

ECHOES AND A VISION

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the difficulty of carrying Christ's Gospel to all the non-Christian peoples of the earth, the improbability of united planning and concerted action on the part of the differing Churches of Christendom—all this impossible of solution. With statesmanlike insight, with a calm outlook these men of diverse nations and varying creeds came together and looked each upon the face of the other with a sense of shame, that the vision had been made to tarry so long before men ever attempted to realize it; next came the humiliating sight of a divide and quarrelling Christendom. The world looked on, to behold no shrinking, but to see amid the problems of great optimism awake and stir the hearts of all; a great hope for the world arise amid the very vastness of the task with which they grappled. The world looked on; and as it looked, the very difference of the sect seemed to fade away: out of the vast diversity of creed and worship arose a sense of spiritual brotherhood and Christian unity unheard of before. Like the early disciples, all seemed content to be called "Christians," at first; the touch of Christ had made the Churches kin, banishing all narrow bigotries, all sectarian bitterness, uniting all in a grand, whole-hearted, dignified compact to stand together in practical, prudent, organized efforts to spread the influence of Christianity throughout the whole earth in the name of God. Then, conspicuous above all else, one great conviction grew clear, grew defined pervading the very atmosphere, dominating and uniting all hearts as one—the vivid belief in Jesus Christ as triumphant, no longer the pathetic victim of the Cross wept over, no yet the shadowy myth dissected by modern criticism; but the living reigning Son of God Almighty, able to sway the lives of men with an influence sublimely, with a power supreme, and ultimately victorious over all, conquering and to conquer. Only such a Master of men, only such a Saviour of the world, only the Son of God with power could enlist such splendid talent as was there seen consecrated to His service; only to such a Redeemer can man look, to lift this world from ignorance, degradation and despair and sin, and win this earth for God.

CONSECRATION OF TALENT.

One glance at that World Conference, where the splendid talent of statesmen, scientists, thinkers, scholars, experts in all the learned professions and every line of practical business, the pick of manhood, the fines of womanhood, was seen consecrated to the service of mankind in the name of Christ—one glance, one day spent in their midst, made clear the fact that the day of apologies for Christian Missions is forever past; that the day of small things in missionary enterprise is quickly passing; that the day of Christ's supremacy over the complex forces of the world intellectual, moral, social and spiritual, is ahead, nearer at hand than ever before in the history of mankind that the vision, though it has tarried long, will surely come to its great fulfilment. The name "Foreign Missions" is now a provincialism: for no soul in all the world is foreign to the Love of God. The old complaint that we have plenty of heathen at home, is no longer an excuse for the Church's delay in giving to others what we acknowledge is worth keeping at home. To appropriate the Gospel to ourselves when God has given it for all men and all lands, is clearly to act the role of embezzling trustees? The imperfection of our Christianity at home is no excuse for denying the Gospel to those who may appropriate and use it better elsewhere. The sight of one reformed life in our missions abroad, must silence such an excuse forever while the report shows over five million lives in non-Christian lands thanking God for Jesus Christ and His Gospel. Before we decry Christian missions abroad, because new converts do not exhibit all the Christian graces and virtues in a year or even fifty years, one has to remember how many centuries it took for the influence of Christianity to make our forefathers in this tiny country of ours worthy to be called Christians, or even civilized. Perhaps some of these critics have not all the graces yet! No student of history will deny that civilization follows the Cross of Christ; no one will deny that what is worth having is surely worth giving to others; no one will gainsay the fact, that no where is such heroism, self-sacrifice and cheerful devotion to duty, manifested more unostentatiously, more genuinely, looking for no reward save the advancement of Christ's Kingdom and the elevation of mankind, than in our Christian missions, medical, industrial, educational, and evangelical. A selfish Christianity, that never sent one missionary to labour for the betterment of his fellows, is a contradiction in terms, has publicly, before the world and before God, received at last its death-blow.

THE REAL PERIL.

Cheap excuses go; but practical difficulties remain. Worse than a half-Christianized heathen is a half-healthened Christian, especially in those lands where we go to present the Christian religion. We have heard of the "yellow" peril, what we hear of today from the people of non-Christian countries is the "white" peril. We have heard of Hindu and Chinese outrages; we have to face the fact that what makes many an Eastern street a place of offense and a source of danger today, is the white men from Christian Europe. To those polite nations, the white man's greed of gold, his domineering superiority, his frequently coarse manners, his loose morality, his blasphemy in the very name of Christ, mean a real peril, as they constitute an enormous obstacle to the spread of the Christian Gospel. Can we wonder if those Eastern peoples cannot distinguish between Christianity and what they see in the conduct and commerce of men

from Christian nations! Can we wonder at the resentment of the East to the white foreigner today, no matter what message he professes to bring, be it a message from heaven!

OUR PLACE IN THE WORK.

As Britons, we boast ourselves as a Christian nation, as a world-wide Empire upon which the sun never sets, the greatest empire the world has ever seen. What is to be our place in the spread of God's Kingdom? What part are we to take in the extension of the empire of Christ? Our opportunity, our privilege is unique, in softening the jarring relations of East and West, in uniting the diverse nations of the world in the name of Christ. With our privilege goes our responsibility, hand in hand. Is our empire to be the honored instrument in the hand of God, to work out His high purposes with the race, subserving the higher imperialism of Christ; or shall we fail, only to disappear like other empires, and give way to a new nation which God shall yet call to do the duty that lies to our hand today. Ours is a great and glorious chance; but our empire's place in the advancement of God's Kingdom is critical. If our empire is a Christian empire in purpose and influence, if our British imperialism is a Christian imperialism, our place in the history of the world is unique and glorious forever. But if our boasted supremacy is to end in mere commercial supremacy among the nations; if it is to be concerned only with selfish gain and world aggrandizement; then, it must go, and crumble in the dust of ages, like those other empires which failed to rise to the height of God's great purposes and fulfill their sacred opportunities for the welfare of mankind.

AN AWAKENING HOPE.

But hope awakes, as we recall that our nation has, in as large measure as any other today, the characteristics of righteousness, justice, liberty, peace. That God may use us in connection with other nations to work out His onward-moving purposes, this is our hope; this is our chance. Is it too late? Are we shewing signs of moral and spiritual decay? God forbid! For over that nation which shows no life for God, over that lifeless empire that becomes dead to His voice, there are the vultures gathered together to work swift judgment on all that pollutes God's world and hinders His purposes, removing it out of the way! It is still ours, thank God, to formulate laws and spread influences throughout the world that shall reveal the Spirit of Christ. Certain it is that only as the manners, the morals, the commerce of Christian nations, become more worthy of the Christian name, will the resentment to our white races and their religion cease to be an obstacle to the spread of the Gospel of Christ. Only as our Government of non-Christian peoples becomes kindly as well as firm; only as our western laws and civilizations shew solicitude for the bodily and social well-being of all races under our rule, will Christianity be welcomed as a universal boon, and the difficulties offered by non-Christian lands cease to make the Kingdom of our Lord to tarry. But thank God, the forces of this world are in the grasp of a greater than they know. God's providence, God's power, is supreme. His set time is sure. "It will not tarry; it will surely come." And He to whom is given all power in earth and heaven or man's redemption has called His Church from out the world, is rallying its scattered battalions into one great army, and He is at it's head!

THE CHURCH UNITED.

The vision of one great united Church of God, uniting the diverse life of all mankind, the vision of an imperial Kingdom of God's own Son—a unity amid all racial diversity—this is the vision that inspires us today. Behind the diversity of nations, we see the latent unity of the human race; behind the racial distinctions of mankind, we behold the essential brotherhood of all men; behind the intellectual, moral, social and religious inadequacy of other world-systems, clearer than ever, is the eternal sufficiency of Christ, for the most varied needs of humanity; and we take up with new courage the stupendous task of giving His Gospel to the entire world. No longer do we go as scattered bands of skirrnishers, making Presbyterians or Episcopalians or Methodists or Bap-

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ists out of colored races, as the idea of missions once was. No longer do we go trusting to the strength of separate societies and sects, but in a world wide unity which means strength—the very power of Christ. Through the dispersion of Christians throughout the world striving in isolation to bring in the Kingdom of Christ, has come to our homeland this many-voiced demand for Christian unity among the churches; and in our very midst, in a way that seemed impossible, we have seen realized and established on practical lines, a unity and co-operation for the evangelization of the world, unprecedented in the history of Christianity, revealing the presence in our century of the very Spirit of Christ himself. The strength and richness of the church's life consist in unity amid diversity. No one now asks for uniformity. All down the ages, uniformity has been mistaken for unity. It has failed; it is an effete ideal; it is dead; and the sooner it is buried, the better. No one wants precipitate, immature disintegrating unions between churches. Differences of orders and government and worship can be respected; but sectarian bitterness and ecclesiastical wrangling must cease. With unity at home, we can respect each other's conscience and methods abroad, revealing to the world one great, Christian Brotherhood, a unity amid all diversity, the unity of loyal service to Jesus Christ and His conquering Kingdom.

THE DESIRE OF CHRISTIANS.

In one great federation of forces, under one permanent, international council, we go to hasten the supremacy of Christ over the life of the world, seeking to make the Christian ideal desirable for the life of man-



kind, irrespective of race or creed. We seek to give Christ to the whole world, leaving the Spirit and influence of Jesus to make the world Christian in God's own good time. Not "any one" will do to send to our missions abroad, but only the picked men and women of the Christian Church, men of the best education and the highest character, men learned in the non-Christian religions of the world, who will allow for the religious antecedents of the people among whom they labour, who will respect the national genius of the races whom they seek to bring into the empire of Christ. The strength and richness of a unified church suggests the vision of new strength and richness of life in a unified humanity,

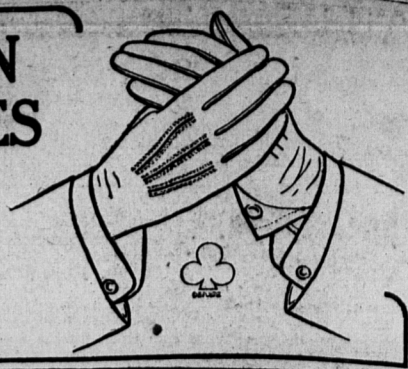
filled with the Spirit of Christ. Into that universal Kingdom of God, we see "all nations bringing their riches" of life, each race contributing to the richness of the whole through its characteristic national genius; the mystical, devotional Hindu, touched by Christ, contributing of his religious exaltation and practical self-sacrifice; the African contributing his spirit of zeal and enthusiasm; the Japanese contributing of his patriotism and hero worship; the Chinese contributing of his love of family and home. Drawn by the supreme desirability of Christianity, touched by the Spirit of Christ, behold the vision of Buddhism, Brahminism, Confucianism, Mohammedanism, yielding ere long the riches of their distinctive genius to the wondrous unity of life in God's universal Kingdom, all that is best in the world's religions, all that is best in the diverse nationalities, all that is best in the life of mankind, consecrated, harmonized, beautified, immortalized in the light of Him, who is the Life of men.

OUR SUFFICIENCY IN HIM.

We have seen the vision; clear above all is the divine sufficiency of Christ for the life of this great and wondrous world. We have seen the vision; though it tarry, wait for it; expect it; it will surely come; it will not tarry. We have heard God's voice with a great thankfulness, with a great hope, we now go to relate ourselves to the needs of His world. As a Christian nation, we are in great tradition; let us be greater in endeavour; let us take a growing share in the advancing empire of God; let us be Christian imperialists; let us see

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imperial Christians, embracing the whole world in our outlook, claiming one great unity of prayer and purpose to claim this world for God. As followers of the Son of God with power, we take up the great Reformer's words uttered to all branches of the Church of Christ—"Keep your smaller differences; let us have no discord on that account; but let us, valuing all we have in common, behold the vision of a redeemed humanity, march in one solid column, under the banner of the one Captain of our Salvation; and with undivided counsels, with unquenchable hope, throw the legions of the cross upon the unconquered territories of this world's darkness, sin and death!" Then the vision will not tarry; it will surely come, when the knowledge of God's glory shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea; and our blessed Lord in triumphant glory shall deliver up His Kingdom unto God the Father, who reigneth for ever and ever.

A NOTE OF THANKS.

We thank God for the vision He has given; we take hope as we see Christ reigning, ruling, triumphant, as He has last over all; we take courage as

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