

HOW RICH THE HARVEST

STUDIES IN
BIBLE THEMES AND MISSIONS

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PREFACE

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RICH is the harvest of memory when I recall that my first book, *Arabia the Cradle of Islam*, was published by the Fleming H. Revell Company fifty years ago and that for all these many years they have been pioneers in arousing interest in Moslem lands. The present harvest in the world of Islam may still be "like grass upon the house tops which withereth before it groweth up, wherewith the reaper filleth not his hand nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom"; but we know that even in Arabia those who have sown with tears are now reaping with joy, bringing their sheaves of first-fruits with them.

This is not a book of memories but of meditations. Not ripe sheaves of Bible truth but gleanings gathered after the reapers; like Ruth's "handful of purpose" in an alien field, which told of the richness of the harvest not only but of the greatness of the heart of Boaz.

Or even as the twelve baskets of fragments bore witness to the magnitude of Christ's creative miracle in feeding the five thousand, so the inexhaustible riches of His Word can sometimes be seen by meditation on a stray word or an obscure text.

This little basket of autumn fruit was gathered under The Tree and was sweet to my taste as I sat in

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its shadow. There is variety in the twenty-seven chapters, also brevity; the latter not a fault common to octogenarians.

The shorter themes may offer pegs for sermons and the longer chapters provoke thought on missions. The critical reader will remember to discriminate as did Jeremiah, whose "one basket had very good figs like the figs that are first ripe and the other basket had very naughty figs which could not be eaten, they were so bad." There is no accounting for taste. And as Joseph Conrad said, "In plucking the fruit of memory one runs the risk of spoiling its bloom."

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BIBLE STUDIES

I

BASKETS IN THE BIBLE

ONE OF the most fruitful methods of Bible study is the topical one. Take, for example, the word basket, and the concordance will show, as archæology teaches, that basket-making began at the dawn of history, that they made baskets in Egypt before they made pottery.

From Mexico to China the art of weaving baskets is the oldest art of civilization. Jochebed, the Jewish mother, made a basket of bulrushes and saved her baby from cruel foes. That baby led out the children of Israel from bondage and wrote the Pentateuch! Saul of Tarsus, after his conversion when they sought to kill him, was let down over the wall of Damascus in a basket. No two baskets ever held such treasure for all time and all nations as these. The law of Moses and the thirteen epistles of Paul saved by baskets!

The concordance also shows that there are several words in our English Bible that should be translated as basket. The ark of bulrushes was an Egyptian basket covered with bitumen, just as is used there to-day. A different Hebrew word is used for the baskets in which Jeremiah saw good and bad figs (Jer. 24:2); the baskets of the priest in Deuteronomy 26:4, and those of Amos with summer fruit were of different size and shape. So

also were the baskets of the baker in the story of Joseph (Gen. 40: 16-18). And the big wicker-basket in which Paul sat as he was let down over the wall was quite different from the twelve baskets full of fragments gathered after the miracle of the loaves. (Here is one reason why students should study Greek.) Compare Mark 6:43 and Mark 8:8, and you will see that the miracles of the loaves included that of twelve large baskets full, and seven smaller baskets. Such detail is both proof of eye-witnesses to the event and of verbal inspiration in the record. Ten kinds of baskets are mentioned in the Old and New Testaments.

We know from the tombs of Egypt and its monuments all about ancient baskets. They were made of the fibre of the palm tree, from bulrushes, twigs and ropes, of all sizes, and used for every purpose in household and trade from summer fruit to clay bricks. They were carried in the hand, on the head, borne on a pole between two men or across the saddle of donkeys and camels. They were also used as a dry measure for wheat and barley. In Jesus Christ's shortest and sharpest parable such a measure is called a bushel. Three times in the Gospels He warns us against putting our candles under a bushel (Mat. 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 11:33). The bushel is the symbol of gain; the bed of ease; the candle-stick of service. Where is your candle to-day? Every man's life is determined by one of these dominating desires.

Baskets are so universal and so ancient that anthropology has found no primitive tribe in the whole world without the art of making baskets. Men used baskets

long before they knew the use of iron or the mystery of a wheel.

It would be an interesting sermon that dealt with Moses' basket, or Jeremiah's or that of Amos. But most of all I would like to preach on the bushel basket of Jesus or the big hamper basket in which Paul was let down from the wall in his escape (2 Cor. 11:33). Because just after that (2 Cor. 12:4) he tells of how "he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words." When God humbles our pride and lets us down in a basket we may, after that, be caught up to the third heaven.

II

GOD'S HAMMER AND SICKLE

“Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? . . . And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. . . . When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

EVERYONE TO-DAY is familiar with the symbol of the U.S.S.R., which represents the great number of United Socialist Soviet Republics controlled by the central authority of the Kremlin. But it is well to remember that the original meaning of that symbol of Russian Communism was the union of agriculture and manufacture, of the hammer of the iron-worker with the sickle of the farmer, for their common uplift and progress.

Today we witness the terrific power of Marxian theory harnessed to a ruthless totalitarian empire, which is one of the members of the United Nations and, to say the least, an “unruly member.” Our hatred of atheistic Communism should not decrease but rather increase our Christian solicitude for the spiritual welfare of the millions under its yoke. Prayer and evangelism for the U.S.S.R. demand faith, hope, and love.

It has occurred to me that a Bible study of God's hammer (Jer. 23: 29) and His sickle (Mark 4: 29; Rev. 14: 14) would strengthen our faith, encourage our hope, and kindle our love for the Russian masses in the critical situation to-day.

God's hammer is His holy Word, which has been as a hammer and fire to break the rock of the human heart in pieces. In the battle of the books at Ephesus (Acts 19: 1-20), it was the gospel that started a bonfire of magical books in honour of Diana to the value of \$8,850! The twelve decisive battles of the mind, according to Gorham Munson, were fought with twelve books. And among them he lists Karl Marx' *Das Kapital*, but also Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*. The Bible and the Bible alone registers victories for the Kingdom of God when it becomes God's hammer. Charles Martel was called the Hammer of God because he drove back the Saracens at the battle of Tours and saved Europe from Islam. St. Augustine was called the Hammer of heretics because he defended the Holy Trinity against Arianism.

God's Word has been a hammer for nineteen centuries and when other hammers to-day try to break God's eternal anvil of truth we remember the inscription on the monument to the Huguenots at Paris:

“Hammer away, ye hostile hands;
Your hammers break; God's anvil stands.”

If the free circulation of the Scriptures were once more permitted in the vast areas of the U.S.S.R., would not Jeremiah's prophecy again find fulfilment? The adamant of Saul's heart was broken by that hammer of

God on the road to Damascus. The gates of brass and the bars of iron cannot resist the power when God knocks. Pray for Russia. Only prayer can prevail in the present crisis.

Again, we read of God's sickle in two texts which interpret each other. Study them for yourself. In each case it is God's thrusting in His sickle to reap a harvest for the Kingdom. Mark's parable tells us that "after the full corn (is) in the ear" the Lord of the harvest puts in His sickle. We sow in tears. He reaps to His glory. We wait impatiently but He is confident and has faith in the soil and the seed and the Sun of righteousness—for the harvest day is near, and He is Lord of the harvest.

The passage in the Revelation is not devoid of difficulty but nearly all commentators agree that the Son of man crowned with glory, who wields the sickle, is Christ the Reaper. Another angel brings another sickle to Him that sits on the cloud and the dreadful reaping of the grapes of God's wrath is described (Rev. 14: 15-20).

The children of the Resurrection and life eternal are ripe for God's granary. The children of disobedience are ripe for destruction in the winepress of judgement.

God's hammer and God's sickle! How can we forget their symbolism to-day? Sure, O sure will the harvest be when the Son of Man returns on the clouds of heaven. Unless we are faithful in proclaiming His Word and in sowing His seed, how dare we say, "Even so. Come Lord Jesus!"

III

THE ART OF THINKING

EXCEPT IN our sleep or when we are stupefied by the use of drugs, we are all conscious or semi-conscious of an unending series of mental images that pass before our inward vision. Blurred or distinct, commonplace or startling, attractive or repulsive to our judgement—this continual moving-picture show is called thought. The images we see come on the screen either from the outside world through our senses—sight, hearing, *et cetera*—or they come from the world inside of us through memory, reflection, or meditation. Can we select our own films for this eternal cinema of the soul? Can we shut off the machine or regulate its speed? Can we hold a picture that attracts us and enobles us and quickly pass by that which is repulsive and degrading? Do we ourselves operate the machine, or are we helpless spectators?

The answer to some of these questions was given in a book called *The Art of Thinking*. Written by a white-haired French abbé, Ernest Dimnet, for American readers, we hear that over ninety thousand copies of the book have been sold. M. Dimnet is an author profoundly read in literature, he has travelled widely and observed the results of modern education and "the age

of newspapers" on the art of thinking. He does not say it is a lost art, but no one can read the little book without becoming conscious of how many people have themselves lost the art of clear, conclusive thinking.

The thoughts which we think, afford the clearest possible test of character. "As a man thinketh in his heart," said Solomon, "so is he." Character is what a man is in the dark; and character depends on habit of thought. We become that to which we pay the most attention. Our subconscious minds are the indelible record of thought processes. But there is a difference between real thinking and day-dreaming. "It is evident," says Abbé Dimnet, "that a person whose mind is filled with the images of petty pleasures, comforts, good food, good clothes, dancing, travelling and amusement, in short, material well-being, is farther away from what we call thought than the person whose imagination will be engrossed by beautiful scenes, the appeal of antiquity and the recollection of great artistic lives everywhere." Most people are imitators and never originate anything, because they never think. The thinker is pre-eminently the one who sees where others do not.

The chief obstacle to thought is stupidity; and we do not need to remain stupid. Education may remove ignorance but it does not always produce the habit of thought. Parrot-like repetition and the stifling of originality are also of the evils of mass education.

Reading is supposed to help thinking but it may, on the contrary, be a foe to real thought. It depends on what we read and how we read. Some people read to kill time and that kills thought too. "To-day," says

Dimnet, "printing has gone mad and the world is in danger of being submerged by the ocean of books." Eleven thousand new books are published annually in France alone! The inveterate and superficial reading of daily newspapers is one of the surest methods to destroy the art of thinking. We should read not even good books, but only the best books in every realm of thought. Why waste time on second-rate books when the Best of all Books, and many based on it are on our shelves? Why read rhymsters and cheap poetry when Shakespeare, Milton, and Browning are neglected? Even a good book can be the enemy of a best book on any great subject.

Aside from reading, solitude and meditation are provocative of real thinking. The soul grows in silence. We must be still to do real thinking. The great ocean or the pathless desert or gazing upward under the starry vault of heaven—these have been the schools of thought to men of genius. The silence of a martyr's dungeon has helped thought far more than the clamour of the market place, or the loud applause of the arena.

Paul spent three years in solitude before he began to preach or write. No one has ever put into a single paragraph the vast realms of Christian thought as Paul did (Philippians 4: 8): "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." These adjectives are an index to the thinking of St. Paul and to all who follow in his train.

IV

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL FLOURISH LIKE THE PALM TREE

PALESTINE is the land of the palm and the olive. Both are frequently spoken of in Scripture. The Israelites found refreshment on their way from Egypt under threescore and ten palm trees (Exodus 15: 27). Jericho was called the city of palms and it was with palm branches in hand that they shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David" as He entered Jerusalem. The redeemed in glory will sing Christ's praises with palms in their hands (Revelation 7: 9).

But the promise of Psalm 92: 12 unites all the symbolism of the most beautiful and most useful tree in the Orient. In this psalm the wicked are cut down like grass, and wither. The righteous flourish like the palm, and bring forth fruit even in old age.

The date-tree palm consists of a single stem or trunk about thirty to fifty feet high without a branch, crowned at the summit by a cluster of leaves or "palms" that droop somewhat in the shape of a huge umbrella. Each of these palms has long lanceolate leaves spreading out like a fan from the center stem, which often attains a length of ten or even twelve feet. In a wild state the successive rows of palms, which mark the annual growth

of the tree, wither and contract but remain upon the trunk, producing with every breath of wind the creaking sound so often heard in the silence of the desert night.

Arabs have written books and Europeans have composed fables on the thousand different uses of the palm tree. Every part of this wonderful tree is useful to the Arabs in unexpected ways. To begin at the top: The pistils of the date blossom contain a fine curly fibre which is beaten out and used in all Eastern baths as a sponge for soaping the body. At the extremity of the trunk is a terminal bud containing a whitish substance resembling an almond in consistency and taste, but a hundred times as large. This is a great table delicacy. There are said to be over one hundred varieties of date palm, all distinguished by their fruit, and the Arabs say that "a good housewife may furnish her husband every day for a month with a dish of dates differently prepared."

Dates form the staple food of the Arabs in a large part of Arabia and are always served in some form at every meal. The date pit is ground up and fed to cows and sheep so that nothing of the precious fruit may be lost. Whole pits are used as beads and counters for the Arab children in their games on the desert sands. The branches or palms are stripped of their leaves and used like rattan to make beds, tables, chairs, cradles, bird cages, reading stands, boats, crates, and other things. The leaves are made into baskets, fans, and string, and the bast of the outer trunk forms excellent fibre for rope of many sizes and qualities. The wood of the

trunk, though light and porous, is much used in bridge building and architecture and is quite durable. In short, when a date palm is cut down there is not a particle of it that is wasted. This tree is the "poor-house" and asylum for all Arabia; without it millions would have neither food nor shelter, for one half of the population of Mesopotamia lives in date-mat dwellings.

The righteous, like the palm tree, grow in desert soil but are fed by secret springs. They are useful and literally live to serve others. The great heavy clusters of luscious fruit are typical of the ninefold cluster called "the fruit of the Spirit." The palm tree grows to a great age and never ceases to bear fruit. I have seen date trees over a hundred years old that could be described as "fat and flourishing." What does it? They hold their heads high in the bright sunlight and send their roots down deep into the moist wady. Of the righteous we read that their "life is hid with Christ in God." He is also the Sun of their soul.

"Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing. . . . For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalms 92: 13, 14; 84: 11).

V

GOD THE OPENER

THE TRUE Moslem carries about his neck or in his hand a rosary of ninety and nine beads, equal in number to the names of God, as given in the tradition of Abu Hurairah. Those who have read Edward Arnold's *Pearls of the Faith* remember his eloquent comments on many of these names in his poem. One of the favorite names among Moslems is the subject of this article. It is the eighteenth in the list, and is often found written above the doors of houses and mosques: *Ya Fattāh*.

Although this name is not directly given to God in Scripture, yet the idea is there in greater fulness of meaning and wealth of promise than the most devout Moslem ever dreamed of. The God of Revelation is the great Opener. He opens the eyes to behold the wonders of His law, the ears to hear, the understanding to comprehend, and the door of the heart for His entrance. He opens the lips of the dumb to song, the eyes of the blind to sight, and the prison-house to the captive. He opens doors of utterance and entrance for the gospel. He opens graves and gates, the windows of heaven, and the mouth of hell. He holds all the keys of every situation. He opens and no man can shut; He

shuts and no man can open. He declares, "I am the door."

Now, what is the relation of this name of God, which is therefore also a truth of God, to the work of missions? Perhaps one of the most common prayers offered up for the Kingdom of God is that God would open doors for the entrance of the gospel. This is a good prayer so far as it goes, and it certainly (provided it is an effectual prayer) is most urgently necessary. Because, though in general and superficial phrase we say that the whole world is open to the gospel, in particular that is not the case. Tibet and Afghanistan, Mecca and Medina are instances of only two countries and two cities closed to the message of Christ. Besides these, there are vast tracts and districts in Africa and India, Arabia and China, where the Church has never yet been to see whether the doors are open or shut. Yes, there are still closed doors; at least to human eye the gates are closed, the entrance barred, and the enemy holds the fortress. There are also those who desire to enter; at least, by her prayers and offerings and missionaries, the Church professes to seek this. And there is the Opener. Why do these doors remain shut?

Nowhere in the Bible do we find pattern or warrant to pray for an open door, and so to expect entrance. In one case the Apostle addresses the Church of the Colossians, asking them to pray for him "that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ." But there is a vast difference between a door of utterance and a door of entrance. Moreover, when he wrote, Paul was standing at the door trying to

enter. In the Sermon on the Mount we find clear and plain directions how to open doors—not by praying and beseeching or hoping and longing for entrance at a distance from the door, but a much simpler process: "Knock, and it shall be opened." God, the Opener, is not on the outside but on the inside of the gate. Jesus Christ possesses all the strongholds of heathendom and Islam by His Father's promise. He asked, and they were given for His everlasting inheritance. The Church has only to go and take possession of her estate.

We do not expect people to open their front door for us when we are not yet in sight, but still at home, thinking of making a call and putting on our gloves. Even when at the door of our friend's house we would have to wait long if we did not knock. Is it not also thus in the things of the Kingdom? You want to open a heart for Jesus. Do more than pray. You desire to open a country for Christ, go there. "Knock, and it shall be opened."

And this knocking includes three things: a desire to enter—going to the door; a purpose to enter—waiting at the door; and faith to enter—knocking. Loud, long, continuous rapping—a desire that only increases as it is disappointed, a purpose that remains forever unshaken, a faith that removes mountains by waiting without wavering until God works.

To the Opener there is no closed door, and no barrier can hinder His entrance. It was exactly "when the doors were shut" that He entered. Paul found a door. He did not tarry in the "upper coasts" while Apollos was at Corinth, but came to Ephesus. And

then he wrote, "A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." God, the Opener, made the door effectual, and the adversaries made it great. The greater the enemy, the greater the victory. Tierra del Fuego was shut, but Allen Gardiner remained knocking at the door until he died, and God opened. Korea opened to the knock of a medical missionary and Burma to that of a woman's needle. Hudson Taylor had faith to say that the Inland Provinces were open to the gospel, and then God opened wondrous doors before him. For what the Opener has opened none can shut.

Open doors are to be entered. Closed doors are to be knocked at until they open. There are no locked doors, for the Opener liveth. But every door, open or closed, is an opportunity and a responsibility. Remember the awful words of Christ to the Pharisees who tried to shut the doors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is the hour not so much to pray for open doors as to go and knock at closed doors, and to pray for the opening of hard fists and hoarded treasure and alabaster boxes, in order that at least one door-keeper may stand at every closed door of the kingdom and knock. Then will God, the Opener, open the doors of all nations and "the windows of heaven," and pour such a blessing upon us, "that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

VI

LOOKING BACKWARD TO GO FORWARD

THIS PARADOX is true only in the case of those who row a boat. In ordinary life a man looks the way he goes; he travels onward by looking forward; his eyes are on the goal. But in nearly every land and since the earliest days, the oarsman looks backward as he pulls his oar. Plutarch used the metaphor, "Like watermen who look astern while they move ahead," in his attempt to interpret history. Montaigne, who wrote his famous philosophical essays nearly four hundred years ago, says we are to be "like rowers who advance backwards." If this is not the case in China it may explain her backward civilisation! Some Orientals *push* their oars.

There is no doubt that in Bible lands and in Old and New Testament days, the rowers looked backward. The great galleys of which Isaiah (33:21) and Ezekiel (27:6, 29) speak, with oars made of oaks of Bashan, were propelled as were the Spanish galleys of the sixteenth century. When our Saviour saw the sons of Zebedee and their companions "toiling in the rowing; because the winds were contrary," they were pulling backward to get forward against the storm. All of which is a parable of

the strenuous life and its goal. We live to move forward. We must not float idly downstream with the currents of our day, but breast the waves and move onward and upwards.

The life of a Christian is real and strenuous. It is at our own peril on a stream like Niagara, that we cease toiling at our oars. We are not galley slaves, and yet we belong to the Master of our boat and of our fate. He sees us "toiling in the rowing" when the winds are contrary, and even at midnight will make us aware of His presence till the end. We sail by faith even as we walk by faith, not by sight.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."

The good oarsman steers his craft by a steady gaze backward. So does the philosopher of life and the Christian. The place which we have left behind determines our destination. We get our bearings from the City of Destruction to the Wicket-gate and on to the King's Highway. We look back to what we were to press forward to our heritage. It is the remembrance of past mercies that gives present confidence. Without memory gratitude is impossible. "Beware that thou forget not," said Moses to Israel. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," sang David. And although Paul speaks of forgetting those things which are behind he never forgot that he was once "a persecutor and a blasphemer" and the chief of sinners saved by God's

marvellous grace. To remember our past sins is cure for pride.

We need ever to keep in mind the paradox of the oarsman—look back but pull forward. It is the true secret of a victorious life. The lessons of the past are behind us; our task is before us. History is philosophy teaching by example; the things that were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we "through faith and patience [might] inherit the promises." The New Testament saints looked back to the Old Testament and rowed forward. The history of the Christian Church for nineteen centuries tells us of rocks and whirlpools that we must avoid, and of the deep stream of true teaching that is our safety. We are heirs of the ages if we look back wisely. Only God knows the end from the beginning. So, with our conflicting but not contradictory theologies, we confess that God must do all and man can do nothing. We must repent, yet He gives us penitence. He works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure and yet we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Our old revival hymn bade us "heed not the rolling waves but pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore."

"Yet oars alone can ne'er prevail
To reach the distant coast,
The breath of Heaven must swell the sail,
Or all the toil is lost."

Do not lean on your oars. Look backward and pull forward.

VII

LESSONS FOR CHRISTIANS IN A MOSQUE

AMONG ALL the living religions of the non-Christian world Islam may be characterized as the religion of a Book. All Moslems to-day believe that the Koran is not only the infallible word of Allah, but that it existed from all eternity, and was revealed to Mohammed, chapter by chapter, by the angel Gabriël! I recall the interior of an old mosque in Cairo with its beautiful lattice-work, its bronze lamp hanging from the ceiling with the crescent symbol above it, and the doors of an inner shrine, and a mosque-library.

The man in charge is called a *Qāri*, or reader. He is seated on a *kursi* and the large volume before him is the Koran. These chair-desks are used in the large mosques of Damascus and Cairo to-day, and the reader intones the words aloud for a large company on special occasions, or to himself in meditation.

During my forty years as missionary in Egypt and Arabia I often listened to these Koran readers. They are especially busy during the long nights of the fast month, Ramadhan, and also at funerals or at the graves of those whose relatives pay for such service. To the reader and

to the dead this exercise confers merit, so they believe. The first primer used in every Moslem school, from Morocco to China and from Constantinople to Cape Town, consists of the Arabic alphabet followed by six short chapters from the Koran. Children memorize its pages, and I have known even girls of ten or twelve in Arabia who could recite long passages without a single mistake. Older people, both women and men, receive the title of *Hāfiz* when they have learned the whole book by heart! It is a little smaller in size than the New Testament, has one hundred and fourteen chapters with strange titles: The Cow, The Bee, Women, Spoils, The Ant, The Spider, Smoke, The Pen, etc. It contains Old Testament stories, fables, ceremonial laws and also some account of Jesus' birth and miracles. There are many Moslems who know it all by heart.

The Koran denies Christ's death on the Cross and His resurrection. It is the word of man and not the Word of God, but it has perhaps had a larger circulation and more readers than any other book in the world—except the Bible. Translations exist in some forty languages, but only the Arabic text is sacred and used in prayer and worship. If you have never read the book of Islam, borrow a copy from some library and see for yourself how it differs from the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments. The world of Islam needs our Saviour.

However, as we think of it we may learn from Moslems three lessons.

1. That of reverence for God's Word. Moslems never place their book on the floor. They generally put

it in a silk case or wrapper on the highest shelf. No Moslem would dare to mark the pages of the Koran or use it without first washing his hands. When they quote the Koran they say, "Allah says . . ." How often thoughtless Christians talk as if Paul's words or David's words are their very own, while we know that it is God who speaks through the prophets and apostles. The Bible is the Word of God. It is the Holy Bible; human words are not always holy.

2. Moslems memorize the Koran accurately. How much of the New Testament can you repeat correctly from memory? How few clergymen, even, can quote without error some very familiar passages. I witnessed a Moslem slave receive a severe beating for mispronouncing one word of the Koran because it raised a smile in the audience! And they memorize entire chapters. Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, former President of Princeton Seminary, could repeat whole chapters of the New Testament from the pulpit without use of the text; he never used notes or Bible at funerals, but repeated Scripture.

3. The daily prayers of the Moslems are taken *verbatim* from the Koran. Are our prayers as Biblical as they should be? Are there any better words than David's confessions and thanksgivings, or Isaiah's adorations and meditations? These are inspired words, and our prayers would be greatly deepened and become lovely by the beauty of holiness. How many Psalms do you know?

Think of the dignity, the reverence, and the silence of a mosque service compared with the restlessness, the

noisiness, and the whispering which we sometimes witness in church gatherings. "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him."

When one lives close to Moslems and tries to understand their ways, there is much that shocks him in manners and morals. They truly need the gospel message, for they are without Christ and without hope. But after long years, I still admire three virtues which they often show in contrast with the Christians of the West: their patience in suffering, their hospitality to strangers, and, most of all, their reverence in the mosque and towards the Koran because they think it is the Word of God.

VIII

TO-DAY'S CALL TO PRAYER

THE THREE great theistic religions are at one in the primacy and preeminence they give to the privilege and duty of public and private prayer. On the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, the eleven million Jews scattered around the world hear the *shofar*, ram's horn, sound in their synagogues, calling them to repentance. No one who has witnessed a Jewish service on that day will ever forget its solemnity and sincerity. Driven out and persecuted among the nations, the people remember the Paschal Lamb and the great deliverance at the time of their Exodus.

During many years of my life among Moslems I have heard the call of the Muezzin from his minaret, five times daily: "God is great, God is great. Come to prayer . . . prayer is better than sleep." Tourists in Egypt often speak of those who call to prayer from the minaret of the great mosque of Al Azhar, which has thousands of students from every part of the Near East. That sonorous, weird cry heard at dawn or at eventide still rings in my memory as a rebuke and a challenge—a rebuke to Christian sloth when we love sleep more than the Bible or intercession for a lost world, and a

challenge to pray for the deluded followers of the great Arabian prophet who has, in many Eastern lands, eclipsed the Sun of Righteousness by his half-moon of truth.

In Moslem lands it has become a custom in some Christian mission circles to pray for Mohammedans when they sound the call to prayer. The first chapter of the Koran is a prayer for guidance, which, when uttered in sincerity, God may answer by directing the seeker to the Saviour. It was so in the case of Bishop John Subhan of India, as he himself told me and tells every reader of his autobiography, *How a Sufi Found His Lord*.

In the present world crisis nothing is more important than prayer—and nothing more difficult. Dr. Frank Laubach, the well-known missionary, at a recent meeting in New York City, called on us to have faith in God—a defiant faith that despises obstacles—and to pray for the rulers of the nations represented at the United Nations. He told of how he himself daily agonizes in prayer for the leaders in Russia and India and Palestine. Only God can give them new hearts and divine wisdom. Behind the Iron Curtain of the Kremlin God's Word and God's Spirit can touch the hearts of Stalin and Molotov. Ibn Sa'ud, the King of Arabia, is to-day the friend of missionaries. Is it too hard to ask that he may yet become, through prevailing prayer, the friend of God in Jesus Christ? There are groups of Christians in Iowa who are praying for him and his family.

Peace on earth and good-will to men is the gift of the King of kings only. Let us not forget in these dark

days the call to prayer that Paul gave to Timothy and the Church at Ephesus. Nero the Tyrant sat in purple splendour on his throne, and the Apostle wrote: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. 2: 1, 2). Do you pray for kings and rulers? If ever such a call to prayer was needed it is in our day and for the assembly of the United Nations.

Have you faith to pray as Paul commanded? Have you heard God's call to prayer?

I X

THE NESTORIAN MONUMENT

ONE OF the most inspiring and yet tragic chapters in the history of missions is that of the Nestorian Church—a church once on fire with the spirit of evangelism. From Edessa on the Euphrates, this church, constrained by persecution and spiritually nurtured by the monastic system, sent its missionaries to Arabia, Persia, India, Ceylon, across Turkestan into China and over to Japan. From west to east and from north to south, covering practically the whole of Asia, the messengers of the gospel, representatives of the most missionary church the world has ever seen, wended their way and, supporting themselves by the labour of their hands, carried the message of salvation across a continent. From the fourth to the beginning of the fourteenth century they maintained their testimony, as witnessed by the cemetery inscription of Semivechensk and other evidences.* Most famous of all is the Nestorian Tablet of Sianfu (dated *circa* 781), now in the hall of tablets in the court of a Confucian Temple.

Marco Polo, the famous traveler, says that "there were Nestorian churches all along the trade routes from

* John Stewart's *Nestorian Missionary Enterprise*, p. 307. T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh 1928.

Baghdad to Peking." And the historian Assemani states that by the end of the thirteenth century Nestorian Christianity was so widely spread that they had twenty-seven bishoprics.

The story of the discovery of the monument and the interpretation of its bilingual inscription in Chinese and Syriac is too long to tell here. But its lesson is clear. "In the inscription," says Dr. Legge, "not a word is said about the miracles of Christ or anything bearing on His crucifixion, death or resurrection." If it is genuine it testifies, as does the history of this Church, to its degeneration through compromise with Islam and Buddhism. Flattery is paid to the Chinese emperors who welcomed the Christian missionary, A-lo-pu, said to have come to Sianfu in A.D. 635, bringing the sacred Scriptures.

But the old zeal and vigorous faith were already on the ebb. The spirit of compromise had sapped the strength of witness. James Stewart tells the tragic story in his monograph.

In 1933 I paid my third visit to China and flew from Sian-fu to Lanchow. We saw the Nestorian Tablet and also the growing strength of the new Evangelical Church in Shensi province. It all comes back to me as I read the fascinating pages of a new book by George A. Young, *The Living Christ in Modern China*.* I wish every missionary and candidate would read it. In his brilliant chapter on "The Living Christ and Other Religions," Young tells the story of how in his early career he too was tempted by a proposal to have fellowship with a

* Carey Press, London, 1947.

student group in Sian in a sort of "Examine all Religions Society":

"The aim of its advocates was not to become Christians but to unite Buddhists, Muslims, and Confucianists with Christians. Their argument was subtle and attractive—'All religions are the same in worshipping the one true God and in calling men to live the good life. All have similar teaching. Why argue about the merits of one religion when they were all as good as one another? Let us unite.' The speakers of these words were good men, devout seekers after God. 'Here is a great opportunity,' I said to myself as I meditated one evening in the courtyard of the Confucian temple. 'Here is a warning,' a voice said to me. I looked up and beheld a large stone tablet—the old Nestorian Memorial—the sole witness of an early Christianity which had died through compromise. I returned home more alert."

He faced the temptation, was victorious and in spite of opposition led many of this enquiring band of students to open confession of Christ and public baptism in the only Name under heaven whereby we must be saved. His is a story of stern decisions, of not being ashamed of the offence of the cross and of victory by clear witness and the prayer that prevails.

That chapter in his book and the photograph of the Nestorian Monument in my Chinese collection recalled instances and experiences in Arabia and Egypt and America where I had seen compromise spell defeat. The whole gospel and the pure gospel leads to victory. On this Rock Christ builds His Church. There may be comparative religions, but Christianity is not one of

them. It is God's revelation. The Nestorian Monument bears witness to early apostolic zeal but also, by its weak testimony to Christian doctrine and its Buddhistic symbols, to compromise and syncretism, which lead to defeat.

X

THE DOME OF THE ROCK IN JERUSALEM

THE OLD Jewish tradition is that Jerusalem is the center of the world, and the rock on which Solomon built his temple is the navel of the earth! This rock has perhaps an older religious story than any other place. It is Moriah, where Abraham sacrificed the ram instead of Isaac (Gen. 22: 2), where David offered sacrifice on the threshing-floor of Araunah (2 Sam. 24: 16), and where the Temple was built (2 Chron. 3: 1).

Not only the Talmud, but the Koran has strange traditions regarding this immense rock covered now by the dome of a mosque and sacred to all Mohammedans. Traces of the first temple of Solomon still remain in the channels which, cut in the rock to drain the blood from the sacrifices, lead to an immense cave beneath. The mosque is called *Kubbet-al-Sakhra*, or Dome of the Rock, and was built when the Arabs took Jerusalem. Afterwards, in 688 A.D., it was enlarged and beautified by the Caliph Abd-ul-Malik. During the Crusades, Jerusalem became the capital of the Latin kingdom and the mosque became a church. When Saladin reconquered Jerusalem the Cross was replaced by the Crescent, and for all these long centuries it has been a center

for Moslem pilgrimage. It is second only to Mecca in its sacred associations. Moslems believe Adam worshipped here; Abraham sacrificed on this very rock; here Mohammed began his famous night journey to Paradise on a fabulous steed called Al-Buraq, and the footprint of the animal is still visible on the Rock! In 1928 I visited the mosque and gave a Gospel to the sheikh in charge.

Tourists to Jerusalem are allowed to visit the shrine now in Moslem hands. But Jews and Christians also have a historic right to believe it is really the site of Abraham's sacrifice and Solomon's Temple; afterwards of Herod's Temple. Not only in modern Palestine, but at the tomb of Abraham and at the Dome of the Rock, Jews, Moslems, and Christians are rivals for prestige and possession. Abraham is called by each of these three religions the Friend of God, and each interprets in a different fashion the story of the sacrifice that took place on the rock at Mt. Moriah. The Jew tells the story as recorded in Genesis, embroidered by legend. Orthodox Jews still celebrate the day of the binding of Isaac with a beautiful prayer of penitence. The Moslem pilgrim believes that from this rock his Prophet ascended to heaven and returned to Mecca in one night's journey, and he kisses the footprints of Mohammed's steed. He also believes that Noah's ark rested here after the flood; that here on the resurrection day the Angel of death, Israfil, will blow his trumpet; and that beneath the Rock is a vast cavern where the spirits of the dead assemble! No wonder the pious Moslem treads softly in this shrine.

Christians recall that on this very eminence stood

the Temple where Jesus taught and worked miracles; and that the Lamb of God, typified by the sacrifice of the ram in Isaac's stead, and of whom the Scriptures bear witness from Genesis to Revelation, died for our sins on one of Moriah's hills, Calvary.

As we think of the Dome of the Rock, we recall the Rock of Ages cleft for us and hide ourselves, in spite of all superstitions and fables, in Him alone who is the only Saviour and the only One who ascended to heaven from Olivet and will come again. "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3: 13).

XI

THE ARCH OF TITUS

Symbol and Challenge

Jerusalem compassed with armies.

—(LUKE 21: 20.)

FOR THIRTY-THREE centuries Jerusalem has suffered at the hands of nature and of man. She has been rocked by earthquakes and sacked by invaders. She endured over twenty sieges and blockades, frequent reconstructions, and two periods of desolation. Six times she passed from one religion to another but her spirit remained unbroken. The most terrible of all her sieges was that of Titus about 70 A.D. It is described by Josephus in all its horror. The Temple was demolished and its spoils carried away; thousands of Jews were crucified. And following a second insurrection against Rome under Bar Kochba in 132 A.D. the city was utterly destroyed. Titus carried away his spoils and they are portrayed on the frieze of his celebrated Arch of Triumph erected in 81 A.D. As restored in 1823, we see it to-day a testimony not only to Roman conquest but to the ancient history of Israel from the days of Moses to those of Jesus Christ.

The objects portrayed on the Arch recall the early

tabernacle in the wilderness, with its golden candlestick, its silver trumpets, and its table for the shew bread. They are the very same holy symbols also found in Solomon's temple, in that of Nehemiah's day, and, finally, in the glorious temple built by Herod the Great, King of the Jews. When Jesus our Saviour walked its courts and pointed to its grandeur He foretold its utter destruction, but also declared Himself to be God's true temple, the Word made flesh and dwelling among us. Is it strange that He said (referring to the Golden Candlestick), I am the Light of the World? Or that, mindful of the twelve daily loaves on the table in the holy of holies, I am the Bread of Life? Or that He cried, as with the voice of a silver trumpet, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden"? Jesus Christ was God's last trumpet call to Israel. When they had stoned earlier messengers He sent, last of all, His well-beloved Son—and Him they crucified, crying, "Not this man but Barabbas." The rejection of Christ was the end of Old Testament Judaism. The chosen people had been chosen to be a light to the Gentiles; to be the custodians of God's Holy Word, the true manna, the bread that came down from heaven; they also were to carry the truth of Revelation, as a chosen missionary people to humanity. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Israel was a chosen people for a chosen task. In Abraham's seed all nations were to be blessed. The Messiah was not for the Jews only but was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles. When Jesus was rejected by His own people, when the Temple was destroyed and the

veil that hid its mysteries was rent in twain, it is no wonder that God's providence signalized the end of a dispensation by the symbols on the Arch of Titus!

The Church of Christ is now the true Israel according to the New Testament; the vocation of Israel, the promises to Israel, the Shekinah of Israel now belong to those who are the children of Abraham by faith in the Messiah. The middle wall of partition is forever broken. Those of the circumcision and those of the Gentiles are all one in Christ Jesus.

The seven-branched candlestick is a type of the True Light, every follower of His is to let His light shine. "I am the light of the world"; "Ye are the light of the world." The table of shew bread is a type of the Bread that came down from heaven (John 6: 35-58). They who feed on that living bread are priests unto God and have access into the holiest through the precious blood of our Saviour.

And the gospel trumpet to-day sounds forth liberty to all nations—the liberty of the sons of God—in more than a thousand Gentile languages. "Go ye into all the world and proclaim the gospel to all creatures."

Who can study the spoil of Judaism on the frieze of the Arch of Titus and not see behind the symbols of the ancient Temple a challenge to Christendom? Unless we to-day let our light shine, feed hungry souls with the Bread of Life, and declare God's message with no uncertain sound on the Gospel Trumpet, we invite judgement and doom on ourselves!

XII

"ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THREE FISHES"

DESTRUCTIVE CRITICS have for over a hundred years denied the authenticity and genuineness of John's Gospel. A genuine book is one written by the one whose name it bears; an authentic book is one which relates matters of fact as they really happened. Now, the importance of this controversy is the content of the message and the truthfulness of the writer, for he professes to be an eyewitness (19: 35; 21: 24). He proclaims the deity and the finality of our Saviour as no other writer in the New Testament.

But the proofs for the Johannine authorship are so strong that one is more and more surprised at the persistent incredulity of unbelief. The latest critic is Martin Albertz, a German scholar, who frankly states, "It is quite impossible to identify the author with a Galilean fisherman; the Gospel is written with meagre knowledge of Galilee."

We omit all the external evidence for its authorship by John the son of Zebedee found in manuscripts and Patristic quotations, which prove "that the Gospel in its present form existed before A.D. 125" (Marcus Dodds); and turn to internal evidence, which has usually been

grouped under four heads: the author was a Jew, of Palestine, an eyewitness, and therefore John the Apostle. The theory of the critics that an unknown disciple, called John the Presbyter, wrote this Gospel in the second century is cleverly ridiculed by Dorothy Sayers: "John's Gospel was not written by John, but by another man of the same name!" Our plea in this brief article refers to one point only, viz.: the numerous detailed statements and particulars which prove that the writer was an eyewitness. He mentions that there were exactly six waterpots of stone at Cana (2: 6); that they rowed five and twenty furlongs (6: 19); that Bethany was fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem (11: 18); the hour when Jesus sat at the well (4: 6); the weight and value of the ointment (12: 5); the very hour when the nobleman's son began to amend (4: 52); the hour at which Jesus took two inquirers into His own lodging; and, lastly, the exact number of fish at the last cast on the right side of the boat. Who but an eyewitness standing close to Peter recalled his counting them, "One hundred; one hundred fifty; one hundred fifty-three!" John had often counted fish before, but perhaps never so large a catch. Here is an eyewitness to Christ's appearance, his recognition, and one who heard every word of the discourse after their breakfast at the lake.

Now one has only to turn to other strange and wild explanations of the number of fish to realize, as Calvin states, that "the exact number is insignificant, but the great number is proof of Christ's superhuman knowledge and power." Some commentators saw a mystery in this number. The Hebrew characters of *Simon Iona*

equal $118 + 35 = 153$! The early Fathers understood that 100 meant the Gentiles, 50 the Jews, and 3 the Trinity! Jerome cites the authority of Pliny to prove that there were exactly 153 species of fish, and this indicated the universality of the gospel-net! It is passing strange that no commentator seized upon this one significant fisherman's experience, and their amazement helping each the other count the catch, 153, as proof that this twenty-first chapter, above all others, is from an eyewitness. It was written by John the Apostle and not by some unknown Elder John, or John the Presbyter in the second century. Christ's words in reply to Peter's question (v. 21), which is also a stumbling block to the destructive critics and one of their chief arguments against the Johannine authorship, are a prophecy from the lips of our Saviour spoken before the event. The concluding verses are again those of an eyewitness who beheld His glory on the resurrection morning and on that other morning when he helped count the one hundred and fifty-three fishes, one by one, and heard Peter confirm their marvellous catch.

XIII

"GIVE ATTENDANCE TO READING"

. . . especially the parchments

—1 TIMOTHY 4: 13.

—2 TIMOTHY 4: 13.

IT IS EASY to remember these references. In both cases Paul was writing to a young convert from the Gentiles put in charge of a church at Ephesus. Paul was an educated man, not a fisherman of Galilee; a citizen of Tarsus and trained in theology at the feet of Gamaliel. He was the heir of three civilizations, Jewish, Greek, and Roman. The Hebrew and Greek languages were familiar to him; he carried a Roman passport and quoted from Greek poets and philosophers. Such a well-read man knew the value of books and when he suffered from cold in the Mamertine prison at Rome, he asked not only for his cloak, forgotten at Troas, but for "the books, . . . especially the parchments."

A strangely parallel story is told of William Tyndale during his imprisonment and shortly before his martyrdom in 1536. He wrote to the governor-in-chief asking that some of his goods might be sent: "a warmer cap, a candle and a piece of cloth to patch my leggings.

. . . But above all, I beseech and entreat your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew grammar, and Hebrew dictionary, that I may spend time with that study."

Here we have two heroes of the faith, apostles of Jesus Christ, devoted to their dying hour to books and manuscripts! Bolts and bars could not shut them from the illuminated page, nor could an iron curtain imprison their free spirits.

Timothy had known the Old Testament from his childhood. It had been taught to him by Lois and Eunice, although his father was a Greek. Yet Paul wrote in his first letter, "Give attendance to reading," and in the second he begged Timothy to bring books and manuscripts. One wonders what they were and why Paul wanted the latter. In those days and for three centuries afterwards there were three kinds of manuscripts on costly papyrus parchment. There were uncials, written in large capitals; the cursives, in a running hand, and palimpsests. These latter were parchments used a second time, with the original messages rubbed off and a new one on a different subject written across the half-defaced lines. Paul speaks of Christians as epistles of Christ "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God" (2 Cor. 3: 3). May we not classify Christians as uncials, with a clear message of new life in Christ; cursives, where the message is not so easily read; or poor palimpsests, where the original epistle of Christ has been erased and another hand has written about this present evil world?

There is a very ancient uncial Gospel fragment in the British Museum. It was discovered in 1934 and is dated about A.D. 140. The fragment includes words from John 5: 39, "Search the scriptures in which ye think that ye have life; these bear . . . witness of me . . ."; and also John 5: 45. The importance of these fragments is that their early date and form put back the date of St. John's Gospel earlier than is generally stated and confirm its genuineness and authorship. Even to-day we may say, read books, the best Book, but "especially the parchments." A good preacher needs to go back of translations and versions to the Hebrew and Greek text of the Word of God, that he may be thoroughly furnished to expound the Word.

We all need Paul's injunction to give more "attendance to reading," and many of us surely should read not only books about the Bible but if possible go back to the parchments and original text.

"Blessed is he that readeth!"

XIV

"BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!"

—JOHN 1: 29, 36.

IF ONE were asked what is the central message of the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, it could be expressed in the words of John the Baptist when he pointed to Jesus at Jordan. The early verses of the third chapter of Luke are remarkable in that they indicate the absolute historicity and reliability of what Luke narrates. He anchors his story of John the Baptist's preaching and the miraculous descending of the Dove on Jesus, God's beloved Son, in secular history. The very details are arresting by their contrast. "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa"—while Herod, Philip, and Lysanias ruled other districts, with notorious Annas and Caiaphas high priests—"the word of God came unto John in the wilderness." Read the lives of these seven "great men" in their day; what a contrast to the life of the greatest preacher born of woman, John the Baptist. They sat on thrones in purple and experienced autocratic power for a few years, to go down in disgrace and shame. Their very memory is cursed or forgotten except in relation to the life of Christ, while John and his

preaching are recorded and familiar to millions who read the gospel in a thousand languages.

The preacher, clad in camel's hair and with a leathern girdle, came in the power of Elijah to preach repentance and remission of sins. The whole of his sermon is given in Luke's Gospel. John's Gospel gives the text. For a generation of vipers, for reprobate Israel, for a false priesthood and corrupt society, there could be no remission of sins without the shedding of blood. Nor can there be for any of us.

John's sermon had a short text illustrated by the picture-book of the Old Testament and illuminated by the history of all religions. One and all declare by the universality of blood-sacrifice that *without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin*: Rome and Greece, India, ancient Egypt, China, and pagan Africa.

John spoke a language every Jew could understand. The Lamb of God, slain before the foundation of the world in His eternal counsel, appears at the very gate of the Lost Paradise. "Jehovah made unto Adam and Eve coats of skin and clothed them." The dawn of conscience came up like thunder, and forgiveness was taught by the first sacrificial lamb. Abel brought the same symbol and was accepted. Noah offered sacrifice, and over that altar was the bow of promise—forgiveness and grace for all humanity. Abraham and Isaac found the inner meaning of surrender and substitution on the heights of Moriah; John 3: 16 interprets the story. The institution of the Passover made the blood of the lamb on each doorpost an everlasting sign to Israel. The five books of Moses have one central theme, an altar of sac-

rifice and atonement by blood that is shed. David's psalm of penitence has as its keynote, "Purge me with [the blood sprinkled by] a hyssop-branch and I shall be clean; wash me [in the blood of the Lamb] and I shall be whiter than snow." The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah reveals its beauty of holiness only when we read it (as he wrote it) under the shadow of Calvary. "Abraham rejoiced to see my day: . . . and was glad." Why and where?

From Genesis to Malachi, those who search the Scriptures find everywhere "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." In the Old Testament, thirteen different Hebrew words are used for lamb, and they occur 196 times. In the New Testament, only two different Greek words are translated lamb. The second one, *arnion*, "dear little lamb," occurs twenty-eight times, mostly of Christ in the Book of Revelation. Paul nowhere uses the word so dear to John, but he and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews base everything on the blood of Calvary—the word of the Cross. Peter, who heard John preach and stood near the Cross on that awful day, writes: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19).

The first word of John's text is a gesture. "Behold!" That is, stop, look, listen! The Cross is the red light of danger or the green light of safety. This is the cruciality of the Cross. To encounter Jesus demands decision. The Cross always stands at the cross-roads. "He that believeth not is condemned already." He that be-

lieves finds eternal life and loses forever the guilt, the stain, the bondage of sin. "O Lamb of God, I come, I come." And after we come, we can tell others the good news, Behold the Lamb of God!

XV

GOOD FRIDAY IN JERUSALEM

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE is one of the many places in the Holy City which brings memories during Holy Week. Its very ancient olive trees and proximity to Jerusalem across the brook Kedron made it a favourite place of resort for Jesus and His disciples. It was on the dreadful night of His betrayal that He sought its shade and isolation (John 18: 2; Luke 22: 39). It is now forever sacred as the scene of His bitter agony.

The present garden site is nearly square and was enclosed with a wall by the Franciscans in 1848. Although there is some doubt that the present garden is exactly on the spot where Jesus knelt in prayer, yet here it is that pilgrims to Jerusalem have for many centuries knelt in silent meditation.

To-day we hear on the radio that Jews and Arabs have broken its walls, built a century ago, and are engaged in bitter conflict over Palestine. While we seek the quiet of church or upper-room to meditate on Good Friday, Jews, Moslems, and Christians live in a city of war and confusion whose walls speak neither of peace nor salvation. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out!"

What will Good Friday bring to Jerusalem this year? Massacre of those who cried, "His blood be on us, and on our children?" Partition and peace for the land of promise? Foreign armies to fight for the international decision? Who can tell?

When Jews, Christians, and Moslems crowd the streets of the Holy City, what is our message and how shall we give it?

What Christians call Good Friday is unknown to the Moslem calendar. In this, as in many other details of doctrine, the affirmations of the Koran are as astonishing as are its denials. The doctrine of the unity of God is the warp and woof of Mohammed's message. Yet in the weaving of this pattern of unity and sovereignty of Allah there are strange, golden threads that tell of Allah's Word and Allah's Spirit, and indicate Christian influence.

One would not expect reference to the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection, as the three red-letter days of Christendom (Advent, Good Friday, and Easter), in a book so outspoken in its denial of Christ's Sonship, His death on the cross and His resurrection as is the Koran. But in the account of the miraculous birth of Jesus from a virgin (Surah 19: 15-34) we have astonishing words from the lips of the infant Jesus. When Mary to justify herself, "pointed to him and they said, How are we to speak with one who is in the cradle a child? He said, 'Verily I am a servant of God; He has brought me the Book and He has made me a prophet, and He has made me blessed wherever I be; and He has required of me prayer and almsgiving so long as I live

and piety toward my mother, and has not made me a miserable tyrant: and peace upon me the day I was born, and the day I die and the day I shall be raised up alive.' That is Jesus the son of Mary—by the word of truth whereon ye do dispute." The three days mentioned are indeed days of peace in the gospel record. When Jesus was born the angels sang of peace on earth; and prophecy declared Him the Prince of Peace. In His death we have peace with God through the blood of the Cross (Rom. 5: 1; Eph. 2: 14). And after His resurrection it was Christ who gave the disciples the symbol and the seal of His peace (John 20: 19-26; Luke 24: 36). The basic message of the Incarnation, of the Atonement, and of the Resurrection morning is peace with God. In this threefold sense Jesus Christ is indeed the Prince of Peace from the day He was born, the day He died, and the day He arose from the dead.

Good Friday is the central day of these three. For the Incarnation was in order to atone, and the Atonement was vindicated and glorified by the Resurrection. Thus from apostolic days and for nineteen centuries the Cross became the central message, the symbol, and the cynosure of ecumenic Christianity.

To all who profess and call themselves Christians this is the message of Good Friday. The Cross of Christ is the searchlight of God. It reveals God's love and man's sin, God's power and man's helplessness, God's holiness and man's pollution. As the altar and propitiation are first of all in the Old Testament, so the Cross and the Atonement are first of all in the New. There is a straight line from every point in the circumfer-

ence of a circle to the center. So the Old Testament and the New Testament doctrine of salvation in all its wide circumference, and with all it includes of a new heart and a new society and a new heaven and a new earth, lead back in a straight line to the center of all—the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world.

XVI

DEAD SAINTS OR THE LIVING SAVIOUR

THOSE WHO deny the bodily resurrection of our Saviour from the dead put Christianity on the level of Islam and pagan religion. Across the map of the world there are everywhere tombs of “holy men,” saints, and prophets which have become shrines of worship and centres of pilgrimages. It is heartbreaking to witness the devotion of despair at the shrines of saints where to-day thousands seek healing; at the tombs of Mohammed and Ali and that of Mulai Idris in Fez, Morocco. During many centuries men, women, and little children have crowded in fruitless pilgrimage to such places for healing of soul and body. I can hear their cry as I heard it in Arabia and Egypt and North Africa: “*Ya Mohammed, ya Fatima, ya 'Ali, ya Idris!*” But, as with the worshippers of Baal on Carmel, there was no voice and no answer.

The glory of the empty tomb on Easter morning was the fact that it was empty. “He is not here,” said the angel, “He is risen, . . . come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

Prophets, saints, apostles, martyrs are found in all

religions and also in the Christian annals. But only One arose from the dead and is alive for evermore. Our missionaries call men everywhere from saint-worship to the living Saviour, from dead relics and tombs and idols to the living God who sent His Son from heaven to die for sin and arise victor over death. Do we realise the vital issue? If Christ be not risen we are in no better state than Moslems, Hindus, or Buddhists. We cry for help to the dead, we expect salvation from a tomb, we hope for help from corpses turned to dust. If we do not believe the Gospels and have not experienced the power of Christ's resurrection we may have a form of Christianity but we are not Christians. The New Testament was not written by men who believed that Jesus of Nazareth remained in the tomb as a martyr to truth. If Jesus was only a remarkable Jewish teacher—"the crown of Judaism," as one modern Rabbi calls Him—His death becomes a mere tragic martyrdom. But this is not the teaching of the New Testament. Read the story once more, for example, in Luke's Gospel. In the manger of Bethlehem the Son of God came to be one of us. The Word was made flesh. On the Cross He died for us and paid our debt with His precious blood. By the Resurrection He gave Himself to us and ever liveth to make intercession. He ascended to His Father and shall come again at the last.

The glory of the Resurrection differs from the glory of the Incarnation and the glory of the Cross. No mortal has shared or can share in the glory of the Manger or of the Cross. But all who believe in Christ as Saviour and Lord will share in the glory of His resurrection.

How can we be silent when we know such a living Saviour? How can we fail to tell the story of the resurrection to Moslems and pagans, who worship dead saints and seek salvation from human intercessors?

XVII

AN HOLY PRIESTHOOD

Ye also . . . are . . . an holy priesthood

—1 PETER 2: 5.

THIS IS the title Peter gives to all true believers. Now, there were holy priests in the Old Testament, but also those who were unholy. The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were bad sons of an indulgent father, and perhaps the doubtful saying about sons of ministers going to the bad started with them. Dishonest, irreverent, sensual, self-servers, the two sons of Eli, the priest, were a disgrace to their father and to Israel. It is well to remember, when we read the story, that it is sober history and has a New Testament lesson for us all. The story is true to fact, and the facts are like Rembrandt's painting in their sharp contrast of light and shade.

Against the dark background of these sons of Belial we have the beautiful picture of a priestly mother and father, Hannah and Elkanah, with their lovely lad Samuel. All three were priestly souls. They knew what real sacrifice meant; they loved the house of God, and their prayers ascended as sweet incense. The priestly function, now as then, does not depend on lineage, ordination, or an amiable disposition, but on a new heart, a

sterling character, consciousness of vocation, and spiritual gifts.

Melchisedek is the first priest mentioned in the Bible. In Genesis, in Psalm 110, and in Hebrews we learn that he was indeed a true priest of God and therefore a type of our great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

The functions of the priestly office in the Old Testament were threefold. The priest represented the people before God by intercession; he offered sacrifice, and he pronounced the divine benediction. Such was the holy office of Aaron and his sons. Theirs was the sacred service of the tabernacle and the temple, with all their marvellous symbolism and types of our Saviour. But corruption of the best became the worst when love of gain, greed of power, and lying lips prostituted the priestly office.

It was the prophets who indicted the priests, beginning with Samuel and ending with Jesus Christ in His sevenfold woe on the scribes and priests. Annas and Caiaphas condemned, betrayed, and crucified Jesus of Nazareth. The story of the Jewish priesthood from David's time to Malachi is one of deterioration. Against such priests, Isaiah (1: 11), Jeremiah (7: 21-23), Amos (5: 21-27), and Hosea (3: 4, 5) lift their voices. It is not against the sacrificial ritual but its profanation that they cry out with indignation. The priests' trampling of God's courts, their new moons and sabbaths, their solemn meetings, yea, their very prayers were polluted by unholy living. So says Isaiah. And Micah echoes the rebuke of God to Eli when he cries: "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to

love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" But the altar of sacrifice continued.

Jesus of Nazareth cleansing the Temple by driving out those who made it a den of thieves, Savonarola thundering against the corrupt selfishness of the Roman clergy in Florence, Luther stigmatizing the papal indulgences as blasphemy—all are illustrations of how in the long history of Christianity the prophets have called the priests to account. John Wesley, in his day, also had his protest.

Since the Reformation the New Testament teaching that all true believers are priests has come to its own. Every parent is in a sense a priest in the home. Every godly Sunday-school teacher is a priest to his pupils. The universal priesthood of believers is taught by Paul in his epistles and by John in Revelation, where the saints in glory sing:

"Worthy art thou . . . for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests" (Rev. 5: 9, 10 R.V.).

What a priesthood! And how universal and all-embracing is the company in that Hallelujah Chorus: "Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins . . . to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (Rev. 1: 6 R.V.).

That is our high calling—to be priests unto God. To offer up ourselves a living sacrifice, to pray for others, to bless others with pure lips and consistent lives. The

story of Eli should teach us also not "to tremble for the ark of God." God will take care of His ark if we do not profane His sanctuary. As Dr. Robertson Smith put it, "The ark had ceased to be a shrine of the living, revealing Word of God and had become a fetish, an idol carried as if by its power it could assist the Church in its war against the Philistines." Even a Protestant church may have its idols!

The priestly function of every believer is best learned from the daily life and the prayers of Jesus in the days of His flesh. As He walked, we should walk. As He prayed, we should pray.

Was there ever a more priestly sacrifice than that of Hannah when she brought the child Samuel to the house of Jehovah in Shiloh? "For this child I prayed; and Jehovah hath given me my petition which I asked of him; therefore also I have granted him to Jehovah, as long as he liveth." Hannah's beautiful priestly prayer on that occasion was the model for Mary's *Magnificat*. And then we read (1 Sam. 2: 19) that she came from year to year to bring her boy "a little robe" and to offer the sacrifice. Do we bring our children to Christ to-day?

Amy Carmichael has lifted the veil to show the horrors of temple prostitution in India. Missionaries in Iran and Iraq tell of the Moslem Shiah clergy who arrange temporary marriages in the holy cities. What a comfort it is that every Christian and every minister of the gospel can plead the sacrifice of Calvary and the story of the restoration of Peter by Jesus at the Lake!

The most perfect description of the priestly office

was given by George Herbert (1593-1633) in his *Rules for the Life of a Country Parson*. If you have never read it, there is a treat in store for you. He describes the ideal priest: his praying, preaching, courtesy, charity, and daily life. He tells what a priest (parson) should be in his church, on journeys, at catechising the young, comforting the aged, and burying the dead. There are chapters on the parson in mirth, in his library, with his church wardens, or in restoring those who have backslidden. It is an old-fashioned book, but good for our day.

XVIII

ORIENTATION

The Sun of righteousness . . . with healing in his wings.

—MALACHI 4: 2.

THE OLD TESTAMENT closes with dreamings of the dawn, even as it opens with "a garden eastward in Eden," man's first Paradise. Not only among early Christians but in every part of the world and among many tribes and peoples, worshippers have turned to the rising sun and faced eastward in their rituals. From this custom is derived the word orientation. The early Christian churches were built so that the chancel, or sanctuary, was in an eastward direction; and burial of the dead in all Christendom seems to reflect this ancient custom, for the position of a corpse is that the head is toward the west and the feet toward the east.

At Stonehenge near Salisbury in England is a vivid proof of how early our ancestors turned toward the rising sun in their pagan worship. Stonehenge is the most important ancient ruin in the British Isles. It goes back to the days of the Druids and consists of two circles of large stone slabs with broken lintels. The outer circle has a diameter of over one hundred feet. The largest upright slab is twenty-two feet in height. There are

two theories regarding the origin of this very ancient shrine. It was either for sepulchral use or for sun-worship.

When I visited Stonehenge in 1938 I secured a rare photograph. It was taken at 4:00 A.M. on June 21; that is exactly the summer solstice. So the rising sun shines exactly through the aperture of the eastward columns toward the centre of the ancient temple. The great pyramid of Egypt has its orientation exactly in accord with the astronomical position of certain stars and the rising sun. In Mesopotamia and in Mayan shrines of Central America, even as at Stonehenge, entrances to temples were designed to point toward the East; so also in Rome and Greece. In Jewish synagogues to-day the *haikal* or receptacle for the sacred Torah (Pentateuch) is at the eastern end of the building. Mohammed at first prayed toward Jerusalem, as did the Jews in Arabia, but afterward at Medina turned his back to Jerusalem and made Mecca the *qibla* or the orientation for daily prayers.

As homing pigeons speed their way across land and water with unerring instinct and by a law that baffles scientific investigation, so the soul of man seeks God. "Thou hast made us for Thyself," said St. Augustine, "and our souls find no rest until they rest in Thee." Heaven is the home of the soul and thither its orientation. "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest," cried the Psalmist (55: 6). As Hafiz, the Persian poet, puts it:

"My soul like a homing bird yearning for Paradise
Shall rise and soar, from the snares of the world set free.

When the voice of Thy love shall call me to be Thy
slave
I shall rise to a greater far than mastery
Of life and the living, time and the mortal span."

Daniel in captivity prayed with "his windows . . . open toward Jerusalem." His orientation may teach us when we pray to look toward the New Jerusalem and the rising of "the Sun of righteousness . . . with healing in his wings." That is the last Messianic promise in the Old Testament, and, in a sense, the greatest. It compares the coming Messiah with the centre of the solar system, source of light, life, and power.

In seminary days, our senior professor, Dr. Samuel M. Woodridge, preached his famous astronomical sermon on that text. I recall its divisions: 1. In what respects does Jesus of Nazareth resemble the rising sun in its glory? 2. In what respects does this metaphor fall short of reality? The climax of the sermon was a description of night, with endless, bitter, polar winter, on the most distant and lifeless planet Uranus. Then spreading his hands, Dr. Woodridge exclaimed, "But *He* is able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him." Hallelujah, what a Saviour! "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." Would that all Christians everywhere and always oriented their lives by His!

as a matchless illustration of the wisdom, goodness, and power of God, and to draw a lesson in theology from the solitary habitant of that desert where Moses and Paul were taught by the Almighty.

As a teleological argument for the existence of God, the Orient furnishes no better illustration, because none is more common. The camel is found in Arabia, Persia, Asia Minor, Afghanistan, Beluchistan, Mongolia, Western China, and Northern India, as well as in Syria, Turkey, North Africa, and parts of Spain. The camel is known by the same root-word in nearly all these lands; scarcely a page of an Arabic lexicon but has reference to the camel; the language itself, according to Hammer Purgstall, know him by 5,744 names! The only reason why Scripture is comparatively silent is because the topography of the Holy Land is such that in most parts the use of camels is an impossibility.

In considering adaptations and design in the camel, the multitudes of illustrations are bewildering. There is no variety or part of the animal, no characteristic of his habitat or history which does not show in some way God's wisdom and goodness, proving the Arab saying: "The camel is the greatest of all blessings given by Allah to mankind." The two main distinguished species, among its hundreds of varieties, are the Southern, Arabian one-humped camel, and the Northern, Bactrian two-humped camel. Each is especially adapted to its locality. The Bactrian camel is long-haired, tolerant of the intense cold of the steppes, and is said to eat snow when thirsty. The Arabian species is short-haired, intolerant of cold, but able to endure extreme heat. The

XIX

WHY DID GOD CREATE THE CAMEL?

THERE IS an Arab tradition cited in Burton's *Gold Mines of Midian* regarding the creation of the camel which illustrates the popular but erroneous opinion that this animal is ugly in form and temper.

The story goes that when Allah determined to create the horse He called the South Wind and said, "I desire to draw from thee a new being, condense thyself by parting with thy fluidity." The Creator then took a handful of this element, blew on it the breath of life, and the noble quadruped appeared. But the horse complained against his Maker. His neck was too short to reach the distant grass blades on the march; his back had no hump to steady a saddle; his hooves were sharp and sank deep into the sand; and he added many similar grievances. Whereupon Allah created the camel to prove the foolishness of his complaint. The horse shuddered at the sight of what he wanted to become, and this is the reason every horse starts when meeting its caricature for the first time.

Without detracting from the superiority of the horse in beauty and grace, it is possible to use the camel

limbs and the structure of the foot differ also in each, to conform to desert caravan paths in the one case, and to mountain trails and passes in the other.

Apart from differences in species, to enumerate the parts of the camel is to catalogue instances of evident design: His long neck, giving wide range of vision in desert marches and enabling him to reach far to the meagre desert shrubs on either side of his pathway. The cartilaginous texture of his mouth enabling him to eat hard and thorny plants—the pasture of the desert. Ears very small, and nostrils large for breathing, but also especially capable of closure by valve-like folds against the fearful simoon. Eyes prominent, but protected by a heavy overhanging upper lid, limiting vision upward and guarding from the direct rays of the noon sun. Cushioned feet peculiarly adapted for ease of the rider and the animal alike. Five horny pads to rest on when kneeling for burden or repose on the hot sand. His hump,—not a fictional, but a *real*, and acknowledged reserve store of nutriment as well as nature's pack-saddle for the commerce of ages. Have you ever thought of the relation between your morning cup of Mocha and the hump of a camel in Yemen? His water reservoirs in connection with the stomach—not as in the Occidental Arabian Nights for thirsty travellers!—but for the animal himself, and enabling him when in good condition to travel for five days without water.

Again, the camel alone of all ruminants, has incisor teeth in the upper jaw, which, with the peculiar structure of his other teeth, make his bite, the animal's first and main defence, most formidable. The skeleton of the

camel is full of proofs of design. Notice, for example, the arched backbone constructed in such a way as to sustain the greatest weight in proportion to the span of the supports; a strong camel can bear one thousand pounds' weight, although the usual load in Yemen is not more than six hundred pounds.

In addition to all these adaptations, enumerated but not described, every product of the camel equally illustrates our subject. The sole support and the only wealth of a large desert population near the cradle of the human race, all that can be obtained from the animal is of value. Fuel, milk, excellent hair for tents, ropes, shawls, and coarser fabrics are obtained from the living animal; and flesh food, leather, bones, and other useful substances from the carcass. Even the footprints of the camel, though soon obliterated, are of especial value in the desert. A lighter or smaller foot would leave no tracks, but the camel's foot leaves data for the Bedouin science of *Athār*—a sort of navigation for the ship of the desert. Camel tracks are gossip and science, history and philosophy to the Arab caravan.

Is it not also remarkable that although many diseases attack the camel, none, according to Burckhardt, are epidemic? Thus has Providence prevented the sudden impoverishment of those who without the camel would suffer starvation.

The relation of the camel to the history of civilization affords no less proof of a wonderful designer. Who that has read the history of Arabia before Islam has not received new ideas of the importance of the caravan routes of Arabia to the commerce and wealth of the

Eastern Empire in its greatest glory. The ships of the desert, bearing the "wealth of Ormuz and of Ind," were to the city of Constantine what the Adriatic fleets were to Venice and the North Sea skippers to the Netherlands in the time of their supremacy.

Van Lennep, speaking of the camel, says in regard to this, "Vast barren tracts extend in several directions from the cradle of our race by which one would suppose mankind would have remained shut up within the boundaries of the land they first occupied. But as the sea, though apparently destined to separate the nations of the earth, has yet been the pathway to bring them together, so this animal was provided to enable men to traverse these dreary wastes."

Such are a few gathered illustrations of design from the camel. Would you have more, *study* the animal at your next opportunity; if not in the caravan march and the evening encampment, then (but, oh, how fallen!) in the zoological garden or menagerie. Is it a wonder that the meditative youth who led the camels of Khadijah along the desert way from Mecca to Syria, should conclude, "There is no god but God," and appeal to unbelievers, (Surah 88: 17), "*Do ye not look then at the camel, how she is created?*"

XX

WHAT DID PAUL DO IN ARABIA?

"A VEIL of thick darkness," says Lightfoot, "hangs over St. Paul's visit to Arabia. Only one passage of Scripture states that the Apostle visited Arabia, and even there we are left to imagine all else except the undoubted fact of his visit. The particular part of Arabia visited, the length of his stay, the motive of his going, the route taken and what he did there—all is left untold." We can draw the map and tell the story of all but the first great journey of the Apostle to the Gentiles. Commentators were not satisfied to leave all these questions unsolved, and certainly the first journey of the new Saul of Tarsus cannot have been the least important or without some great purpose.

The probable length of his stay, which is by some put at only six months but which may have been two years (cf. Gal. 1: 18; Acts 9: 25; 9: 9), would also indicate some importance in the event. Visions and revelations to the Elijah and Moses of the new dispensation there may have been while he tarried in the desert, but it is scarcely probable to suppose that at this critical juncture in Early Church history, so long a time should have been occupied with these only.

Therefore, we find the earliest commentators of opinion that Paul's visit to Arabia was his first missionary journey, and that he "conferred not with flesh and blood" but went into Arabia to preach the gospel. "See how fervent was his soul," says Chrysostom, "he was eager to occupy lands yet untilled, he forthwith attacked a barbarous and savage people, choosing a life of conflict and much toil." Many others, including Hilary, Jerome, Theodoret and the Cœcumenian commentators are stated by Rawlinson (*St. Paul in Damascus and Arabia*, pp. 128) to hold the same opinion. Porter, not alone of modern writers, puts forth the same view in his *Five Years in Damascus* and supposes that Paul's success was great enough to provoke the hostility of Aretas and make him join the later persecution. The idea that Paul went to preach immediately after his conversion is natural; and that he should, as the Gentile Apostle, seek first that race which was also a son of Abraham and heir of many Old Testament promises and whose representatives were present at Pentecost, is not improbable.

Two objections, however, are made to this "preaching theory," as it is called by the commentators who follow the "forty-days-in-the-wilderness" school. They ask, "How could Paul anticipate the revelation made to Peter by offering the gospel to the Gentiles when the admissibility of Gentiles to the church was a thing as yet unsuspected?" (Rawlinson). But they forget that Paul received his commission direct from heaven and that it was to those very Gentiles whose admissibility was a thing unsuspected. It was just because Paul did not confer with these unsuspecting "flesh and blood" Apos-

tles of Jerusalem that he went into Arabia in obedience to a higher commission. Moreover, we are told that Paul disputed boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus with the Grecians (Acts 9: 29), and this also antedated Peter's vision.

The second reason given is more plausible, being based on Acts 26: 20 where we read: "I showed first unto them of Damascus that they should repent and turn to God." Therefore, they say Damascus was the first place where Paul preached and this was after he went to Arabia, for he went there (Gal. 1: 16) immediately." But this reason does not hold if we examine the Greek text or even other versions than the English, for it is evident that "immediately" does not qualify, necessarily or naturally, the verb "went" but the clause "conferred not with flesh and blood" and that, therefore, it has rather a logical than a temporal significance. In fact, the whole argument is answered because it proves too much (see Acts 26: 20 and 9: 20). The "straitway" of Acts 9: 20 is the very same in Greek as "immediately" of Galatians 1: 15. If the latter passage in conjunction with Acts 26: 20 proves that Paul did not preach until he came back to Damascus (Rawlinson), the former proves that he did not go to Arabia at all, but preached after the scales fell from his eyes in Damascus, until he escaped over the wall to Jerusalem! Granted, therefore, that Paul went to Arabia to preach the gospel—and this **does** not exclude a time of visions and revelations—where and to whom did he go?

A *certain* reply to these questions is unattainable, since revelation is silent, but we can seek probable an-

swers: (a) The place was most probably the Sinaitic peninsula or the region east of Sinai (Rawlinson). (b) There is more than one reason to hold with Jerome and later writers that he went to a tribe where his mission was unsuccessful as regards visible results. (c) The only people of the desert then, as now, were Arab Bedouin and of the probability that Paul also knew their life and customs Robertson Smith gives a curious illustration of an allusion in Galatians 6: 17, when, speaking of tattoo marks in religion (*Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 214). Now was there an Arab tribe in the days of Paul, in the region southwest of Damascus, to whom a missionary came with a new and strange message which was not favorably received, and yet whom and whose message those Arabs could not forget? We find a curious legend taken up with other nomad debris into the maelstrom of Mohammed's mutterings that may answer the question. It is about the Nebi Salih or "good prophet," who came to the people of Thamud (Koran, Surah 7: 71 ff) and whose person and mission is as much a mystery to Moslem commentators as Paul's visit to Arabia is to us. European critics suggest to identify him with Salah of Genesis 11: 13! but etymology and chronology both afford the most meagre basis. Palmer offers a theory, not without reasons, that Nebi Salih is none other than the "righteous prophet" Moses (*Desert of the Exodus*, p. 50); the only difficulty is that this puts the legend too far back in history. It is not probable that the people of Thamud "hewed out mountains into houses," such as are found to-day, as early as the days of Moses. Nor does Old Testament history in-

dicating a time when Moses went on a mission to Arabs with a Divine message. Moreover, the legend is evidently a *local* one that came to the knowledge of Mohammed or it would have been better known to him who borrowed so largely from the former prophets; and if it is a *local* legend, it is not a legend of Moses, for he is mentioned more than seventy-seven times in the Koran and his story was well known in Arabia, at least as far as Yemen. Palmer makes too much of the *camel* story. That the proud unbelievers hamstrung the prophet's camel and that an earthquake was sent to punish them are later additions, like so much else that is fanciful in the Koran. The pith of the legend underlies the bark. What says the Koran? Nebi Salih came as a "brother" (cf. Acts 17: 26) and said, "O my people, worship God. Ye have no God but him [Acts 17: 29]. There has come to you an evident sign from your Lord [cf. Acts 17: 31]. . . . And remember how He made you vice-regents after 'Ad, and established you in the earth . . . and remember the benefit of God" [Acts 17: 25]. "Said the chiefs of those who were big with pride *from amongst his people* [Pharisees or Jews from Damascus?] to those who believed amongst them: Do ye know that Salih is sent from his Lord? [i.e., his Lord is not your true God]. They said, We do believe in that with which He is sent," [i.e., gospel?]. "Said those who were big with pride, Verily, in what ye do believe we disbelieve." Here follows the tale of the she-camel, but the close of the passage is again very significant. "And he turned away from them [back to Damascus?] and said, O, my people, I did preach unto you the message of my Lord

[cf. Acts 20: 20, 27], and I gave you good advice, but ye love not sincere advisers.”

Does not the story have points of contact with what we might imagine would be the experiences of a man like Paul among such a people?

The fact that there is a so-called tomb of Nebi Salih at El Watiyeh (Palmer) does not weigh much for or against any theory as to the identity of the prophet. Arabia has tombs of Job on the upper Euphrates, of Eve at Jeddah, of Cain at Aden, and of other “prophets” where there is a demand for it. But it is interesting to learn, in conclusion, from the learned author of *The Desert of the Exodus*: “The origin and history of Nebi Salih is quite unknown to the present Bedouin inhabitants, but they, nevertheless, regard him with more national veneration than even Moses himself.” If revered more than Moses, why was not Salih *later* than Moses—*greater* than Moses—even Saul of Tarsus?

MISSIONS

XXI

PAUL'S FAR HORIZONS

NOTHING IN the character of the Apostle Paul is more astonishing than the breadth of his vision, the wideness of his program, and the greatness of his loving heart. By a new creation Saul the Jew, with his Pharisaic prejudice and nationalistic limitations, became Paul the Apostle to the Roman Empire. His spiritual biography was the growth of a narrow soul into the measure of the stature of the fullness of his Master, Jesus Christ, in whom there was neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, Roman nor barbarian. The middle walls of partition were all broken down—and if not, Paul would break through them. “Who maketh thee to differ?” he cried. “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” “None of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.” Such categories of thought were not only startling to Paul’s contemporaries, they were revolutionary.

From the height of the imperial city—where no stone walls could make a prison for his soul—Paul the dauntless scans the whole horizon of life, things past and things to come, the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant, his fellow workers, some faithful

and some faithless, and the distant vision of the Eternal City and the fadeless crown.

From the same imperial city only yesterday Benito Mussolini, once the statesman and dictator of an awakening nation, in early life an itinerant workman and a socialist editor, summed up the world situation. We quote from a story of his life:

“There are three great empires which to-day form the tripod of humanity. There is the British Empire, which still possesses lands, but to all appearances has lost its leading idea; the Russian, which has an idea and is seeking lands for itself in East and West; and the Christian, which no longer has any land, but an idea in which 400,000,000 persons scattered over the whole earth are agreed. Of these three, the little ship of the divine Hebrew, Jesus, still floats better than any other on the stormy waves of history. . . .”

The present world situation calls for earnest thought. It is no time for men to seek their ease, or rest on their laurels. We still need Paul's admonition to be sober in all things, to suffer hardship, to be on the job as an evangelist, and to fight the good fight.

The good fight must go on until all the world hears and the message is fully proclaimed at any cost. Alone and in prison, Paul thought not of surrender but of world conquest. The two empires were already engaged in a death struggle and Paul knew which was to win. “In real life,” said an eminent preacher, “Nero sits on the throne and Paul languishes in prison and many years must pass before people begin calling their dogs

Nero and their sons Paul. But that time comes. As God lives, that time always comes.”

In the Church Militant there is no substitute for the missionary passion. When the Church ceases to evangelize, she ceases to grow and to glow. With a world vision, what fierce loyalty to the truth, what unflinching love for humanity, and what sacrificial service appear in the life and epistles of this world citizen of the first century!

There are still colossal evils to overcome, gross injustices to combat, and lost provinces to win for the King. In the spiritual warfare of the Church, pacifism is treason. Paul had his opinion of Demas and of Alexander the coppersmith. The Lord will render to them according to their works. The Christian religion never could have been started on the kind of loyalty many people give it to-day.

One reason for the slump in missions is the slump in faith. We have lost in intensity although we have gained in extensity. If we keep the quality of apostolic faith God will take care of its quantity. In prison and out, Paul kept the faith. Many in our day and in our churches are losing it. Paul believed that Jesus Christ was the only Saviour. Do you? He believed that Christ was sufficient for all the world's desperate needs. Do you? Paul felt the urgency of his task and his mission. Many times he bids his colleagues make haste; to be urgent in season and out of season. His gospel was Christ, Christ who existed from all eternity. Christ, manifested in time, in the days of His flesh. Christ, risen, ascended, glorified, and soon to return as judge

of the living and the dead. When men believe this, they can no longer sit still nor keep still.

Paul's faith was not static, but dynamic; not retrogressive, but progressive; not blind acceptance, but reasonable demonstration based on evidence. Paul's letter to Timothy, asking him to bring to him the "books, but especially the parchments," contains a human touch—like William Tyndale from the damp cells of Vilvorde in the winter before his death, asking "for Jesus' sake for a warmer cap, something to patch my leggings, a woolen shirt, and above all my Hebrew Bible, grammar, and dictionary." Above all, Paul and Tyndale desired to study again and again the sources, the evidences of their faith. What we need to-day is to get away from newspaper-and-magazine religion to source-books—the New Testament.

Finally, we notice that Paul's horizon stretched far beyond the widest reaches of the Old Testament revelation, beyond the bounds of the Roman Empire and of time, to the eternal city, the heavenly kingdom, and the crown of righteousness. The time of his departure has come. The ship is loosed from her moorings and is about to cross the bar. Paul knows he will meet his pilot face to face, with "all men also that love his appearing." The cloak, the books, the parchments, the Roman prison, and the Roman Empire—all these things that are seen and can be handled are, after all, temporal. The glory that awaits is eternal. The great cloud of witnesses beckons him to higher service and the reward of his faithful toil. He has a great desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Are you ever homesick

for heaven? Do you ever gaze on the far horizon of Beulah Land? What a man sees, seizes him. The earthly house of our tabernacle will soon dissolve. What shall it profit to gain the whole world and lose one's soul?

"The angels from their thrones on high
Look down on us, with wondering eye,
That where we are but passing guests
We build such strong and solid nests,
And where we hope to stay for aye—
We scarce take pains one stone to lay."

Before Paul died he had filled the world of his day with the message of Christ, and since then his thirteen epistles have been translated into more than six hundred languages. We, too, are ambassadors of the Conqueror of Death, the immortal King of Glory. Our gospel concerns eternity and is, therefore, of infinite value. All our institutions, organizations, equipment, and methods are only a means to an end—the scaffolding for the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

All social service has its place and its power in a world of suffering; but nothing can so appeal to the individual as the gospel of the Resurrection. This, indeed, is our missionary message, as it was Paul's; the everlasting gospel of One who came, who died, who rose, who ascended, and who is destined to universal dominion. From Bethlehem and Calvary, from the empty tomb, and from the clouds that hide Him from view there streams the light of eternity.

XXII

THE GLORY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

"THE WORD *impossible*," said Napoleon, "is found only in the dictionaries of fools." But it is used in the Bible.

"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19: 26).

"Nothing shall be impossible to you" (Matt. 17: 20).

"The things which are impossible with man are possible with God" (Luke 18: 27).

The history of geographical exploration has in it the glory of the impossible. The penetration of South-east Arabia by St. John Philby and Bertram Thomas—what a story of intrepid courage!

The fourfold attempt to reach the unconquered heights of Kanchenjunga (where Mallory and Irvine met death in 1924), with its virgin snows, 29,500 feet high, ended not in defeat but in the glory of triumphant failure. Again men will try. As Toyohiko Kagawa said, "If you are willing to die for it, there is nothing you cannot accomplish."

The discovery of the North and South Poles only stimulated other discoveries. Piccard's ascent into the stratosphere was followed by Beebe's penetration one-half mile downwards into the depths of the sea. They

revealed two vast unexplored worlds—one above the highest clouds and the other in the depths of the abyss. Science will not rest until she has conquered both.

Warriors, too, have shared the glory of the impossible, and their heroism has been the inspiration of many generations.

It stirs our spirit of heroism to read of scientists, explorers, and warriors who one and all experienced the glory of the impossible. The spirit of man is the candle of Jehovah. "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels . . . crowned him with glory and honour . . . thou hast put all things under his feet."

It is, however, in the realms of the spiritual that we see the real glory of the impossible. Eleven disciples on Mount Olivet—ignorant, unlearned, feeble in faith, faltering in trust—"When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted." And to *them* came the great commission. In less than half a century Paul had drawn the great ellipse of a new kingdom across the old Roman Empire with its foci at Antioch and Rome. It is in the spiritual realm and among Christians that we see the glory of the impossible, century after century, in every continent and island. They remembered Christ's words: "All things are possible to him that believeth."

The most impossible of missionary problems is the evangelization of the world of Islam.

The Laymen's Appraisal Committee in *Re-Thinking Missions* made slight reference to Mohammed and Mohammedanism. Only ten lines of type in the whole volume—and they say they believe "The strength of

Islam is waning," and even where it exists, it is "rather an ally than a foe in the arena of truth." No judgement could be more superficial and false. In the evangelization of the Moslem world we face a task humanly impossible. And Islam has never proved an ally to the truth of the Gospel.

Re-think its colossal dimensions and ever-expanding area; the baffling fact that Islam is the only religion that has defeated Christianity and eclipsed it; its categorical denial of all that makes Christianity Christian; its arrogant defiance and the closed doors in Moslem lands.

And this great system of Arabian monotheism eclipsed Christianity in Asia from the seventh until the fourteenth century. The story of this conquest was recently told by Laurence E. Browne. Islam is the only great religion that came after Christianity and yet defeated and well-nigh destroyed it in Central Asia, in Arabia, Persia, Syria, Egypt, North Africa—even in Palestine, the land of its birth. Churches became mosques. Bishoprics became provinces that paid tribute. The Arab civilization wrote its Mohammedan palimpsest over the Christian tradition. Mohammed's name was exalted above every name. Armenians, Nestorians, Syrians, Copts, and Berbers were persecuted, and country after country passed over to Islam until the remnant of the faithful became, like Samson with eyes blinded, grinding in the prison house of the Philistines! This is the tragic history of Oriental churches!

The impossibility of this problem appears also when we ask what Islam really is. A colossal system of

anti-Christian theism; a threefold cord not easily broken. It has in it Arabian pagan pride of language, race, and culture; a strand of Jewish fanaticism, of Semitic intolerance; and it also has a Christian universalism that seeks world dominion and expansion.

Consider again other elements in this faith. The strength of its short creed; the very words sound like a defiant battle cry. The solidarity of its fellowship; the pilgrimage to Mecca every year. Yes, in spite of all diversity, Islam is marked by a strange solidarity in its denials and its defiance of Christianity in every land where they come in contact.

It has meant, therefore, not only the eclipse of the churches but of the Christ. His incarnation, His atonement, His resurrection, His finality as Lord and Saviour are contradicted by the Koran; and His character and ethics, by the life and character of Mohammed.

Al Azhar University has secured government credit to propagate Islam in America, China, and Japan. The Moslems of North India are raising funds for "the reconquest of Spain" as Moslem territory. Moslems of the Ahmediyya sect have built mosques in Berlin, London, and Chicago, and are circulating new lives of Mohammed in English, Turkish, Albanian, Polish, Italian, Javanese, Malay, Dutch, Chinese, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, and other languages. They claim to have published seventy million pages of this literature. In this country they have a Chicago monthly called *Moslem Sunrise*.

Not only is this religion defiant of Christianity in its creed and propaganda, but the old law of apostasy,

still in force in many lands, has made visible results meagre, and the battle for truth is a fight against the wall. One of the saintliest of missionaries, Miss Lilius Trotter, of North Africa, wrote just before her death:

“We who are engaged in Moslem work live in a land of blighted promises. That is a fact that none of us who love its people best can deny; and the deadly heart sickness of hope deferred sometimes makes even the most optimistic of us almost despair of seeing abiding fruitage to the work.”

Look at the actual situation. Think of the thin red line, Christ's vanguard, His lonely sentinels. In Egypt, eighty years of unremitting sacrificial toil by the noblest of men and women, yet scarcely 500 Moslem converts in all Egypt to-day!

In Arabia, fifty years of pioneer effort against prejudice, loneliness, and a deadly climate—hospitals, schools, evangelism, toil, tears, and blood, but only a handful of Christians.

North Africa, which once boasted Augustine, Athanasius, Cyprian, Tertullian, thousands of churches and scores of bishoprics, now counts scarcely a single organized Christian community. One missionary stationed in all of Tripoli keeping lonely vigil; none in all of Western Arabia; three little stations in all Central Asia; a few waiting wistfully on the borders of Afghanistan. Two or three have actually penetrated and returned. They are fighting and facing fearful odds but remain undiscouraged.

“More than half beaten but fearless,
Facing the storm and the night.”

Theirs is the glory of the impossible. None of them would exchange places with us because they are confident of the issue. They see the invisible, lay hold of the intangible, hear the inaudible voices.

Watchman, what of the night? The morning cometh, but also the night. With men, this problem of Islam seems impossible, but not with God. The Roman Catholic Church recently published a most interesting series of studies on the psychology of conversion in the foreign field. The last chapter was entitled “*Le bloc inconvertissable—les Mussulmans!*” Presbyterian missionaries have never adopted this slogan. So in Iran they are gathering a harvest of converts and in Java there are organized churches of Moslem converts. There may be new opposition, but there is also a new responsiveness to the gospel.

Doors once barred and bolted are now opening. Ibn Sa'ud has given repeated invitation to medical missionaries to visit his capital and Taif. Mr. Irwin, of Meshed, crossed over into Afghanistan and preached the gospel to the Mullahs of Herat. An Afghan Moslem, educated in England, writes a book entitled *Lights of Asia* and pays high tribute to evangelical Christianity! That is the glory of the impossible! We say Afghanistan is closed, and from within comes this voice! All economic, social, and political changes, of which we hear so much, are negligible factors compared with such a work of the Holy Spirit.

The pent-up energies of unanswered prayer; the

faith of those who saw the invisible before they fell asleep; the promises of God's Word; the working of His Spirit to-day—all these make up the glory of the impossible.

XXIII

ECUMENICS OR MISSIONS?

IN A recent volume on world missions,* the first two chapters deal with "Universalism in the Old Testament" and "The Universal Gospel of Jesus." They are written from the liberal angle and startle those who still believe what the Bible teaches. The early prophets failed in Israel, we are told, because their view was so limited. "These gregarious bands of ecstatics did much for Israel to inflame nationalism," but the first real missionary note was sounded by Amos (9: 7). Even Isaiah has a narrow horizon! "He can never break away from the fact of election and Israel's pride of place in the divine plan. To him, Jerusalem is the centre of the universe and Zion is the city of God" (p. 4). "Jeremiah was the founder of foreign missions and the first man to teach prayer for one's enemies." Ezekiel was essentially narrow in his tendencies (p. 6), and we must turn to the unknown author of Deutero-Isaiah, "who proclaimed for the first time the program of a missionary religion." Such is the Modernist view.

Even the Servant of Jehovah who suffers on a cross

* *The Christian World Mission*. Edited by William K. Anderson: Commission on Ministerial Training, The Methodist Church, Nashville, Tenn., 1947.

(Isaiah 53) is not Jesus Christ, but Israel! The Book of Esther "is devoid of any historical foundation" and forms the basis of a "God damn our enemies" and "a pogrom in reverse." "The finest missionary tract is the little book of Jonah," continues Professor John Patterson of Drew Theological Seminary. "This book, of course, is only a story which cannot be read without a sense of humour! When Jonah fled from Yahweh he ended by finding himself where he started . . . it would not be wrong to say Jonah was the first man to discover that the earth is really round." With no reference to Genesis and its glorious and tragic universalism in creation, the fall and the dispersion of the nations; with Abraham's call and God's promises to him for all nations left out; without a word concerning the universal lawgiver, Moses, and not a single one of the great universal, Messianic Psalms quoted—this is Modernism's interpretation of the Old Testament. Yahweh is to them a tribal god.

More surprising is the second chapter of this thirty-chapter symposium by Dr. W. A. Smart of Emory University. He, with Harnack and other liberals, denies any consciousness of a universal mission on the part of Jesus. New Testament scholarship has eliminated the great commission from Mark's Gospel on textual grounds and is also "practically unanimous in its conviction that the words at the close of Matthew's Gospel did not come from Jesus." When we appeal to the whosoever passages of John's Gospel, it is stated that "this is a Hellenistic book and the sayings it attributes to Jesus are extremely doubtful" (p. 12). Jesus never conducted or

contemplated a Gentile mission. "The non-Jewish world seems simply to have lain beyond his view." "It has often been claimed, with only slight exaggeration, that everything Jesus taught had been taught by the rabbis before him" (p. 18). Grace and love are not typically the words of Jesus, but of Paul (p. 19). And so forth.

Of course, this attitude toward the missionary character of the Old Testament and the denial of the authenticity or genuineness of Christ's Great Commission is nothing new. It is revealing the old liberal doctrines. The surprise is that such teachers can still write on a Christian world *mission*. There is no mission or vocation to missions without a Missioner—One who sends us with authority into all the world on His errand of the gospel. All we have left then is ecumenics, not *missions*.

If Christ never gave the command, all missionary hymns, poetry, art, and literature based on this command are false. Or shall we change our vocabulary and substitute ecumenics for missions, even as we have put other good words, heathen, natives, lost souls, into discard—pronouncing them more politely, non-Christian, indigenous, prodigal-children. It is not logomachy, a mere war of words that is at stake.

The two words express different ideas and ideals. The first, *ecumenics*, is very modern; the second, *missions*, is as ancient as the Vulgate New Testament. It is found, unchanged, in many European languages and in every English dictionary where you search in vain for ecumenics. Ecumenics expresses world-wideness and unity; missions, world-neediness and human solidarity.

The former mobilizes Christian thought; the latter, Christian activity. Ecumenics bids us lift up our eyes and behold; missions, to lift up our feet and march. The former *may* become mere outlook; the latter is outreach. The former tells of the condition of the *world*, its social and political confusion; the latter emphasizes the condition of men's hearts and the fatal disease of sin.

Ecumenics stresses the importance of *men* as messengers of the King; missions, the importance of the *message* they carry. The one stresses church unity and organization; the other, church vitality in faith and life. The new word, ecumenics, is gaining ground in missionary circles and institutions' but, we believe, with a distinct loss of connotation and inspiration. The Orthodox Greek Church is proud of its ecumenicity, as also is Rome. The Protestant churches are proud of their missionary spirit and accomplishment. The Mission of the church was its Expansion, as Harnack indicated in the title of his great work on the early centuries. Professor Latourette, in his masterly and massive *History of the Expansion of Christianity*, does not avoid the word missions. He wrote me, "I do not recall why I did not mention the Great Commission in Volume One. It was certainly not from any purpose of ignoring it. In my opening lectures this term, I used the Great Commission as an introductory text for two lectures" (October 6, 1942). And in his shorter volume, *Anno Domini*, he states forcefully that "missions has made the church ecumenic."

Men put the cart before the horse if they think to make the modern church missionary by the study of ecumenics.

Henry Ford's plant is ecumenic; his motor cars are ubiquitous but they are not specifically missionary. When a missionary loses himself and his first love in the study of comparative religion, native music, archaeology, ornithology, or folklore, he may remain ecumenic in his interests and thought, but he will cease to be a practicing missionary with a passion for souls.

And the church at home may master the excellent message by Wendell Willkie of "One World," thus becoming ecumenic in its outlook, but this should not be at the cost of losing One Book which tells of the One Missionary who came to a foreign land and laid down his life for the lost—"the first medical missionary," as David Livingstone said.

In the temptation of Christ our Lord, we read: "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." It was indeed an *ecumenic* vision of the Roman Empire and all other empires of that day. But Christ did not fall down and worship the tempter. He saw far ahead another lonely mountain-top in Galilee where the disciples fell down "and worshipped him." "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth, Go ye therefore." The two mountain peaks are symbolic of the great temptation and the great commission down the centuries. When the individual or the church listened to the glamour and glory of power and prestige, they lost both. Only on the mount in Galilee do we hear His voice and receive His commission to a world mission.

XXIV

THE LAYMEN'S MISSIONARY
MOVEMENT AMONG
MOSLEMS

THE GREAT religions of the world may be divided into two classes—the non-missionary and the missionary. Professor Max Muller, in his famous lecture at Westminster Abbey in 1873, defined the former as “a religion in which the spreading of the faith and the conversion of unbelievers are raised to the rank of a sacred duty by the founder or his immediate successors—the spirit of truth in the hearts of believers which is not satisfied till it has carried its message to every human soul, till what it believes to be the truth is accepted as the truth by all the members of the human family.” If we accept this definition, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism are non-missionary, while Buddhism, Christianity and Islam are missionary religions.

In matters of faith and morals Christianity has nothing whatsoever to learn from Islam. It stands unique and supreme by as much as the Bible is greater than the Koran and Jesus Christ than Mohammed. The sun in noonday splendour needs no borrowed rays from the waning Crescent.

But in zeal for propagating their faith, in world-wide missionary enterprise and activity, whether by fire and sword or by word of preaching—Islam affords a striking example of how the rank and file in the Moslem army are missionaries of the faith.

One hundred years after Mohammed's death his followers were masters of an empire greater than Rome at the zenith of her power. They were building mosques in Canton, China; in Spain; in Persia and in Southern India! The extent, the rapidity and the method of the early Moslem conquest are a marvellous illustration of the fanatic ardour of their zeal.

Two hundred years after the Hegira, Mohammed's name was called out on thousands of minarets from the Pillars of Hercules to the Pacific, and from Northern Turkestan to Ceylon. Only thirteen centuries have passed, and to-day there are over 300 million Mohammedans—one-seventh of the population of the globe! 60 million in Africa, 90 million in India, 12 million in China, 35 million in the Malay Archipelago and a quarter of a million in the Philippines, not to speak of the lands that are almost wholly Mohammedan in western Asia. It is easy enough to say that Mohammedanism was propagated by the sword. It largely was. But we may well ask with Carlyle, “Where did Mohammed get his sword?” What fires of faith and devotion must have burned in the hearts of the early champions of Islam to make them gird the sword and fight and die for their religion!

What a Laymen's missionary movement it was that swept across Syria, Egypt, Tunis, Tripoli, Algiers, Mo-

rocco, like the desert simoon, swift, fierce, impetuous, irresistible, only to be curbed and cooled by the waves of the Atlantic. History tells of their leader, that he rode his horse far out into the surf and cried: "Great God, if I were not stopped by this raging sea I would go on to the nations of the west preaching the unity of thy name and putting to the sword those who would not submit." Tariq, finding no lands to the west, crossed over the straits into Spain and named its promontory Jebel Tariq (the mountain of Tariq) Gibraltar—an everlasting monument to his missionary zeal.

In spite of cruelty, bloodshed, dissension and deceit, the story of the Moslem conquest is full of heroism. If so much was done in the name and after the example of Mohammed, what should we not do in the name of Jesus Christ and in obedience to His marching orders? A careful study of these early Moslem conquests impresses one with the fact that a large measure of their success was due to their enthusiasm and fanatic faith rather than to the mere power of a sword. The preaching of Islam was as powerful, and demanded as unconditional a surrender as did their weapons. The thunder of their cavalry was not more terrible to the enemy than the clamour of their short, sharp creed in the ears of an idolatrous and divided Christendom! *La-ilaha illa Allah! Allahu Akbar!* These laymen of the desert carried everything before them, because they had the backbone of conviction, knew no compromise, and were thirsting for world conquest as the hart panteth for the waterbrooks. Not Khaled alone, but *every Moslem warrior* felt himself to be the "Sword of God."

Nor did they shrink back from hardship, danger, or death itself in this holy war for their faith. Had not Mohammed said: "The fire of hell shall not touch the legs of him who is covered with the dust of battle in the road of God?" And was not Paradise itself under the shadow of the spears of the thickest fight?

And again, the Moslems were brave preachers as well as brave warriors. Witness the spread of Islam in China, Java, Sumatra, West Africa and the Philippines.

To the modern Christian world, missions imply organizations, societies, paid agents, subscriptions, reports, etc. All this is practically absent from the Moslem idea of propagation, and yet the movement goes on. In Burma (where Indian merchants are the Moslem missionaries) the Moslem population increased 33 per cent in one decade. In the western Sudan and on the Niger whole districts once pagan are now Mohammedan, and this has been the work of lay missionaries—merchants, travelers, and artisans to a large extent. It would be an exaggeration to say that every Moslem is a missionary, but it is true that with the exception of the Dervish orders (who resemble monks) the missionaries of Islam are the laymen in every walk of life, rather than its priesthood.

I knew a pearl merchant at Bahrain, Arabia, who at his own expense and on his own initiative, printed an entire edition of a Koran commentary for free distribution. On the streets of Lahore or Calcutta, you may see clerks, traders, bookbinders, and even coolies, who spend part of their leisure time preaching Islam or attacking Christianity by argument.

The merchants who go to Mecca as pilgrims from Java return to do missionary work among the hill tribes. In the Sudan the Hausa merchants carry the Koran and the catechism wherever they carry their merchandise. No sooner do they open a wayside shop in some pagan district than the wayside mosque is built by its side. And is it not a remarkable proof of the earnestness even of the Arab slave dealers that in spite of the horrors of the traffic the very slave routes became highways for Islam, and the negroes adopted the religion of Mohammed to escape the very curse which brought it to them?

The laity in Islam are in one sense all preachers. The shopkeeper and the camel driver are ashamed neither of their proud creed nor of their prophet and his book. They proclaim the creed from the housetop; they never utter his name without a prayer, and they carry the Koran everywhere, although eighty per cent of the Moslem world is illiterate. If they cannot read it they can at least kiss it or wear it as an amulet! All ranks of society are propagandists.

Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief,
 Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief,
 Butcher, baker, candlestick-maker,

one and all belong to the laymen's missionary movement of Islam. And only as a result of such incessant, spontaneous and almost fanatic parading, preaching, pushing of their faith by the mass of believers, Islam grew to its gigantic proportions—and not solely by the power of the sword. But grant that they *did* use their sword—so can we ours. "The Word of God is sharper

than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit to the joints and the marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." *That* blade, we can all wield. It is a better sword than theirs and slays sin to give Life Eternal to men.

If they did so much with theirs, surely we can do more with ours. We can do it if we will. We have a better message, a more glorious faith, a higher motive, a richer reward, a more certain victory, a nobler inspiration, better comradeship, and a Leader before whose great white throne and great white life the mock majesty and the whitewashed immorality of Mohammed shrivel in abject terror.

They did it for Mohammed—and they were only laymen—shall not we do it for our Saviour?

They were fatalists, and believing it was God's will they cared not what it might cost, but leaped forward to victory. We are not fatalists, but we know it is God's will that our world be evangelized in our generation. It is now or never. *God's will* is not to be argued about or talked over, but *done*.

XXV

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHER
RELIGIONS

A THOUGHTFUL writer of the Anglican Church says that the sole fact of the Incarnation is a strong argument that Christianity is final and absolute (J. K. Mozley, *The Church Overseas*, 1930). And for us who believe in this supreme Christian miracle of God taking human form, the argument is entirely valid. All religions are B.C. or A.D.; if the former, their gropings, longings, and prophetic insight were really fulfilled in the Christ (though their advocates do not understand it so); if the latter, they are *ipso facto* superfluous, since in the incarnate Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and the Lamb taketh away the sin of the world.

But, even as in music men speak of harmony and discord, in aesthetics of the beautiful and the ugly, in ethics of the holy and the sinful, so in the realm of religion there is the antithesis of the true; it is the false. The Bible speaks of this sharp cleavage of one true God and false gods, of Christ and antichrist, of the Holy Spirit and the Evil spirit, of miracles wrought by God and counterfeit miracles.

In dealing with the non-Christian faiths, however, we must see not only their disparity and inadequacy but

also their points of similarity and contact. As Dr. Abraham Kuyper put it so clearly: "The fact is that both in the Christian religion and in the non-Christian religions there are two developments proceeding from the self-same principle, namely, the original knowledge of God. In the one case this principle is corrupted through sin, but by God's grace restored again; in the other it proceeds on the line of degeneration. But even so, we can discover *something* of the innate knowledge of God in all races. Hence a twofold task is before us. First, the study of the Pseudo-Religions, and second, to utilize the results obtained to discover the relationship of these religions to the innate knowledge of God."

There are four fundamental principles at the heart of all religions: A sense of the Infinite and Eternal (awe). A sense of the supernatural and a desire to commune with it (prayer). A belief in immortality (funeral rites, ancestor worship). A belief that *sacrifice* can bridge the gap between man and God.

The first and third are closely related; the second and fourth lead to the deepest spiritual experience. No one who has lived among Moslems can doubt the sincerity and spiritual outreach for Allah in many of their prayers. The best religious poetry of the Hindus shows a thirst for God. And no pagan in darkest Africa ever expressed a doubt that there is a life beyond. Therefore, Kipling was right when in *Kim* he pleaded:

"O ye who tread the Narrow Way
By Tophet-flare to Judgement Day,
Be gentle when the heathen pray
To Buddha at Kamakura!

The living religions of the world to-day—Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism—cannot be put on a dissecting table with impunity. Many who profess these faiths are so sincere and devoted that they put lukewarm Christians to shame. They know their sacred books better than we do ours. Proportionately, they give more to sustain temples and mosques and shrines than Christians give to Christ. Therefore, it is evident that we must study the non-Christian faiths with sympathy and intelligence. God has not left Himself without witness in nature, in conscience, and in the very groping of the soul for light.

Dr. Frick writes that there are strange though discrepant parallels, such as the three holy nights, in Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. (Frick, *Typology of Religion*, p. 69.) He points out how the Catholic-Protestant division is found also in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam—not that these terms have the same significance, but that we face a parallel phenomenon in each of these religions. In Hinduism, for example, we have the *Karma-Marga* and the *Bhakti-Marga*—that is, a way of salvation by works and a way of salvation by faith. In Buddhism we have the same distinction: *Zen Buddhism* which is Catholic, and *Amida Buddhism* which has features of Protestantism. In 1571 a Roman Catholic missionary, Francis Cabralis, called attention to this distinction, saying, "In Amida Buddhism, the Japanese are like the Lutherans in Europe. Nothing is necessary for salvation, they say, but to trust in the name of Amida. Good works are not necessary."

In early Islam every Moslem child was marked with

the blood of the *Aqiqa* sacrifice while the father gave the name and prayed for expiation. The custom is still common in Morocco, India and China.

How near and yet how far are these ideas from Christian truth. But no observant preacher to people who believe such facts could afford to ignore them in proclaiming the Good News as the fulfillment of human hopes.

Paul is our great example. At Pisidia and at Athens he began with points of contact and then arose to the great contrast and fulfillment. "The heathen in their blindness bow down to wood and stone." Paul saw more than that and deeper than that in his contact with paganism.

Protagonists of each of the nine outstanding theories for the origin of religion have pointed out not the true origin of religion but the element of truth in their respective theories.

1. *Nature Myths* (Max Muller) immanence of God.
2. *Fetishism* (Lubbock) awe before the supernatural.
3. *Manism* (Herbert Spencer) the immortality of the soul.
4. *Animism* (Tyler) the supersensuous against materialism.
5. *Star-myths* (Jeremias) the transcendence of God.
6. *Totemism* (Frazer) exogamy in family relations.
7. *Magism* (King and Durkheim) sacrament in worship.
8. *Sky Gods* (Andrew Lang) creation by a sky god.
9. *Primitive High God* (Schmidt) a revelation handed down by tradition.

Eight of these theories are now discarded, although each in its day was highly acclaimed as the one key to the question, How did *homo sapiens* get religious?

The theistic hypothesis (based upon Genesis 3 and Romans 1 and defended by Wilhelm Schmidt, the anthropologist, in six massive volumes) is that of a primitive revelation.*

The testimony is unanimous that primitive tribes in West Africa, in the South Seas, and among the North American Indians have a religion which includes in every case five elements: an organized family life; a name for a supreme, unseen Power, sovereign and benevolent; a moral sense, namely of truth, justice, shame, and a knowledge that there is good and evil; the idea of soul and the universal belief that this soul does not die with the death of the body; and, finally, communion with the unseen Power by prayer and sacrificial rites.

Here are five ancient soul-pathways, trodden for centuries while men grope in darkness for light—and they lead directly to the Manger and the Cross and the Empty Tomb, *when men's hearts are opened to receive the good news of the Incarnation*. It is notable that there has ever been far greater numerical success in missions to believers in these ideas than to those who profess the great ethnic faiths.

Heathenism in whatever form (even the neo-paganism of America) is a unified antagonism, a defection from God and a defection which is utterly guilty. The non-Christian world when it faces Calvary can only confess its utter bankruptcy. All human righteousness is as

* Cf. Zwemer's *Origin of Religion*, 3d Edition. New York. 1946.

filthy rags before God's holiness. Nevertheless, we may not forget—that

“Far and wide, though all-unknowing,
Pants for Thee each human breast;
Human tears for Thee are flowing,
Human hearts in Thee would rest;
Thirsting as for dews of even,
As the new-mown grass for rain,
Thee they seek as God of heaven,
Thee as man for sinners slain.”

It is this double portion of the spirit of Missions which we should seek, a compassionate vision of a lost world (lost now as it was when John wrote his 3: 16) and such absolute faith in the Incarnation that we, too, may proclaim that “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory. . . .)” (John 1: 14).

The miracle of history, the miracle above all miracles, is Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin and died on a cross but yet is alive forever more. Those who have experienced His love and forgiveness never doubt that He is the only and sufficient Saviour. For them, the two eternities, past and future, and the whole period in between are united and controlled by one purpose, redemption through Christ. He is the Alpha and the Omega. In all things He has the pre-eminence. He will yet reconcile all things unto Himself, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens. He will restore the lost harmony of the universe, because to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. This is the goal of religions and of the yet unfinished task of missions. It is also the heart of the Christian message.

XXVI

FATHER, THE HOUR HAS COME,
GLORIFY THY SON

—JOHN 17: 1

IN THESE words of our Saviour are joined the highest motive and the strongest plea for missions to Moslems. The fundamental error of Islam and its corporate guilt is this fact, undisputed and undenied, that the supreme glory of Jesus Christ has been given to another. The heart of the Moslem missionary problem is, therefore, to secure a transfer of allegiance and this is only possible when the mind and will of the individual face the issue, weigh all the evidence and make a right decision. Thirteen centuries ago Mohammed's moon eclipsed the glory of the Sun of Righteousness; the Koran superseded Christ's Gospel; the intercession of the Prophet made an atonement by our Great High Priest unnecessary; the Cross of Christ became a stumbling block and its deepest significance foolishness. This is the tragedy of the Near East. To those who know the religion of the Crescent, therefore, it is not surprising that there is an Eastern question—many Eastern questions—all summed up, however, in this one: Mohammed or Christ?

All the prophets and apostles of the Old and New Testaments have not only been succeeded but also supplanted by Mohammed. To the masses he is at once the sealer and concealer of all former revelations.

Mohammed is called Light of God, Peace of the World, Glory of the Ages, First of all Creatures, and other names of yet greater import. His apotheosis was Tradition. Although in the Koran he is human, in Tradition he became sinless and almost divine. No Moslem prays to Mohammed, but every Moslem prays for him in endless repetition daily. His name is never uttered or written without the addition of a prayer.

The honour given to Mohammed's name by his followers is only one indication of the place he occupies in their system and holds in their hearts. Mohammed holds the keys of heaven and hell. No Moslem, however bad his character, will perish finally; no believer, however good his life, can be saved except through Mohammed.

"For all Moslems," says Dr. Macdonald, "he is the Messenger of Allah, the Last, the especially Chosen, with a halo of centuries of reverence around his head. For very many of them he was the first made of all creatures; for his sake Allah created the worlds; as nearly as could be, we have the Arian doctrine of the Person of Christ. Besides that, for all Arabs he is the great Arabian; no other like to him has sprung from their race. For all Arabic speakers he is the greatest artist in the Arabic language; the Koran, for all whose native tongue is Arabic, even for Christians, is the greatest work in Arabic literature."

The most popular book next to the Koran, in all parts of the world of Islam, is a little prayer-manual called *Dala'il-ul-Khairat*. It is the pocket-testament of the Moslem soldier, the most widely used breviary of the mystic, the primer and catechism of the laity everywhere. Yet this volume contains little else than glorifications of the Prophet of Arabia and calls for his intercession.

The fact is, that as long as Islam remains Islam, the emphasis *must* rest on the second clause of its brief creed. The monotheism of Mohammedanism is shared by other faiths, but its devotion to Mohammed as ideal and goal, as center and pivot of God's plan for the universe—that is unique—but impossible.

The followers of the Great Arabian (whatever their race or sect) unite in saying if not singing:

“O Lord and Master of us all,
Whate'er our name or sign,
We own thy sway, we hear thy call,
We test our lives by thine.”

The encouraging aspect of the present situation, however, is that this devotion to Mohammed as saviour and ideal is being challenged by Moslems themselves. There are attempts in Egypt and in India to use the method of destructive criticism and so eliminate everything in his character and career which shocks the modern sense of propriety and the ethics of our day. The sinlessness of Mohammed must be admitted at any cost. Although it cannot be proved from the Koran or Traditions, it yet became a leading article of popular faith.

The disturbance of this ideal has produced a shock far more telling than any political event. It is the hour of God's unveiling. The Jesus Christ of history faces the Moslem world in the open through the unprecedented circulation of the Scriptures, the presence of the Christian home, the hospital, the school, the university, or the press in every important center of population. His presence cannot be hid. He is demanding attention.

Real Christians are the best and truest friends of Moslems everywhere and always. It is only when Christian things have been done in an un-Christian way, or when un-Christian things have been done by Christians, that Christianity has appeared as a bitter foe to our Moslem brethren. Not the Crusades, but Raymund Lull represented the real spirit of Christianity toward Islam in the Middle Ages; not the bombardment of Jiddah in 1858, but the foundation of Robert College in 1864, expressed the real desire of Christians toward the Moslem world; not the Italian campaign in Tripoli, but the work being done day by day in the missionary hospitals in North Africa and the Nearer East alone, and the ministry of healing and friendship from Fez to Kerman, represent the spirit of the Gospel and of Christianity.

In the Koran chapter, *The Tablet*, occurs a remarkable verse, the eighty-fifth, to which we call attention because it expresses this same truth, only half comprehended by the Prophet himself, and one that has never needed emphasis so much as it does to-day. “Thou wilt surely find the nearest in love to those who believe, to be those who say, We are Christians; that is because there are among them priests and monks, and because

they are not proud." Baidhawi, the great Moslem writer, comments on this text as follows: "Because of their gentleness and the tenderness of their hearts and their little desire for the present world, their much care for knowledge and labour; and to this the text has reference, that is because there are among them priests and monks and because they are not proud; i.e., to receive the truth when they understand it; or they are humble and not arrogant like the Jews. So this passage teaches that humility, a teachable spirit, and the fleeing from evil desires are praiseworthy even in the case of the infidel."

In spite of the sting at the end of this comment, Baidhawi and other commentators with him, have here shown us the surest line of approach if we would win our Moslem brethren to Christ. Humility, docility, and love speak a language that is everywhere understood and that cannot be gainsaid. It was understood by Mohammed in the earlier part of his career when he met Christian monks and teachers, and is understood to-day by his followers.

A passion for Moslem souls does not mean that we are to compromise or to conciliate at any price. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." There is a real sense in which he who loves Moslems most, must at times, like a skilful surgeon,

"Go his way, and preach
On the old Gospel's heart-assailing plan,
And cut the gangrene, like a practised leech,
With firm, sure hand, and fear no face of man;

Call vile things vile; wash the fair paint from sin,
And give to glare of day the foul-faced sore within."

Yet this is only part of the cure of souls. The surgeon hurts to heal. The Great Physician is tender. In these days when Moslems are justly irritated by the political aggressions of Christian powers, or the un-Christian conduct, at times, of the so-called representatives of Christianity, we emphasize the ministry of friendship and enter a plea for less of the spirit of controversy and more of the spirit of the Cross.

The nearest way to the Moslem heart is the way of God's love, the way of the Cross. "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Where *this* is the attitude and character of the missionary, he will doubtless hear again from Moslem lips:—

"And thou wilt find the nearest in love to those who believe to be those who say We are Christians."

When we think of the spiritual unrest, the disappointed hopes and disillusionments following the war with its aftermath, everywhere, we are forced to conclude that the hour is ripe for pressing our advantage now and pleading the claims of the Living Christ. The

day in which we live recalls to our mind the words of one of the Arab poets:

“Not in vain the nation’s gropings, nor by chance the currents flow;
Error-mazed yet truth-directed, to their certain goal they go.”

That goal is evangelization.

There is only one mandatory for the world of Islam that includes all its races and peoples—it is the mandatory of God, the commission of Jesus Christ. His purpose is the redemption and regeneration of the peoples. His prayer is ours for their deepest needs, “Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son.”

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