling because it guides and helps them to God. Will the link, which our generation should add, be imperfect or faulty, unworthy of Christ, and of those that have gone before? It is a question which every man and woman who dares to call Christ Lord must answer, in the uttermost sincerity and honesty, and upon that answer hang the very life of the Church and the future of the world.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

These books can be purchased from the W.M.M.S., 7, Carlisle Avenue, London, E.C.3.

* May be borrowed from the W.M.M.S. Lending Library, 24, Bishopsgate, E.C.2.

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The W.M.M.S. Annual Report. 1s.

The Foreign Field. 2d. monthly.

The Highway of God. K. Harnett and W. Paton. 2s. 6d.*

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Christianity and the Race Problem. J. H. Oldham. 7s. 6d.*

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IN CHINA NOW. J. C. Keyte. 2s.*

FLOOD-TIDE IN CHINA. B. B. Chapman. 1s.*

THE WORLD TASK OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. S. C. M. REPORT. 2s. 6d.
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Suggestions and hints as to the use of these questions in various groups in your church will gladly be supplied by the Missionary Education Department, 24, Bishopsgate, E.C.2.

CHAPTER I

THE CHANGING WORLD

1. Compare organised Christianity as found in England in the early eighteenth century with that to-day. Are there any common faults? How can those of to-day be remedied?

2. A modern agnostic suggests that, through history, the Christian Church has been one of the greatest drawbacks to progress. How would you reply to him in the light of the history of the last two centuries?

3. When Wesley had made the Gospel his own, he went "through England like a flame of fire." Is indifference to missionary work due to a lack of personal devotion to Christ? If not, to what is it due?

CHAPTER II

WEST AFRICA: OUT OF THE DARKNESS

1. Imagine yourself a fetish-worshipping African to whose village there come the apostles of Muhammad and of Christ. Would you be likely to change your religion? Why? If so, which of the two new ones would you choose? Give reasons.

2. Compare the message and methods of the Prophet Harris with those of John the Baptist. What are the advantages and dangers in work such as Harris did?

3. "£23,000 is too much to spend on one institution, when the needs of the whole of West Africa are so pressing and urgent." Do you agree? Why?
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

CHAPTER III

SOUTH AFRICA: THE NORTHWARD TREK

1. It is not likely that the white man will evacuate South Africa and leave it to the African. What policy with regard to land and labour do you think would be mutually beneficial?

2. The rush for gold and diamonds has changed the face of South Africa. How? What are the advantages and disadvantages of missionary work in the mining compounds?

3. Missionary work amongst Europeans in South Africa is sometimes considered less romantic than that amongst Africans. Is it less important? Is it helping to solve some of the problems in South Africa? If so, how?

CHAPTER IV

INDIA: THE TOUCH OF A SAVIOUR

1. Hinduism enslaves; Christianity frees. In what ways is this true for the individual and the community?

2. (a) Can you suggest any reasons why there have not been mass movements among the caste Hindus? How are they most likely to be won for Christ?
   (b) Because our high schools may not produce many actual converts, would you advocate closing them?

3. "India will only be a nation when she is a Christian nation." What elements hinder India from being a nation today? How can Christianity help her in her efforts towards self-determination?

CHAPTER V

CHINA: THE LAND OF MANY VOICES

1. (a) Why did China for so many centuries remain a closed land? How has the door been opened?
   (b) In what ways are Christian missions serving China today?
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

2. If you were a leader in China to-day, what characteristics of the old and the new orders would you seek to combine in helping to mould the China of your ideals?

3. "China is the key to the future history of the world." Why? How does the realisation of this present an immediate challenge to all followers of Christ?

CHAPTER VI

THE UNCHANGING CHRIST

1. Why and how have the various great religions been found wanting to-day? How is it that the Gospel of Christ never fails to meet man's need?

2. Can the Methodist Church justify its existence unless it embraces the world as its parish?
   How would you answer people who say: "Christianise England first"?

3. "Life is a mission." How can each of us discover and fulfil this mission in our Christian service?
To show Chief Stations of Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society