

CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER BOOKS

THE  
MESSAGE  
OF THE  
WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

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THE MESSAGE OF THE  
WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

*General Editor :*  
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## GENERAL PREFACE

THIS series of books is designed to assist thought upon the relation of the Christian faith to present problems. We live in a changing society; it is still an open question what the outcome of change will be. It is the duty of Christians to be aware of what is happening and, while the situation is still fluid, to exercise their utmost influence upon the course of events. In politics the old party lines are vanishing, and new groups are being formed. Christians ought to play a decided part both by thought and action in these developments. Those who are collaborating in the "Christian News-Letter" and who are producing these books invite all men of goodwill to join with them in an attempt to understand the principles at stake and the policies which must be pursued.

We have got as a nation to do much more hard thinking than has been our wont. It has been said that "the average Englishman not only has no ideas, he hates an idea when he meets one." During the last hundred years our general security and the settled framework of our society have made thought about fundamental principles to seem unnecessary; but now that change is upon us we must ask the big and difficult questions that have been neglected. There is no law of nature which prevents Englishmen from doing this. We shall, however, find it hard work, and the general reader, for whom these books are intended, must not expect to be let off lightly. This sustained effort of thought, in which it is hoped individuals and groups in every rank of society will cooperate, is likely to unmask truths which we should prefer to ignore and duties which we should prefer not to have to undertake.

# THE MESSAGE OF THE WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

BY

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*Secretary of the International Missionary Council*

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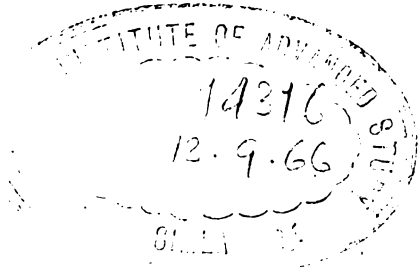
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## PREFACE

It is only necessary to say, by way of preface, that this little book is written expressly to set forth a proposition which may seem wholly preposterous to sensible people. That proposition is, that the Christian Church contains in its distinctive message, its distinctive methods of work and its distinctive type of life precisely that which the society of mankind most sorely needs and for the lack of which it is falling into ruin. I hope that those who, in spite of this initial confession, may bring themselves to read the book will feel at least that the writer is not blind to the actual defects of the Church as it exists among us, and that only a profound sense of the treasure that is given to us in trust can enable Christians to risk the accusation of pride, or exaggeration of loyalty to an institution, which might otherwise with justice be brought against those who advocate the position of this book.

W. P.

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## CHAPTER I

### SOME QUESTIONS AND AN ANSWER

THE columns of the more serious newspapers are full of letters from correspondents in which views are put forward about the way in which human society ought to be re-organized when the war is over and the immediate menace to human freedom removed. Some urge that the secret of world order and happiness is to be found in the application of the federal idea to the separate nationalisms of Europe. Others believe that the League of Nations has in it all that is needed, if only the governments will determine to make it work. Others deal with the question of colonial administration, and propose that there should be a move in the direction of international administration of tropical territories . . . and so on.

Not by any means always, but quite often enough to strike the attention, there is implied the suggestion that if only the writer's line of action could be carried out, the multitudinous *malaises* from which Europe and the world are suffering would be at an end. The engine has got out of order, but here is the broken part, accurately diagnosed, and this is the way to mend it so that it will go on working as before. The love of

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panaceas dies hard, and it is perhaps natural enough that people who have laboured at one aspect of the human problem, and see fairly clearly that in that realm a definite advance is possible on certain lines, should treat these methods as if they were so many nostrums, sure to work under all conditions.

But there is noticeable a very different temper, especially among the thoughtful young. It is a mood of disillusionment. They are more than suspicious of panaceas; they do not trust the people in power; they suspect all efforts to put absolute values behind the actions and choices that they know they have got to take. Partly it is that they feel themselves to be in the grip of forces that they cannot understand and that are largely impersonal. They do not deny that in the present national emergency what the British nation stands for is right when compared with what it is fighting against, nor will they shrink from the tragic part which they, more than all others, must play in that struggle. They know what they are to fight against: they seem strangely doubtful what it is that they are fighting for.

Yet is it so strange that they should be doubtful? Perhaps it will be said that patriotism should be enough. In a sense it is enough. It has its own proper claim, which needs not to be supported and buttressed by anything else. There can be few of our race who do not, in their way, feel that claim. The sense of belonging to something that you did not make,

for it was there before you and helped to make you; the joy of moor and hill and valley beauty; the pride that ancient institutions arouse in all who understand how much of history and national character is enshrined in them; the unspoken knowledge of being at home with your own people in the intangible things like humour and taste; the just estimate that the British share in world affairs has increased the sum of freedom in the world—all these things lay their claim upon us, and it is a claim not to be set aside.

But we know also that it is not the only claim. The words used by Nurse Edith Cavell in days that now seem vividly near at hand—*Patriotism is not enough*—have come to be true in ways more varied than she could have had in mind. We have as a people always been a little self-conscious about patriotism and have not taken well to the over-obvious display of patriotic fervour. The national sense of humour prevents the naïve attitudinizing in which some others indulge; we don't like that kind of thing, partly because the real feeling goes too deep, and partly also because our national community has so old and secure a unity that we have not the need to strengthen it by talking about it. But in these years between the wars, in which the young have grown up, there have been made notable efforts to achieve something that could be called a world society and that could claim an allegiance more simply human than even the allegiance that is claimed by one's own country. For the

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moment—it may be a long moment, we do not know—these hopes have faded, but they have left behind them the knowledge that something of that kind *ought* to be possible, that mankind was made for it, that once you have seen the hope of it you can never again be quite content to recline upon the national loyalty, as in itself wholly sufficient.

Then there is the passion for a juster social order. Many of the older generation, not least those who have devoted themselves to the political side of international action, fail to allow enough for the deep desire of many of the younger men and women for a better ordering of society. There is no more certain way to arouse doubt and uncertainty in their minds as to the meaning of the present national effort in war, than to let the idea of political freedom obscure the fact of economic inequality and privilege. Herr Hitler doubtless claims for National Socialism far more than even on the point of class-levelling and national unity can be justified, but in his attacks upon the “capitalistic democracies” he raises a question (it does not matter whether he is sincere or not) which will not down. And yet those who were inclined to look to Russia for hope, and saw there behind all the tyranny and killing at least an attempt to build a social order in which the poor man counted first, have been disillusioned alike by the rise of a Communist oligarchy, by the self-interest of Russian policy and its imperialism, and also by the deepening conviction that there are *no* panaceas

and that the perfectionism of the Communists must be wrong.

This doubt and disillusionment are, of course, only a reflection of the profound uncertainty in which our Western civilization now finds itself. Where do we stand? For what, in the final issue, are we prepared to give up everything? An able and ironical Indian, spending some time in this country after a visit to Germany, said tauntingly: "You people are worse off than the Germans, for they know what they are fighting for, and you don't." What do we put against the religion of blood and soil, with its blindly destructive self-assertiveness and its denial of the rights of other peoples? Is it the rights and dignity of man? The worth of the individual? The sanctity of personality? Government of the people, by the people, for the people? We know instinctively that the cult of race and the god-state is the end of the things we value. We know also that it is to be fought in the name not only of Britain and the Empire, but of something absolute and eternal. But what?

It is here that we find our self-probing taking us into deeper levels. On what grounds do we believe that there is a worth and dignity in the individual man? Is it so plain that there is such worth in the individual as compared with the race, or with the nation? If all that we know is this moving scene of human flux and change, with its rise and fall of civilizations and cultures, its interplay of economic movements, all against the

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background of Nature, so inscrutable with her harvests and droughts, her regular seasons and her earthquake and flood—if we know only this, is it quite unreasonable to hold that man, after all, is less important than a great collective fact such as race? Is it quite certainly true that it is the human person that ultimately counts, and not the dialectic of economic forces which, on any estimate, do play so great a part in human affairs?

There is only one ground for so valuing man and regarding his freedom and dignity as of final importance. If man is somehow linked with eternal reality and his meaning and worth are rooted there, it becomes possible to hold to such views, contradicted as they are by so much that is obvious to the outward view of things. But it is precisely this belief about man's eternal destiny and meaning that has faded out of the minds even of great numbers of those who still try to hold to the liberal ideas that flow from it. To believe in man was rational and liberal; to believe in God was superstitious. Belief in God was tied up with the whole business of Church, dogma and authoritarianism; the enlightened man accepted the truth about the worth of the individual and let the rest go. But now we have seen what was a logic of ideas worked out on the broad plane of history. When man stands by himself it is no longer plain that he ought not to be subordinated to the mass or group interest; they are bigger than he, they last longer than his brief span, it is with them that power and destiny are obviously bound up.

There is also another type of questioning which threatens our contentment. What about the ability of man to do even that which he sees clearly to be right? It is often pointed out that men are not purely reasoning beings and that it is not enough to demonstrate the feasibility and rightness of a course to secure that it will be followed. Indeed it is not. The immense growth of popular interest in psychology testifies to the sense of need for re-making within. Most of us know very well the feeling of frustration which attends upon our effort; we cannot do what we would and what we know to be right, and we are caught up in courses of action which we know to be wrong. Our recent history in Europe ought to be a plain enough reminder that an immense popular desire for peace and an abundance of able minds devoted to the pursuit of it have yet not availed to secure it. There is more in our failure than dimness of vision or feebleness of will; we are corrupt, we need to be re-made.

It would, of course, be a gross exaggeration to pretend that such a recognition of reality is widespread, or that in an articulated form it is present to the minds of our generation. But it is here that we can find the true source of that uncertainty, that disillusionment, that readiness to suspect the presence of propaganda in almost any enthusiastic championing of a cause, which lead so many, especially among the young, to a cynical acceptance of unpleasant duty rather than to

the defence or advancement of a moral ideal. The true grounds for holding to the worth and sacredness of the individual have been forgotten; the evil character of the new gods and absolutes is plain enough, so that there is no refuge there; deep in our souls is the desire for a true human community, but we know we cannot find the way to it, nor are we able to desire it with a single mind.

It is significant that more and more voices are being raised among us now, to call us back to consider the old idea of "Christendom" and to assert that it is in the Christian tradition that the life of Europe has its meaning and from that tradition that it draws its life. A recent example is to be seen in the words of Lord Eustace Percy:<sup>1</sup> "The future of Europe depends upon the future of the Christian faith. That is a political fact. It is a fact commonly ignored in political discussions, because it involves a confession that social organization is determined by forces which neither the politician nor the scientist can control. Yet until that confession is made there can be no sane consideration of war aims or peace terms. It is surely not difficult to make it to-day. There may have been a time when the causes of war could be defined politically in terms of bad state-craft or scientifically in terms of imperfect adjustment to environment. But the recent history of Europe has shocked us back into the knowledge that there is such a thing as positive and deliberate evil, and

<sup>1</sup> *Spectator*, November 17, 1939.

we are learning again to speak the language of sin and of salvation.”

The return to the idea of Christendom, as the above quotation shows, is not merely inspired by the sense that European institutions have Christian roots. Indeed, the attempt to restore Christian belief as the way to a rebirth of European community might be nothing more or less than idolatry. It is true that out of Greece, Rome and Judæa has come almost everything that matters in the European world, and one does not need to be a medievalist to sigh at times for the intercourse of the university world of the Middle Ages, or even for such a conception as the Holy Roman Empire. But we live in a world far wider and far less European than that of the Middle Ages; even Europe must be more than European if she is to be faithful to her past. Christendom as the basis of good Europeanism will not do, for two main reasons. The first is that we now live in a world that has been united by man's control of the powers of Nature, so that all questions become world questions, and the economic and cultural life of the world is becoming one. The economic and military power of Japan, the natural resources of Africa and the vast power of America are but three of the extra-European facts which remind us that Europeanism is not enough.

But the other reason goes much deeper. It is not possible to use Christianity as a means to the accomplishment of ends desirable on general, political

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or social grounds. Not merely is it undesirable, or unworthy, or irreverent: it is strictly *impossible* to do so. To return to the Christian faith in order to regain the lost community of Europe is to nurse an illusion—unless, of course, we are thinking of Christianity as a respectable institution belonging to a certain phase of culture and useful in prolonging that phase. But if by Christianity we mean that life which depends upon the humble and joyful recognition of the act of God in Christ for man's redemption—and that is what we ought to mean by Christianity—then manifestly that is not to be used as an end to something else.

“He that saveth his life shall lose it.” To choose some good end—as in this case the saving of European civilization—and to seek to use the strength of religious conviction to secure it, is not only wrong, it is futile. The life that was to be saved is not saved, it is lost. There is only one way to save life, and that is to throw it to the winds in the service and devotion of something that is truly absolute. Christendom could not be reconstituted to save the European tradition and culture, but a recovered Christian faith would breathe new life into Europe.

Some at least of those who call us back to the Christian tradition do so not for such utilitarian reasons, but because they believe it to be true. It will be the main purpose of the remainder of this little book to show what light can be shed by the world-wide Christian community and the experience of its life

upon the contemporary problems briefly sketched above. But before we proceed to that consideration let us, very briefly, recall some of the central Christian positions. This is not a theological treatise, and no more will be attempted than to show the relevance of some of the things believed by Christians to the deeper questions of our time.

We begin with an assertion which strikes straight at the heart of that absorption in relative and temporary objectives which is characteristic of our age and is at the same time a source of our discontent. That assertion is a twofold one: first, that God is, and second, that God has acted within human history so that the flux of human things is given a centre and a meaning.

Of argument in defence and exposition of the existence of God there is an abundance: it is perhaps of not less avail to seek to show a little of what it means to believe so great a thing. It means not less than this: that all the world of our knowledge, the world that we can touch and see, weigh and count and measure, and also the world of idea and thought, of æsthetic perception and moral effort—all that great and varied world has its origin in the loving wisdom of a Creator. That is why it exists, because He willed it. The end of human searching is not matter in motion, nor a mathematical formula; it is personal will. That is, perhaps, only another way of saying that the end of the searching is not to find, but to be found; the deeper

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we get in the study of ourselves and our life, the more certainly true it is that we are met by that which—or Who—knew us and cared for us before ever we set our mind upon Him. One can understand, even from the outside, something of what it means to believe in God the Father Almighty, by reading the last chapters of the Book of Job. In that book the poet, who had seen with great clarity the poignant problem of human suffering and the inadequacy of the view that merit and award went together, actually finds his problem answered not by any elaborate theodicy in which God is justified, but by the contemplation of the majesty and sovereign glory of God.

But the Christian assertion is not only that God is, but that His essence is to be described supremely by the word Love, and that, being Love, He did what love must do, and gave Himself. Again, we do not here expound or defend the teaching of Incarnation and Atonement, but seek to hint at what it means to hold this faith. It means that there is a centre to history. An answer is given to the old question about time and eternity, a living answer. It is asserted that in the great facts of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which happened within the stream of human history and looked at only from the historian's standpoint are no more than episodes within that stream, there is to be found the action of the eternal. What happened there is more than a bit of history, for it can become to any man something contemporary

with himself; he can find in it the present mercy and love of God, speaking directly to his own soul. Supremely is this the case with the fact of the death of Jesus Christ upon the cross. It is no accident that has made the cross the Christian symbol. When all is said, the one great problem that faces the believer in a loving and almighty God is the fact of sin and suffering; not merely an intellectual problem, but also a very practical one. In the Cross, with its sequel of the Resurrection, there is given to us the certainty that one in whom the very Godhead is fully present went into the utmost depths of knowledge of the fact of human sin and bore in His own body the pains of it. He is therefore with us in the midst of the fire. God is known as holy, not only in judgment, but also in forgiveness. Therefore, in the struggle not only to understand but to live and overcome, we can lay hold of this mighty truth: that God in His love is stronger than sin, and that He does in fact make available for men His own living power of love which can redeem and transmute evil. The Biblical words are fringed with mystery, but they surpass all others in their ability to convey the joyful fact: "God so loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son"; "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"; "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself".

If the very God thus acted upon our plane of time and space, so that all generations of men can find in what was then wrought a present redemption from sin

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and from frustration, and a way into the living knowledge of God with the release and power that go with that knowledge, it is a mild way of putting it to say that it is the most important fact that ever happened. It is the centre of history, a word out of eternity spoken in the cars of time, the supreme fact by which all our human concerns and acts are to be judged.

In view of this tremendous fact we can go on to our second assertion: that it is because of the action of God in making him and redeeming him that man's worth and dignity may be held so high. Here we come to grips with the questions of our political life. It has been suggested already that, if all we know is a flux of human things, it is hardly reasonable to deny that the worth of the individual is not so great as that of the race or the collectivity of one kind or another. But it is precisely the Christian assertion that that is not all we know. We know also that man is one to whom God speaks; that God made him, not aimlessly, but in order that he should of his own self love God; that God so highly valued him that He "gave His only-begotten Son".

It is not pretended here that the full consequences of this truth have always been apprehended by Christians, still less carried into action. That is not the point. Deep down in the very heart of the Christian religion there is this great assertion about man, this story of God becoming man, this good news about God's loving sacrifice to bring man back into the paths from

which he had strayed but in which it was God's will that he should walk. If you believe this, you may be unwilling to face the implications of it and too lazy or cowardly to work them out, but there is something there that is always going to rise up and condemn every human device of government and economic development which treats man as being something less or other than he is, the object of the love of God. Here is to be found a truth which justifies the "democratic" view of the dignity of man; but it is based upon the revelation of the divine action, and when it is divorced from God and turned into a maxim of natural philosophy, the virtue goes out of it—as we now find.

Nor would it be enough to stop at that point without going on to something else that needs to be understood clearly if we are to make anything of the Christian view of life. The Cross not only tells us that if God sent His Son to die for man's redemption, then man is not to be treated as a cog in a machine, or a momentary integration of a racial blood-stream; it tells us that it was because of the sin of man that the Son of God had to die. It is this serious treatment of human sin that marks off Christianity from all other ways of looking at life, and, indeed, from all other religions. The first word of the Christians to the dignified and varied and prosperous civilization of the Graeco-Roman world was "Repent". It is the central paradox of the Christian view of man that it offers both the only sure ground upon which the

human values can be sustained, and also a firm and relentless "No" to all assertions of the goodness and ability and competence of man in his own right.

This is the bottom reason for the intractable character of all true Christianity. It is not difficult for the urbane and sympathetic outsider, who sees clearly the benefits which the practice of the Christian ethic within a community or State can confer upon it, to seek to make an alliance with it upon his own terms. But the first word of Christ to any community of men, anywhere in the world and in all ages, has always been the same. It is not an offer of stability, or idealism, or the buttressing of threatened institutions. It is this stark word "Repent".

The view that human affairs present, seen in the light of the Christian gospel, is not one of mere confusion needing a better ordering and organization, nor one of ignorance and blindness only, such as must be met by enlightenment. It is rather the picture of a society which is seeking to solve its problems by a steady ignoring of the principle upon which it was founded, and though it could find the principle of life by looking away from itself to its Creator, it searches for it among the gods and godlings of its own creation. But that is only another way of saying that selfishness in its myriad forms is the enemy of both faith and love. We have to turn away from ourselves, to find the centre of our world no longer in ourselves but in God, and until we do that not only do we miss the Kingdom of

which Jesus Christ spoke, but the other things also shall *not* be added unto us.

To this brief summary of the central assertions of the Christian tradition one other must be added. Christians believe that they have something of vital moment to say about human community. From the beginning the Christian faith presented itself not as disembodied ideas, but as a way of life, depending upon and inspired by revealed truth, and to be lived in community. But it is necessary to be clear about the nature of this community. It was not a club for the performance of rites, formed by those who desired to carry out certain practices in common, like the groups associated with the mystery-religions. It cut across the bounds of race and language, and united the Roman citizen with the provincial, the freedman and the slave. Its differentia consisted not in a common programme chosen by its members, but in a common attitude to God, of recognition of His loving act towards them in calling them into the knowledge of Him through Christ. Beginning as it did with those who had the preparation of Jewish piety and expectation, it claimed to be the successor of that Israel, that chosen people of God, of which the Jewish scriptures spoke, but from which now the last vestige of racialism and particularism was expunged.

This is to say that it possessed a unity not achieved, but given. We shall see later of what enormous practical importance this fact is when we look at it in

its world-wide manifestation and consider it in relation to our characteristic modern problems. But for the moment we have only to understand what the fact of the Church is. It is not the same thing as the idea of "humanity", though it excludes all racialism. Its unity is not based upon something common to all men (except their need of God), but upon something that God has done for all men. No one can therefore be excluded from it if God calls him in; so that it can offer to the whole race of mankind a welcome that no other can match. It does not exhort men to be united; it tells them that if they will turn and know themselves and give themselves to God they will find that they are united. That unity, moreover, the Church will claim not to be something romantic and unreal, imposed by artifice upon a reality of division and enmity which is fundamentally impatient of it, but a return, through repentance and spiritual change, to that which was in the divine purpose of creation for all men.

Finally, there is in the conception of the Church, as the New Testament presents it to us, the promise of an energizing and recreating life. This life is nothing less than the life of its Master, made available to those who, in the Pauline phrase, are His "members". To most Christians this common life is conceived of sacramentally; to all it is in some measure a reality. The point is vital, and the sins and cowardices and divisions of Christians ought not to blind an intelligent observer to its importance. The claim is so great that it would

be intolerably ambitious were it not made in humility, giving thanks to God. It is the claim to be the society of mankind in which God's purpose is being worked out and wherein the spirit of Christ is to be seen at work. As such, it has no ends of its own to serve, but only the duty to testify to Christ, to pray and labour for the coming of God's Kingdom everywhere, and to be itself, God helping it, a token and earnest of that consummation.

We turn now to a closer examination of these claims in their bearing upon life to-day, and shall particularly ask how far there exists in the world of practical experience anything which affords a verification of these truths.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FACT OF THE WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

It is, perhaps, a sign of the extent to which the life and thinking of our time have become secularized that one so rarely encounters a just understanding of the place of the Christian community in the world. It would probably come as a severe shock to the average thoughtful person to be told that the last hundred years have seen the most rapid and most widespread extension of the Christian Church<sup>1</sup> that all the centuries of our era can show. It is so often said that "the ages of faith are past" or "the Church has ceased to count", that it is forgotten, or never realized, how remarkable, and indeed astonishing, are the facts. This is said deliberately, and without ignoring the solid reasons, rooted in the life and witness of the Church, for the disregard in which so many hold it.

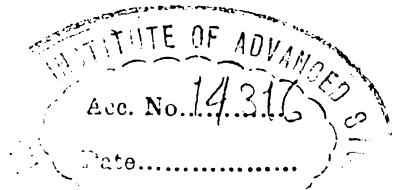
The growth of the Christian Church has been continuous throughout the nineteen centuries of its life, but it has not been regular. There has been a steady interplay between the ever-changing conditions

<sup>1</sup> The word "Church" is used to denote the general company of Christians. The phrase "Christian community" might be used, but in some countries has a special meaning.

of the countries and peoples from which and to which the Gospel was preached, and the permanent, unchanging purpose of world evangelization which finds its warrant and charter in the command of Christ and in the Christian experience of God. For long periods there has been an apparently complete forgetfulness of the divine commission: theological controversy or some other preoccupying factor has barred the way. There have been periods when the Church has lost more than it has gained, notably when, with the rise of Islam from the seventh century onwards, great areas in which there had been large churches became, as they still are, Muslim. Yet it remains true that there has been an extension of the Church among all races and peoples, variable but always increasing, until in the last hundred years it has reached altogether new levels both in extent and in vigour.

The great periods of the Christian expansion are clearly marked, and it is interesting to recall them.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the fifth century the whole of the Roman Empire had been drawn within the orbit of the Church, and paganism remained, if at all, in the remote country districts and among select circles of intellectuals. Beginning with the Jews of the dispersion, themselves to some extent Hellenized, the faith spread among individuals and families, despite the most ferocious

<sup>1</sup> See K. S. Latourette: *History of the Expansion of Christianity*; also in Vol. 3 of Tambaram Conference series.



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persecution, and only in the latter part of the period did whole communities begin to offer themselves for baptism. By the end of the fifth century the Empire had become formally Christian, and outside it, in Ireland, Armenia, Persia, Arabia, Ethiopia and probably India, there were Christian communities.

The next period is the thousand years to the end of the fifteenth century. In this period the faith was accepted mainly by great communities, and political and even military inducements were used by kings and rulers who had determined upon the change. While much of the Christianity of the Levant and North Africa succumbed to Islam, the peoples of Northern Europe accepted Christianity. It was a mixed business. A king, as in Norway, would use the new faith as a way of strengthening the royal authority over the nobles; or, as in Hungary, the missionaries were also the teachers of the culture of Western Europe. But in this same period the presence of the authentic spirit of Christian witness is made plain by great men like Anskar, the apostle of Scandinavia, or the English Boniface, who, one recalls with gratitude to-day, took the Gospel to Germany. In this period, too, Russia and the Slav peoples of the Balkans accepted Christianity, and the amazing but short-lived expansion of Nestorian Christianity into Asia took place.

The third period is the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Here the growth of the Church went along mainly with the development of Spanish

and Portuguese colonization. In such lands as Paraguay, Mexico, Brazil, Peru and in the Philippine Islands large numbers called themselves Christians. The passionate missionary devotion of such men as St Francis Xavier carried them to India, China and Japan. In the two former countries what was won was retained, more or less, in later growth; but in Japan, after an almost spectacular success, there followed a terrible persecution, and within less than a hundred years of the present time there were still notices displayed in public places making the profession of Christianity an offence punishable by death. In this period also both the Dutch and the British began to accompany their colonizing with Christian evangelization, and the pietist movement in Germany gave rise to a missionary expansion, in which perhaps the most remarkable feature was the wonderful work of the little Moravian Church.

The last period is from the end of the eighteenth century to our own days. It is in this period that the missionary expansion of the Protestant or non-Roman churches, though it began earlier, reached its full strength. The special features of this period go a long way to justify the assertion already made that the world-wide expansion of the Church is not a waning movement, but rather one that grows in strength. It is in this period, far more than in any other, that the Gospel has been carried not only to the more primitive peoples, or to those whose cultures and national life

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were in dissolution, but to the peoples of ancient religion and highly developed culture such as those of India, China and Japan, where earlier efforts had been slight compared with those of the nineteenth century. The geographical spread of Christianity in this latter period has been extraordinary. Even now there are regions, such as Afghanistan, Tibet proper, most of Central Asia and some others, in which Christian witness is either negligible or wholly absent, but it can now be said, as it could not be said in any previous century, that literally throughout the world, among languages, races and cultures the most diverse conceivable, the Gospel has been preached and a living Church has arisen.

Another noticeable fact, which also points to increasing life, is the change in the relation between the missionary Church and the governments of the countries from which the missionaries went forth. In the earlier periods the alliance between Church and State in missionary expansion was very close, and it was to that alliance that the size of the ingatherings was mainly due. But in the later period there came about a great change. More often than not the missionary was looked at somewhat askance by the official; diplomatic protection was given only in the same way as to other citizens abroad, financial subsidies to schools or hospitals were given only on a basis of efficiency and equally to the schools and hospitals of non-religious or non-Christian bodies. The missionary

protesting against abusive treatment of the natives among whom he worked—"the attorney of the backward peoples"—became a familiar feature.

A final point which may be singled out is the astonishing breadth of the base from which support was drawn. There were, roughly speaking, 30,000 missionaries of the Protestant or non-Roman Churches at work at the end of this period, and a like number of Roman Catholics; they were supported to the tune of approximately £18,000,000 a year, and that sum was supplied by countless individuals, the bulk of them of small means, in most of the countries of Europe, North America and the British Dominions.

Put at its lowest, this is a remarkable series of facts. At the least, it represents a factor in world affairs of very considerable moment. It is a curious commentary on our common Christianity that it should be so little known even among professing Christians, and that the apocryphal picture of the black-coated missionary under the palm-tree, equipped with Bible and hymn-book, should be taken as a good enough cause for the conventional attitude of either genial tolerance or jeering scorn. On any showing, the thing is too big for that.

"Well," it may be said, "granted that it has been a not inconsiderable human achievement, has this expanding Christianity achieved anything real? Granted that a small minority of Christians have cared enough about it to support it with money and

personnel, may it not have been rather an expensive futility, or at best a piece of vain heroism? ”

To this two different answers may be made. One is that those who believe in the world-wide Christian movement would go on with it whether success were discernible or not, just as the pioneer missionaries had to labour in faith for long, hard years before any results of their labour were apparent. Even to-day some of the most deeply Christian work being done anywhere in the world is done in the faith that a later generation of workers will see the fruits. But it is not necessary to make this reply, for it is abundantly possible to show that in fact a very great deal has been achieved. It is only possible here to single out a few main facts out of a record that might be indefinitely prolonged.

Let us first consider India, of all the Eastern countries that in which a Christian church has longest existed, and at the same time by its own history, the debt the whole East owes to it for religious leadership, and the diversified character of its population, one of the most fascinating lands in the whole world. There are about six and a half millions of Christians in India, but the mere fact conveys little. It is a great number, yet it is small in comparison with the vast population that stretches from the Himalayas and the Afghan and Tibetan frontiers to Cape Comorin—so small a proportion that when the politicians begin to count the numbers of minorities, they often forget to mention the Christians. But the effect of the coming of Christianity to India

has been profound, both in its direct consequences in Indian life and in those that have been more indirect.

Much the most obvious fruit of Christianity in India, especially in recent years, is the new life which it has brought to many thousands—it is even possible to say millions—of the outcastes or untouchables. These people, numbering perhaps sixty millions, have been for innumerable years kept beyond the pale and deprived both of the elementary human rights and of any real place within the Hindu religion, which nevertheless claimed them for itself. It is one of the major facts of modern Indian life that there has come about a new spirit and outlook among these poor folk. It is more comparable with the awakening of labour in the West than with any other fact in modern social history. To-day the removal of the stigma of “untouchability” is a principal plank in Mr Gandhi’s programme; bills are introduced into provincial legislatures to allow the entry of these despised people into the temples from which they have been excluded. More significant is the fact that the untouchables themselves have become infected with a new courage and hope. They have produced their own leaders, among whom Dr Ambedkar of Bombay is the most important, and it is one of the ironies of history that although Mr Gandhi has laboured for them with a wholly sincere and unselfish fervour, his claim that “untouchability” is no part of Hinduism, but an excrescence to be removed, is scouted by the most vigorous of the untouchables’

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leaders, and the new spirit that he has done much to arouse by his championing of them is leading them away from the Hindu fold in which he would keep them.

The "untouchables" are now almost fashionable in India, at least so far as published programmes are concerned, but they were not always so. Neither the historian of India nor the "untouchables" themselves will forget that when no one else in the whole country gave a thought to these degraded folk, living in the foul hovels at the edge of the caste villages, often kept from the wells, their children barred from the schools, their livelihood gained in the filthiest jobs, the Christians took up their cause. The Christian preaching came, with its news—in very truth good news—of a God who was neither fickle nor cruel like the devils and local godlets of their degraded worship, but could be thought of as like in mind and purpose to the Jesus of whom they heard such wonderful stories, and heard them gladly. Many of their children got the chance of going to school, with the result that in all parts of India, and notably in the South, there are to be found Christian men in education, the judiciary or government service whose fathers or grandfathers came from these submerged strata of Hinduism.

To-day there is a definitely Christian movement within this larger movement of the "untouchables" towards freedom and dignity. Probably about 200,000 a year are being received into the Church. That it is *a genuinely religious movement* is shown by two facts

in especial. One is that in most cases the convert has to face opposition and possibly persecution from his caste masters, so that any earthly advantages that may come to him later have to be seen against the background of immediate hardship. The other fact is that in certain parts of India, and notably in the northern part of the Madras Presidency, what began as a movement of outcastes towards the Church has now become also a movement of the caste people. The inspiring motive is not hard to find. In innumerable cases there has been so plain an improvement in the lives of the "untouchable" Christians, both individually and corporately, that the neighbours, including those who are their masters and have never dreamed that it could be possible to derive religious stimulus from these poor people, have begun to ask what it is that they have received that has worked this change.

It would be a very great mistake to under-estimate the importance of this historic movement because the people primarily affected by it are beyond the pale of respectable Hinduism. Its greatest significance is for Hinduism itself. We asked the question at an earlier point, on what grounds we may hold, against the doctrines of the racialists and blood-and-soil people, that man, individual man, has worth and significance. The same question is being put by the march of events to the orthodox forces of Hinduism. Why is the oppression or, if that is too strong a word, the continued

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under-privilege of the "untouchable" wrong? What motive is brought into play to stir people to uplift him? On the whole, it is the forces of nationalism, often of a somewhat agnostic tinge, that have mainly stood up for the "untouchable" and the forces of orthodoxy that have denied him. But nationalism, powerful as it is in its emotional drive, cannot give to the "untouchable" the inner release and fresh impulse that will make a man out of him.

"We were dogs. Only Christ could have made men out of us," said a group of Christians, drawn from the "untouchables", to a missionary who was probing into the grounds of their conviction. It is the old story of a new moral dignity coming in the wake of an understanding, no matter how crude and elementary, of the loving act of God. Once it begins to dawn upon the soul that God "so loved that He gave", other things begin to happen, for the centre of the world has now changed. This is in every respect as true for those of the lowest culture as for those of the higher. It would be to miss the whole meaning of this Christian impact on India if it were assumed that it is the education and the economic aid that have worked the miracle, and that for these degraded people religious insight is impossible. All the evidence goes to show that where economic help has been put in the front there has been little advance, and that where a definitely evangelical preaching has come first there has been laid a foundation on which other building could follow.

This, then, is one great instance of the reality of that insight and those living forces which the Christian Church believes that it draws from Christ. The fact that this type of work, already described, is carried on by Indians and foreigners together and that it have been harnessed the educational, agricultural and sociological resources of America and Europe, emphasizes the universal quality of the movement. But it is not only by this attack upon the evil of caste tyranny that the Christian Gospel makes itself felt in India. There is a wealth of evidence to show that the higher reaches of Hindu thinking have been radically affected by it, to an extent that the comparatively small numbers who have braved the rigours of family ostracism and publicly embraced Christianity do not at all indicate.

This is very clearly shown in the reform movements of modern Hinduism. The strength of the criticism, implicit and explicit, that is levelled by Christianity against caste and idolatry is shown not least by the kind of defence and re-statement offered for these things. Idolatry as a kind of sacramentalism, caste as a sort of *noblesse oblige*—it is no challenge to the sincerity of those who urge these views to suggest that the original and, as it would seem, the plainer meaning of these practices has become morally intolerable under the criticism of Jesus Christ. When a distinguished social reformer, who has stood in the breach defending unpopular causes all his life, and whose keen

nationalism estranges him from Christianity, says that the Hindu doctrine that "I am my neighbour" is at least as powerful a motive to social reform and service as the Christian doctrine of "love to my neighbour", one is moved to ask whether he would ever have thought of that if left to the immanent logic of Hinduism. The truth is, surely, that service and sacrifice for others have come to be seen as morally necessary; the theological foundation has the appearance of an after-thought.

It is not possible to exaggerate the power which the figure of Jesus Christ has exerted in India. The truth of this is in no way minimized by the fact that many of those who acclaim Him deny that Christians understand Him, and would have it that He is more truly to be comprehended within Hinduism. That can be left to look after itself. There is a widespread though tacit acknowledgment that it is by the standards contained in that Life and that story that men are to judge.

But what of the Church—the community of Christians? Has it had anything to say to India, the India of nationalism and religious culture, as well as to the outcaste and the aboriginal? Mainly two things. In the first place, it has shown the possibility of a complete transcending of caste—and caste is one of the most powerful social systems ever devised by man. It is not forgotten, in saying this, that there has been in certain regions a serious failure on the part of

Christians to overcome caste, a failure now put to shame as Hindus awake to the evil of the thing. But this should not obscure the major fact, that at the Holy Table those who have been wholly separated from every social contact have joined together, and that on the whole the Church has stood firm, against all the temptations to easy success that compromise might bring with it, on the principle which is as clear in the case of caste as it was for St Paul in the case of Judaizing privilege.

The other point is that when it is remembered that the Christians of India are a small minority, compared with the masses of Hinduism and the seventy millions of the Muslim minority, the extent to which their leaders have stood out against the poison of communalism is remarkable. On the whole, the political leaders of the Christian community have been ready to trust the fortunes of their community, considered as a political entity, to the goodwill of the major communities, and have only accepted such devices as the communal electorate when it had become plain that that was the framework within which they were compelled to work. Moreover, there have not been wanting voices among them to say that the Church was more than, and different from, a community, and to hold up in a country where, alas, community and religion, political position and spiritual bonds have tended to go together, the fact of a spiritual fellowship. In this, there can be no doubt, they have

been helped by the fact that through the missionary movement (even if they were highly critical of it) they enjoyed the reality of contact with the Christian life of the rest of the world.

If we turn to China there is spread before us another picture of a small minority of Christians in the midst of a colossal population, and of an influence being wielded out of all proportion to those numbers, a nominal four millions, of whom about three millions are Roman Catholics, out of over four hundred millions. There is no caste in China, and there has been consequently none of that tremendous difficulty which confronts the educated high-caste young Indian as he faces the claims of Christian discipleship. Add to this the extent to which education in Christian institutions has formed the minds of a large proportion of the younger leaders, and we do not find it hard to understand how the influence of Christianity in the life and leadership of China has been out of all proportion to numbers.

We shall come later to the moving record of the Chinese Church in time of war. The spirit that has been so clearly manifested in these days of stress was shown before, in the bold acceptance of the duty of evangelism even in the face of the troubled condition of the country ten years ago. To launch a "Five Years' Movement" for a great increase of the Church throughout China at a time when economic and political difficulties were at their sharpest, argued

either great unrealism or great faith and insight—and the leaders were men and women of realistic temper. They were right, for only by holding fast to its spiritual message and to the duty to bear it to all men can the Church bring any help at all to those in need. As with the Indian “untouchables”, it is the spiritual message of repentance and life that is the foundation of all else. The Church was saved from defeatism by the fact that in the face of great difficulty it had not been afraid to go forward; what it learned then was to stand it in good stead a few years later, when China was to face still greater difficulties at the hand of a foreign invader and to need every element of strength available to her.

During these years of nation-building under the imminent prospect of invasion by a jealous neighbour, the Christian forces have been well in the front of Chinese effort in medicine, social reconstruction in ravaged provinces, rural co-operation and in all the many forms taken by education in a country still backward but determined upon national advance. It is well known how much the New Life Movement owed to Christian assistance, though the ideas of that movement were as much Confucian as Christian. Most of the qualified foreign observers of the present Chinese scene agree that the moral nerve of China in her hour of agony is to be found in the personal characters of the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek, and his wife, more than anywhere else. We can gain some understanding of what that remarkable pair have found in

their Christian faith in the statements they have made in public. One of the most remarkable was the Good Friday address given by the Generalissimo after his release from kidnapping in Sian. It was a simple and even naïve statement of what the example of Jesus Christ had meant to him in his captivity and anxious concern for the future of China.

“ Without religious faith there can be no real understanding of life. Faith in the cause of a revolution is not unlike religious faith. . . . Often when face to face with opposition and possible danger we are prone to retreat and abandon our work half-way. Such lack of confidence in ourselves is often due to the absence of a strong religious faith. I have now been a Christian for nearly ten years, and during that time I have been a constant reader of the Bible. Never before has this sacred book been so interesting to me as during my two weeks' captivity in Sian. . . . I found myself placed under detention without having a single earthly belonging. From my captors I asked but one thing, a copy of the Bible. In my solitude I had ample opportunity for reading and meditation. The greatness and love of Christ burst upon me with new inspiration, increasing my strength to struggle against evil, to overcome temptation and to uphold righteousness.

“ I am indeed grateful to all my fellow-Christians

who continually offered prayers on my behalf. I was deeply conscious of a strong spiritual support . . . to which before you all to-day I testify, that the name of God may be glorified.

“The many virtues of Christ I cannot possibly enumerate. To-day being Good Friday, I wish to explain some of the lessons I have derived from the trials of Christ. His utterances from the Cross are our spiritual inheritance. Entreating forgiveness for His enemies, he cried: ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ Truly great is the love of Christ.”

Again in an Easter broadcast a year later he said: “Taking Jesus as the pattern of our lives and adopting His spirit as our spirit, His life as our life, let us march bravely on towards the Cross, in our effort to bring about a permanent peace among men and the revival of the Chinese people.” No doubt the words of the Chinese leader, himself a Christian young in the faith, suggest that China’s freedom is for him bound up with his religious objective, but no one can miss the authentic note of the man who has seen Christ.

Let us now turn for a moment to glance at the problem which offers the closest parallel the Far East has to show to the exaggerations of State-worship in totalitarian Europe, the practice of shrine worship, nominally not religious but patriotic in meaning and content. It would be very strange if there were not

a conflict between this practice and the Christian conscience, because while in its milder forms (and especially as normally practised in Japan itself) it can be held to be no more than a patriotic gesture, in Formosa, Korea and in the nominally free but actually Japanese province of Manchuria it has assumed forms which mean nothing if they do not mean the religious adoration of State and emperor as absolute. It is, unfortunately, not possible to point to any important Japanese Christian action in protest against this practice in the most recent years when it has grown strong; indeed, Japanese Christians have gone very far in accepting the official valuation of their country's mission in Eastern Asia and investing it with Christian meaning. This has made it appear plausible to accuse the Korean or other non-Japanese Christians who may protest as being actuated by patriotic and not religious motives. Yet anyone who has exposed himself to the evidence (and there is much that can be said in favour of conformity to the State rites) will find it hard not to agree that among a number of the Christians there were found the same keen jealousy for the purity of the Gospel and the same refusal to confound the worship of the one true God with anything else in the world that led members of the German confessional Church to endure suffering as the necessary consequence of their witness. It does not appear that protest has arisen from any others but Christians.

We come back again to the truth that the freedom

of man depends upon the recognition of God. No enslavement of man is so complete or so subtle as that which follows upon the deification of that which is not God—whether it be State, nation, race or class. In the Japanese Empire this form of idolatry is united with ancient institutions and all the force of patriotism; it is an obvious buttress to an official programme of Asiatic, and perhaps world, domination. That a protest has been made against it in the name of the Christian understanding of God and man, albeit the protest has been weak and apparently unavailing, shows that there is a vital Christianity at work. It may be that great issues for the whole of the East hang upon what is done in this matter during these years.

When we turn to Africa, it is very plain how much the Christian Church and the Christian message have come to mean to the life of that continent. Here are no developed religious cultures with their literatures and sacred books, but the closely knit web of tribalism and customary law, yielding fast to the inroads of government, trade, industry, and education that come with the white man. In the whole of Africa only Liberia is not under the control of European States. The question, therefore, is not how to preserve tribalism, but, in view of its certain disappearance, how to achieve the necessary transition to a new type of social, economic and political order. It has been very widely agreed that the contribution of the Christian Church is not only valuable but absolutely indispensable. The

bulk of education in tropical and in southern Africa is still in the hands of Christians, largely aided by the resources of governments. What is the alternative? A secular culture would be impossible to people who are emerging or have just emerged, from the profoundly religious unity of tribal life. Islam has a strong hold in the north of the continent, but though its freedom from racialism is a great asset and it offers a simple creed, it has within it nothing of the revitalizing force which a disintegrating society needs if it is to be re-made.

The one great failure that must be laid to the account of Christianity in Africa is that it has too easily made terms with the spirit of racial intolerance. South Africa has now become of all the lands of earth that in which the racial struggle is keenest. The eyes of the rest of Africa, and of India also, are fixed upon what happens in South Africa. The white population, and not least the Christians, are sensitive to outside criticism on this matter, and it is not to be denied that they have a problem to be solved which faces only those white men who do not merely live as temporary sojourners, traders and officials, among a backward people, but bring up their families among them and make their home in the country. But it is not easy to accept the consequence of racial discrimination within the Church itself, and the passivity of much of the Christian community in the presence of real and deep injustice. An example of the way in which the international Christian conscience reacts to this matter

is to be seen in the recent action taken by the body representative of the bulk of the Christians of India which wrote to the Christians of South Africa in appeal to them to withstand the proposed rigid segregation of Indians in the Union of South Africa. There is every indication at the moment that the trends of legislation will drive the Indians, the people of mixed blood and the pure Africans into a common camp of "colour". No other issue transcends this in importance, and it is by its behaviour in regard to it that the changing society of Africans will judge the Christian Church. An interesting sign of the times is the great growth in separatist African churches. In part, no doubt, they are due to the desire to escape the rigour of the orthodox Christian rule in regard to polygamy, but they are also due to the longing for a Christian society to be controlled by the African and not by the white.

Some of the most remarkable developments of Christian life are in the island world of South-eastern Asia, the South Seas and Madagascar, which, though near Africa, belongs to another world. Here are to be found great churches embracing a considerable proportion, sometimes a majority, of the population. In the Dutch Indies there are regions where more than three-quarters of the tribes have become Christians. In Madagascar there are large and rapidly growing village churches numbering hundreds of thousands. In the southern seas are to be found island groups where

the entire society has become Christian. In Sumatra there is a church, built up by the labours of German missionaries among the Bataks, which now numbers some half a million Christians. These people were cannibals up to less than a century ago; they have now a church in which the whole of the ministry is supported by the people themselves.

Perhaps enough has been said to justify the assertion that there is in the world, to an extent little realized by the bulk of professing Christians, a living Church, rooted in every soil and bearing everywhere the distinctive fruits of the Christian spirit. Often it is very small and weak, sometimes it has settled down to the status of a recognized social group and little more. It has proved unable to overcome its own divisions or to attain the outward unity which ought to correspond to the tremendous things which in all its parts it believes in common. None can criticize it so severely as those who belong to it and love it, for they know by what standards it ought to be judged. But when all this has been said, what is there on the earth like it?

If in these pages more has been said of the Church in the lands of the East and Africa and the island world, *and less of the older Christian world of the West*, it is *because even to-day so few Christians are aware to any adequate degree of the vast, growing, living, world-wide fellowship to which they are called to belong.* But the life and growth of the Church throughout the world are essentially one. In the case of the

Roman Communion this is more obvious than with those Churches which do not accept the papal obedience, but the difference is more apparent than real. Whether we look to Anglican or Roman, Reformed or Lutheran, we see a sharing of effort between the Christians of all parts of the world such as is without parallel in any other department of human activity and is to-day more marked than at any other time in human history.

The most recent years have witnessed some striking manifestations of this fact of a world-wide Christian fellowship. Even those to whom the holding of conferences is most suspect can hardly fail to agree that the great gatherings from all over the world which came to Oxford and to Edinburgh in 1937, to take common counsel about the Church's witness in the face of the growing menace of the totalitarian State and about the Church's unity in faith and order, marked something of an epoch in Christian history. When at Madras, a year later, another gathering was held in which the "older churches" of the West were joined in still greater force by the "younger churches" of the East, of Africa, of the Pacific islands and Latin America, and when, on the very eve of the European war, a great concourse of Christian young people from all over the world met at Amsterdam, there had been carried through a process of historic importance. Mr T. S. Eliot<sup>1</sup> says, "I think that some events during the last

<sup>1</sup> *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 53.

twenty-five years have led to an increasing recognition of the supra-national Christian society," and adds that if that is not marked by such conferences as those above mentioned, "then I do not know of what use these conferences have been".

To sum up our argument so far as we have got: there has grown up in the world a society unique among all human institutions. While it is a human institution in the sense that it takes the colour and lives within the life of the most diverse human societies, it is precisely its claim upon its members that it does not rest on any human identities or consent of human wills. It took its origin in something that God did for men. Chequered as its growth has been, it has had at the heart of it an irrepressible longing to give to those without it the knowledge that is the secret of its life. The varied ministries of social uplifting, education and compassion to which it is devoted, in a measure without parallel in the world, have their origin not in a vision of human betterment alone, but in a deep sense of debtorship to God's love, only to be discharged—and even so it can never be discharged—in witness and service. To this central adoring consciousness of the love of God all its life is in the last resort related. If it has brought hope to the oppressed and fresh dignity to the down-trodden, this is not because of a philosophical doctrine of human equality, but because these "little ones", as Jesus called them, are seen as the objects of His love. Always it has reminded the societies of

mankind that they and their powers and authorities are under the sovereignty of God, and that the way out of human trouble is by listening to the divine call to repent. It has been able most effectively to sound that call when within itself it has known contrition. Even in its periods of greatest self-absorption it has not forgotten that the Kingdom of God is other than the noblest ambitions of men, and that the Church itself is to be judged not by its human efficiency, but by its faithfulness in witness to that Kingdom.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CHURCH IN TIME OF WAR

It may well be asked now, "What has this unique fellowship, of which you write, been able to do in the face of the supreme human catastrophe of war?" Indeed, it is in no spirit of boasting that a Christian to-day can dwell upon the long history of the Church or contemplate its far-flung life. To whom much has been given, from them shall much be required. It would be so much more comfortable if the Church could regard itself as only a vehicle of religious culture and could happily remain merely an aspect of the human societies in which it is imbedded. But to hold to the vision that is given to us and not to be disobedient to it is an arduous and humbling task in such days as these.

Nevertheless, it is in the witness of the Church in time of war that we can see most clearly the true nature of the message it has in trust for the whole world, and there is no lack of evidence that such witness is being borne.

To begin with, this drawing together on the part of the Christian forces throughout the world has been accomplished at a time when the influences that were tearing the world into pieces were fully apparent;

the increased faith in a supra-national society was not a fair-weather gospel, conceived when it was easy to believe that the world was such as you would have it to be. For instance, at the Oxford gathering the whole problem of war and peace and the meaning of the universal Church in a world of nations was discussed by people who knew very well that within a comparatively short time they might be called to act upon their protestations. After reviewing the different attitudes which Christians are found to hold in regard to taking part in war, and asserting that

“ the unconditional supremacy of the State or nation, advanced in time of peace or of war, is incompatible with the Church’s faith in Jesus Christ as its only Lord, and is therefore unacceptable as the final norm of judgment or action,”

they went on to portray the work of the Church in time of actual war in words that are worth quoting in full.

“ The Church, confessing its faith in redemption through Jesus Christ, sees in every man a ‘ brother for whom Christ died ’. In time of war, as in time of peace, it should pray not only for the nation in which God has placed it, but also for the enemies of that nation. If Christians in warring nations pray according to the pattern of prayer given by their Lord, they will not be ‘ praying against ’ one another. The Church should witness in word,

in sacramental life, and in action to the reality of the kingdom of God which transcends the world of nations. It should proclaim and obey the commandment of the Lord, 'Love your enemies'." <sup>1</sup>

Again, the four hundred and seventy from seventy nations that met at Madras were living in no fools' paradise. The Chinese had crossed Japanese lines to get there—and to meet the Japanese Christians. Germans met with British knowing that their common sharing in the missionary enterprise and their whole common faith might be tested again, and more terribly than before, in the agony of totalitarian war. Both war and persecution had become for some actually present not possibilities in face of which they had to determine what they might do, but realities by which already they had been tested. Accordingly there is more than a vague aspiration behind such words as these:—

“ We are penitently conscious that in the past all our nations have sinned, and that we are all involved in the system which has resulted in the present international tension and conflict. Our own gathering has been to us a convincing promise of a world fellowship in Christ which transcends all divisions of nation and race, and thus condemns

<sup>1</sup> *The Churches Survey Their Task*, pp. 182-3.

the strife and conflict which so largely dominate the peoples of the world to-day.”<sup>1</sup>

“ . . . (in time of war) Christians should refuse to accept a break in fellowship, and should use every spiritual and material means to cherish their sense of brotherhood in Christ.”<sup>2</sup>

We may look at three different phases of the Church's life in time of war: the Chinese Church facing the aggression of Japan; the handling of German missionary work during war conditions; and the attitude of the European Churches.

It has been remarked more than once that the Church-life of the West, mature and deeply rooted as it is by comparison with that of the young Christian communities of China, would do well if it could rise to the level of Christian love shown in war-time by many Chinese Christians. One of the things which most deeply impressed the Western delegates to the Madras meeting was the lack of bitterness among the Chinese delegates towards the Japanese, though plain things were said about the nature of Japanese national policy. The well-known Chinese youth leader, Dr T. Z. Koo, gave memorable utterance to this spirit when he told the great gathering how it was easy to talk about loving your enemies; he had been able to love the Japanese quite easily while they stayed nine hundred miles away, but it was not so easy “ when the Japanese

<sup>1</sup> *The World Mission of the Church*, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140.

*were on your doorstep, waiting to be loved". But this attitude to the enemy nation was not confined, so we are told by those who have unquestioned knowledge, to the leading and mature Christians, but was found among the ordinary humble folk. Here is a British woman missionary writing about the Chinese Christians in central China:—*

“ What of the ordinary Christians, how are they reacting to the present conditions? Is their Christianity helping them? Let us first listen to their prayers. Among the things we notice are greater realization of their own weakness . . . confessions of their own sins and shortcomings . . . acknowledgment of the justice of God’s judgments, together with a simple trust in His power and love. . . . Very frequently there are prayers for the Japanese, that God will turn the hearts of the rulers and the militarists . . . that He will comfort the hearts of those who are mourning the loss of loved ones. . . . There is surprisingly little bitterness against the Japanese people as a people . . . they realize that the Japanese people are not allowed to know the truth about what their army is doing in China. The Christian women sympathize with the Japanese wives and mothers who are losing their husbands and sons in this war. . . . It would not be true to say that there is no bitterness against the invaders who are

so ruthlessly killing men, women and children and committing unspeakable atrocities . . . with frightfully realistic life-sized posters constantly before their eyes on the walls and the hoardings, showing in vivid detail every kind of horror that is being perpetrated; with inflammatory articles in all the newspapers; with terrible tales of suffering and brutal ill-treatment brought in by refugees from the war zone, they have no chance of forgetting these things and they simply would not be human if they did not feel bitter. Yet they say very little about it, and they pray for their enemies.”<sup>1</sup>

Another good authority<sup>2</sup> says that the dominant note in the Chinese Church is a desire for the liberation of the Japanese people and a readiness for reconciliation with them, together with a passionate desire for the freedom of China herself. He quotes a prayer used by the Chinese bishop, Lindel Tsen, at a service where Europeans and Chinese were both present:—

“Brothers in Christ, I exhort you, now that you have had communion with our Saviour, keep forever steadfast in that communion, in heart, in soul, in mind, in every fibre of your being.

“Remaining steadfast in that spirit, I exhort

<sup>1</sup> Miss Coxon, in *Christians in Action*, pp. 68–70.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. S. H. Dixon, in *Chinese Christians Face Their War*, pp. 17–18.

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you ever to remain steadfast and firm in your communion, so that your eyes will always be open to our Master's will, and that you will never do aught in thought, word or deed which will promote or cause such human misery.

“Brethren, I exhort you at this time to bethink yourselves of the weeping women of Japan—mothers weeping for sons who will never return, wives for husbands who are gone for ever. I exhort you to bethink yourselves of the desolation and grief of the orphaned children of Japan— orphaned in a cause in which the people of Japan have no heart.”

A former Oxford teacher, who was in Canton through the bombing and invasion, writes in a similar strain of his experience of the Chinese Christians:—

“Very striking has been the wonderful lack of vindictiveness, the acceptance of the suffering, the generosity towards the enemy. . . . Sometimes foreign missionaries, in their distress at seeing the pain of others, and in their longing to be one with the country they serve, have been inevitably drawn into the nationalism that blames and defames the enemy. The Chinese, both those openly Christian and those who are Christian in spirit if not yet Christian in name, seem to have learnt the Christ spirit of a love for enemies. They are an example to all the world, in the extent

to which they have kept that spirit amid the bitterness and sufferings of war.”<sup>1</sup>

The quotations might be multiplied almost indefinitely. It is a very wonderful thing that people who have come only lately into the Christian faith should have been able to show in action a Christian grace which is all too rare among us, just because it is so closely bound up with the Cross itself.

It is not surprising that the Church that is able to behave thus to its enemies should exhibit other power. There is much evidence to show that minds are turning to Christianity all over China because they find a quality in the Christians. It is a remarkable thing to find hard-pressed churches embarking upon new fields of labour at such a time; to read of the way in which the universities, bombed out of their homes, have gone on trek to other centres a thousand miles away, and then been bombed again and marched away on foot to another refuge, so that what were backward areas of the south-west have now become centres of national activity and also of Christian education and impulse.

Here, then, is one piece of evidence to show that the idea of a spiritual fellowship, in which men and women may be united even in war, is not just a matter of talk. Let us now consider another test, the matter of the missions of the German churches.

Missionary work is perhaps the aspect of the total life of the whole Church which is most immediately and rad-

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Allen, in *Christians in Action*, p. 56.

ically affected by war. Rupture of communications, blocking of finance, imprisonment and internment of those of "enemy" nationality—these are only some of the difficulties which afflict in time of war a delicate international mechanism like the missionary enterprise. The crux to-day, as in 1914-1918, is the German missions; for the reasons, first, that the larger part of the missionary work of the German churches is carried on in the countries of the British Empire or in lands mandated to Britain or the Dominions; and second, that German missions are mostly cut off from any possibility of obtaining German financial resources, even were the German Government willing to let such monies be sent. What has happened to these missions, and has the world-wide fellowship been of any use in time of stress?

One governing factor has been the position taken up by the British Government, and of this it is possible to speak with much appreciation. The expressed desire of the Government has been that Christian missionary work shall be carried on. It is idle to expect that all internment should be avoided, for missionaries may in certain cases hold views which, combined with the influence they properly wield among the people, make their internment necessary from the point of view of Government. During the war of 1914-1918, except in South Africa, German missionaries were practically all either interned or repatriated. The principle of discrimination is being followed on this occasion, as in the case of German

nationals, refugees and other, in the British Isles. Only those are interned who it is considered, after examination of the cases, ought not to be allowed to continue their work from the point of view of public security under war conditions. In every colonial territory and in the provinces of British India the appropriate bodies are considering the individual cases with a view to determining which of them can be allowed to continue their work.

Briefly, the position thus created is that in South Africa all the German men missionaries are continuing their work; that in Tanganyika a number have been released on parole; that in Nigeria and the Cameroons all are at their work; that on the Gold Coast and in Togoland most are interned. In India at the beginning of the war the men were interned, but a large proportion have now been released. In Palestine the key-men have been released. It may be added, before we depart from the Government side of the question, that every help has been shown by the official departments concerned to the missionary organizations (such as the International Missionary Council and the National Christian Council of India) charged with handling the matter.

The situation, then, comes to this: that within British-governed areas there are certain missions wholly or partly deprived of missionary leadership owing to internment, and that in other areas, as in South China or the Dutch Indies, the problem is one of finance; for the missionaries are at large, but are

wholly cut off from such meagre funds as recent German official policy has allowed to be sent from Germany to them.

Only a provisional statement can be made here on the measures that are being taken, for events do not stand still. Yet it is already possible to show that there is a responsibility accepted and discharged by the world-wide Christian movement. For example, on the Gold Coast the mission of the Scottish Church has assumed charge of the flourishing Ewe church in what was Togoland, and has taken steps also to safeguard the work of the Germans, especially in Christian education, in the Gold Coast territory. In Palestine the Anglican Bishop immediately constituted himself the guardian of the important German missionary work in Jerusalem, which included a famous orphanage and some good schools and hospitals, and in the north of Palestine the Scottish Church came to the rescue. In South India the Church of Sweden has assumed responsibility for helping the Tamil Church built up by the German Leipzig mission, while on the west coast British help is given and in the rest of India help is given by Lutherans from America. In Sumatra, where the remarkable Batak church has been built up, the Dutch are doing their best to help the stranded Germans, and the native Bataks, not content with providing the expenses for their own native ministry, are endeavouring to raise funds to help their German shepherds. These are only examples, but they are sufficient. It can be said with confidence that there

is no native Christian group anywhere in the world that has looked to German missionaries for its guidance that will go unshepherded. The burden will be assumed not only by British or American, Swedish or Swiss or Dutch missions, but also by the Indian or African or Chinese Christians themselves.

What of the European Churches? Can it be said that in any perceptible degree the sense that they are a part of a universal fellowship has influenced their life and witness? Religion, it is to be remembered, flourishes after a manner in time of war, for the natural instinct of the human being in trouble and fear is to take refuge in religious assurance, though this may be but little Christian. Religion that is not merely "religion" but the distinctive kind of life and obligation that has the mark of Jesus Christ upon it, will always be acutely conscious of the bond that unites all Christians, and also of the tension which must exist for the Christian conscience between the duty of resisting evil, on the one hand, and on the other the horror of war, the instrument by which resistance must be offered.

Of our own country each of us is as good a judge as another. The writer would only record his own opinion that the pronouncements made by those in the Churches to whom men look for guidance have in most cases been informed by a genuine sense of membership in a world community, and by that penitence which is the best guard against patriotic self-righteousness. The Bishop of Chichester put the matter in a way which

expressed the minds of many English Christians when he said:—

“It would be a grave calamity if the Church were for one moment to suspend its witness to that which alone can overcome war, or compromise its teaching by surrender to the necessities of the day. . . . The Church can express its solidarity with the nation . . . by being the Church—that is to say, by being a fountain of prayer, and by offering what the Church is divinely commissioned to offer to human beings, reconciliation with God, the worship of the family of God, the teaching of the Gospel about God’s purpose for human life now and the life of the world to come, and the proclaiming of the love of God for all men and all nations, as their common Father. The Church is a universal society, while it seeks to fulfil its mission in different nations. It binds its members in a unity which includes the members of the nation with which we are at war.”<sup>1</sup>

To what extent behind the fog of war this kind of Christian witness is offered in Germany it is hard to discover. There have been some nauseating statements by titular Christian leaders which are best forgotten and will not be quoted here. Of the existence within German Christianity of a wholly different temper there is assured evidence, and it is not necessary to emphasize the gigantic burden that lies upon those

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, September 7.

who would be faithful to the insights of a truly universal Christianity in a country isolated as Germany is to-day. The following statements are taken from a paper on the difference between the "unspiritual war prayer" and the "prayer of the Church of Jesus Christ." Its authorship cannot be stated, but the significance of the expression of such deeply Christian ideas in war-time Germany is not easily exaggerated.

"The unspiritual war prayer takes as its starting point, its intention and its content, the human will and human aims. God is to bring to success what man has set himself to do. It is assumed that He is the 'ally' in heaven. Hard-won successes are given religious consecration, and human intentions are thereby legitimized. God is a factor within human enterprises.

"In contrast to this, the Church of Jesus Christ prays to *God* the Lord, as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. It knows that God's Son, Jesus Christ, is the sovereign of all earthly kings, the Judge of the world. It is with Him that the history of mankind is concerned.

"The unspiritual war prayer puts before God ready-prepared, human judgments, in already formed conceptions and methods of expression, on the basis of a humanly established angle of approach. It does not allow God's glance to penetrate this sphere.

"The Church of Jesus Christ places itself and

the whole world beneath the all-knowing and examining *eye of God*. It knows that nothing can be named before God, no event and no person, without it thereby coming into the zone of God's holiness. Our God is a consuming fire. The Church of Christ knows that God can only be called upon in penitence.

“The unspiritual war prayer chooses the *subjects of its prayer* according to human ideas, and lets the emphasis and measure of value be determined by human standards.

“The Church of Jesus Christ remains, even in war, under the *guidance of the Lord's Prayer*, which puts the fourth request after the first three requests, and lets it be followed by the last three.

“The unspiritual war prayer lets alliance and separation be determined by the world. It disowns the *Communio sanctorum*.

“The Church of Jesus Christ refers to itself as *one Church* all over the world, separated from the opposition to its Lord, called to be merciful to all the suffering of living creatures.

“The unspiritual war prayer seeks to avoid the suffering which is enjoined upon the Christian in this world through the challenge of his Lord. It does away with dissension, or tries to gloss it over with theological reasoning or edifying phraseology.

“The Church of Jesus Christ rejects hasty comforters. It does not take refuge in ‘neutrality’. It does not ignore the distress of the heart and the

conscience. It affirms grief and judgment; it bears sorrow, it practices the 'kingly priesthood of the faithful', it prays for the strength to overcome, and believes in the victory of its Lord.

"The unspiritual war prayer is a powerless talking in the air, because it does not give God honour. It is not acceptable to God and will not be heard by Him. It is a prayer without Amen.

"The prayer of the Church of Jesus Christ is the *incense offering* on the golden altar before the throne of God."

We add a prayer lately ordered by the Archbishop of Uppsala to be used in Swedish churches, expressing much of the spirit of the Church in the northern countries, aware as they are of their special responsibility as interpreters and mediators :

"Almighty and everlasting God, our heavenly Father: Thou hast graciously promised us, through Thy only Son our Lord, that we may come to Thee with all our cares and needs. We therefore come to Thee, our God, trusting in Thy great mercy, and pray Thee to keep within bounds the violence and bloodshed which now prevail, to have pity on all victims of war, and soon to restore peace on our poor earth. We pray Thee, O merciful Father, to hold Thy protecting hand over our beloved Scandinavian countries in this time of need. We remember es-

pecially to-day our dear brother-country of Finland. Destroy the spirit of self-seeking in individuals and nations. Give to the peoples and statesmen thoughts of peace and reconciliation. Thou canst find a way where men know not what to do. In Thee we set all our hope, O Lord our God. Amen."

It is no disparagement of the many practical activities in which the "œcumenical" spirit among Christians shows itself if we fasten upon the life of worship as the truest indication of what is happening within the Church. Of such activities much might be said. They include the service rendered to internees and prisoners of war, both nationally and by international action, a service made possible more rapidly in this war than in the last through the existence of an international agreement signed at Geneva in 1929. There is also the inconspicuous work of numerous Christian scholars and men of affairs who seek to bring into the widespread discussion of "peace aims" the distinctive contribution of the Christian society. But in time of war even more than in time of peace the vital decisions are taken by the few, and full knowledge of the relevant facts is more than ever reserved to the few. The Church has another task: to turn the thoughts of men to the ways of God, and to testify continually to that reconciliation among men which God made possible when He reconciled men to Himself through Christ.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MESSAGE OF THE WORLD-WIDE CHURCH

“ TO-DAY convinced Christians are everywhere in a minority in a predominantly non-Christian world. For the relation of the Church to the community the mission-field is now normative. The relation of the Church in China to Chinese life is more typical than the relation of the Church in Britain to British life; indeed the inner reality in Britain may be more like that in China than is commonly suspected.”<sup>1</sup>

It is because we believe this to be true that so much space has been given to the growth of the Church in the “ mission-field ”; though that phrase is becoming less appropriate as it grows plain that wherever there is a living church the task of “ mission ” is laid upon it.

Mr T. S. Eliot says that modern English society is not a Christian society nor a pagan society, but a *neutral* society, in which the practice of Christianity is tolerated.

“ I am not concerned [he says] with the problem

<sup>1</sup> *The Churches Survey their Task*, p. 200.

of Christians as a persecuted minority. When the Christian is treated as an enemy of the State, his course is very much harder, but it is simpler. I am concerned with the dangers to the tolerated minority; and in the modern world, it may turn out that the most intolerable thing for Christians is to be tolerated.”<sup>1</sup>

Even those who take a more optimistic view of the present extent and influence of the Church and of the nature of our society will hardly deny that it is on some such estimate that we should do well to rely as we think and plan for the future. At least one thing is plain: that all our thinking about the nature of the influence which the Church can and should exert upon the world must rid itself wholly of any vestiges of the idea that the Church has, or can have, the kind of power that the State has. The idea may seem preposterous, stated baldly in this way, but it is by no means uncommon to find people still who would wish to rely upon the size and mass influence and command of popular assent which they believe the Church possesses, to exert its power upon the decisions of the State. On the strength of that influence at the moment there is room for division of opinion; the optimists may be more right than the pessimists, or they may not. The point to be made here is that *in either case* it is not by attempting to move the State by the exhibition of

<sup>1</sup> *The Idea of a Christian Society*, p. 23.

the secular kind of power that the Church can ever succeed. It has its own characteristic life; its methods must be dictated by that characteristic life; to try to meet the State by using the distinctive weapons of the State is to court certain failure, both by the standards of the State and by its own.

In the first chapter certain basal principles were briefly set forth as constituting the message and defining the nature of the life of the Christian society. They were: first, that God is, and that He has in Jesus Christ acted decisively in history; second, that from this loving act of God there proceeds an understanding and valuation of man, based upon that act of grace; third, that the Christian message does not offer to a needy society pieces of idealism to be worked into a faulty structure, but the call to repent and be "converted"; fourth, that the fellowship based upon this act of God has a unity which originates not in any common views or inherent identities in those who belong to it, but in that which they all in common owe to God; it is therefore not an achievement, but a gift. We have seen something of the working out of this dynamic fact over many centuries and in the most diverse lands and cultures. It has been proved true that a new life can be given to the most backward and degraded of men. It has been proved true that the common loyalty to Jesus Christ will hold men together even in the face of the tremendous fact of war. There is no blind self-satisfaction or false optimism in this;

those who know best how true it is know also how feeble the Church is, considered in relation to its task, and how much it has yielded in all its parts to the power of sin, especially to the sins of cowardice, sloth and pride which are the besetting sins of institutions. The case of the Church is not based upon human achievement, though judged by that standard it is a good case: it is based upon the faith that within it, even sometimes against appearances, the merciful and re-creating activity of God is at work.

There are three particular respects in which the message of the world-wide Church bears upon our present troubles and perplexities. First, let us consider the bearing of this unity of the Christian fellowship upon the question which occupies the minds of all serious persons to-day, the question of a better international order.

There is a fundamental difference between the idea of international unity and the nature of the bond that unites Christians. As the word properly implies, an "international" unity is one that is built upon the basis of national units. The League of Nations is, in the strict sense, an international organization, because the given facts with which it has to begin are the facts of separate national sovereignties. But the Church possesses a unity that cannot be called in a strict sense international. It does not begin with the given fact of nations, or of national churches. It begins with the given fact of God and His loving act, and it lives in the

power of a unity which is constituted by that fact. The word "œcumenical" is now much used to denote this specific kind of unity which belongs to the Church.

Now, this is not a mere matter of words. If all that the Christian Church could offer to a world which longs to find the way to unity was a unity composed of national groups, in the sense that until they were brought together they had no unity, it would be offering no more than the many secular associations can offer, and less than those who, by talking of the rights of "humanity", do at least try to get behind our divisions to a basis that may underlie them. The unity which lies behind the divisions of the Christian Church is anterior to all human divisions, because it belongs to God. If a German and an Englishman, a Chinese and a Japanese, who are Christians and take their profession seriously, begin to face together the divergencies that separate their nations, they find out something about themselves. They find that they know one another; at least that they know about each other what is the final loyalty; they face the problems of their separate national communities as members of a common community. This is sheer fact and not fancy; it is a statement born of experience.

Is not this a matter of very great importance for the cause of world order? It is more and more understood nowadays that international law is weak in the world chiefly because it is not supported by any common *ethos*, while the law of the State is, especially in a

country using free institutions, upheld by the common conscience of the members of the community. When again and again at the Oxford conference was heard the phrase, "Let the Church be the Church", it was meant, among other things, that the greatest service which the Church can render to the State is by *being itself*, not by trying to do the work of the State for it. It is precisely by strengthening its own consciousness of its own common and God-given life that it can bring about within the secular order more of that sense of belonging to one another and of mutual responsibility and commitment which is and must be the pre-condition of a better world order. It is, perhaps, needless to say that if the measure of interference with national sovereignty which was involved in signing the Covenant of the League has proved to be more than the nations will support, it is much more unlikely that they will advance towards a federation—*unless* that new world society, or approach to it, is undergirded by a great extension of common moral responsibility. At this point the Church has a distinctive work to do.

There is no space here to indicate the many ways in which this might be done. Those who have partaken, whether as students or in later life, in the experience of making friends of Christians of other races often forget how little of that experience is open to the average Christian. Much more might be done—and may yet be done when peace returns—to help ordinary folk to use their holidays abroad for a more intelligent under-

standing of European Christianity. But it is still the case that for the mass of Christians in our country it is the missionary movement which chiefly brings home to the ordinary man, woman and child in the pew that they are members of a society which is not only British.

The kind of knowledge and fellowship which is stored up in the Church can be useful in another way. As plans for the future order of Europe and the world gather definiteness they can be criticized by those who, while without the highest technical knowledge of international affairs, have both a grasp of Christian moral principle and also some personal knowledge of the standpoint of other countries. To be concrete—one of the major problems of the world is how the vast energies and abilities of the German nation can be fitted into a world order. Too often it is assumed that Germany must somehow accustom herself to the kind of political institutions in which the democratic Powers believe. But it would be better for those who both care for Germany and have German friends to try to work out *together*, beginning from the basis of mutual confidence which as Christians they can enjoy, the ways in which the particular characteristics of Germany can be met. Even in time of war the existence of Christian Churches in neutral countries offers possibilities of consultation. The same need of special consideration arises in the case of Japan, and must not be evaded.

An entirely different aspect of the Church's service is brought up in our second point. The Church can constantly testify to the way in which moral change is wrought. In the innumerable discussions which go on in the national newspapers about war and peace aims it is from time to time pointed out that you do not change an evil institution or system by defeating it. It may be necessary to defeat it as the first condition of changing it, and it may be necessary to prevent it from doing damage. But the changing of it is a moral and spiritual process.

The life of the Church is a testimony to this method of moral persuasion. It is, of course, much more than a matter of moral persuasion, for the Church knows the secret of transmitting spiritual goods and communicating spiritual realities. But it is possible to take courage, in spite of the many who hold that no change is possible except that which is achieved and guaranteed by force, when one contemplates the little bands of Christians, tiny minorities in great populations, who are essaying with a good courage the task of winning to the Christian faith ancient cultures and peoples, or who face the no less complicated problems of tribalism among the backward peoples.

It is not mere Utopianism to say this—and we are becoming altogether too realist and too much afraid of being called Utopians. There are special features of the life of the State, such as the problem of power and the limitations that belong to the corporate action of

the community, which must not be forgotten in the discussion of the bearing of Christian ideas upon the State. But it is still more foolish to forget the deep insight of the Christian judgment, which tells us that the true changes can *only* be made by love, by suffering, by prayer, by humble self-identification with need and with the sinner. The State and the method of law and compulsive force have their proper place, and harm is done by minimizing that place, but it is with these other methods, forces and insights that the final truth and power lie. So long as the Church lives with a life that can be called Christian it will remind the world of these truths.

A last point, and for our present condition not the least important. There is a danger which besets the Church within a nation in time of war, and it is a danger that is gravest when the war is judged by the opinion, not of the nation alone, but of the world as a whole, to be just. It is the danger of equating the success of the national effort in arms with the eternal ends of Christ's Kingdom. There is a way to be taken between two extremes. On the one hand, there is the easy way of finding all good on one's own side and all evil on the other; forgetting the various character of every great people and creating a personalized bogey endowed with every kind of vileness; acting, speaking and thinking as if the will of God was bound up with our own victory and all His purposes dependent upon it.

On the other hand, there is a danger, more subtle and much less common, of treating the Christian fellowship as if it were altogether *au dessus de la mêlée*, and the concrete choices that have to be made, including the choice to fight or not to fight, as outside the influence of that fellowship and not illuminated by it. In that case the common Christian life would have no bearing upon the larger part of men's lives, and be found only in those things which Christians can still do together in spite of the barriers of war.

The first of these errors is the result of a failure to recognize the true nature and calling of the Church, as it has been set forth, though very inadequately, in these pages and as it is to be found in actual experience. The second is due to an idealized and unreal "œcumenical" notion, which bears but little relation to the fact.

Anyone who lets his mind be immersed in the actual life of the Church to-day, and especially, perhaps, in the life of the "younger churches" of the mission-field, will find it a valuable aid in avoiding both errors. There is no better antidote to Christian self-righteousness, which nearly always treats the Church as an aspect only of the moral entity of the nation, than a continuous recollection of the world-wide fellowship in which all are bound together. For then the Church is seen truly, as a society not of righteous men but of those who are being saved; we remember our sins and the mercy of God.

But such recollection, if it is based on knowledge and informed by sympathy and understanding, will never lead to a merely mystical idea of the Church. We are not to identify our moral choice with the eternal Kingdom, but we are to act in the light of the eternal Kingdom. The œcumenical society of Christians must not become for us a twilight in which all cats are grey; there are real choices to be made between the right and the wrong. I may not forget that when I have made the best choice I can, I am a sinner who looks to a Saviour, but that does not exempt me from the duty of choice. The Church is not an escaping club.

The writer can only say, for himself, that such knowledge of the fellowship of Christians as he has been privileged to enjoy in many countries and not least in the mission-field, has been of incalculable value in helping him towards a just understanding of this. The Church as a whole is full of people facing choices that carry them into separate camps—Chinese, as we have seen, against Japanese; it is the joyful truth that the bond that unites us all does not depend upon an avoidance of conflicting action, but only upon a final submission to God as Judge and Christ as Saviour.

It is, however, in the life of prayer, which is the true life of the Church, that the deepest influence is wrought. It is in prayer more than in any other thing that we do, more than in the most earnestly debated action or anxious choice, that we become conscious of the fallibility of all our human designs and of the encircling

wisdom and love of God. Here thought and action pass into worship; we are in the presence of almightiness.

A German friend wrote recently: "There is much prayer in Germany for the Church of Christ all over the world." There is much prayer in the Church of Christ all over the world for Germany.

*Lord, have mercy upon us.*

*Books suggested for Further Reading*

*The Churches Survey Their Task*: Allen and Unwin.

*The World Mission of the Church*: International Missionary Council.

*The Idea of a Christian Society*: T. S. Eliot. Faber.

*World Community*: W. Paton. S. C. M. Press.



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