

The Fundamentals

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CHAPTER IV
FOREIGN MISSIONS OR WORLD-WIDE
EVANGELISM

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Argument in behalf of foreign missions is generally either needless or useless. It is needless with believers; with unbelievers it is useless. And yet not wholly so; for often believers and unbelievers alike have taken their opinions at second hand, and an honest first hand study of the facts and principles of the missionary enterprise leads the one group to believe with deeper conviction and a firmer hope, and shakes the scepticism and opposition of the others who have known neither the aims nor the motives which inspire the movement.

Because foreign missions is a religious movement, however, the fundamental argument for it is of necessity a religious argument, and will be conclusive only in proportion as the religious convictions on which it rests are accepted. It rests first of all upon God. If men believe in God they must believe in foreign missions. It is in the very being and character of God that the deepest ground of the missionary enterprise is to be found. We cannot think of God except in terms which necessitate the missionary idea.

He is one. There cannot, therefore, be such different tribal or racial gods as are avowed in the ethnic religions of the East, and assumed in the ethnic politics of the West. Whatever God exists for America exists for all the world, and none other exists. And that cannot be true of God in America which is not true of Him also in India. Men are not free to

hold contradictory conceptions of the same God. If there be any God at all for me, He must be every other man's God, too. And God is true. To say that He is one is merely to say that He is. To say that He is true is to begin to describe Him, and to describe Him as alone He can be. And if He is true He cannot have taught men falsehood. He will have struggled with their ignorance in His education of mankind, but it cannot have been His will (or be His will now) that some men should have false ideas of Him or false attitudes toward Him. A true God must will to be truly known by all men. And God is holy and pure. Nothing unholy or impure can be of Him. Anything unholy or impure must be abhorrent to Him, if in religion the more abhorrent because the more misrepresentative of Him, the more revolting to His nature. If anywhere in the world religion covers what is unclean or unworthy, there the character of God is being assailed. And God is just and good. No race and no man can have slipped through the fatherly affection of a loving God. Any inequality or unfairness or indifference in an offered god would send us seeking for the real one whom we should know was not yet found. A god who was idols in China, fate in Arabia, fetiches in Africa, and man himself with all his sin in India, would be no god anywhere. If God is one man's father, He is or would be every man's father. We cannot think of God, I say it reverently, without thinking of Him as a missionary God. Unless we are prepared to accept a God whose character carries with it the missionary obligation and idea, we must do without any real God at all.

When men believe in God in Christ the argument for missions becomes still more clear. It is by Christ that the character of God is revealed to us. One of His most bold and penetrating words was His declaration, "The day will come when they shall slay you, thinking that they do service unto God, and these things will they do unto you because they have not known the Father or Me." The best people of His day,

He declared, were ignorant of the true character of God. Only those truly knew it who discovered or recognized it in Him. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me. No man knoweth the Son save the Father, and no man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." These are not arbitrary statutes. They are simple statements of fact. The world's knowledge of the character of God has depended and depends now on its knowledge of God in Christ. A good and worthy, an adequate and satisfying God, i. e., God in truth, is known only where men have been in contact with the message of the historic Christ.

This simple fact involves a sufficient missionary responsibility. Men will only know a good and loving Father as their God, i. e., they will know God, only as they are brought into the knowledge of Christ, who is the only perfect revelation of God. For those who have this knowledge to withhold it from the whole world is to do two things: It is to condemn the world to godlessness, and it is to raise the suspicion that those who think they have the knowledge of God are in reality ignorant of what Christ was and what He came to do. "It is the sincere and deep conviction of my soul," said Phillips Brooks, "when I declare that if the Christian faith does not culminate and complete itself in the effort to make Christ known to all the world, that faith appears to me a thoroughly unreal and insignificant thing, destitute of power for the single life and incapable of being convincingly proved to be true." And I recall a remark of Principal Rainy's to the effect that the measure of our sense of missionary duty was simply the measure of our personal valuation of Christ. If He is God to us, all in all to our minds and souls, we shall realize that He alone can be this to every man, and that He must be offered thus to every other man. The Unitarian view has never produced a mission, save under an inherited momentum or the communicated stimulus of evangelicalism, and it has been in-

capable of sustaining such missions as it has produced. But when men really believe in God in Christ, and know Christ as God, they must, if they are loyal to themselves or to Him, share Him with all mankind.

For, child of one race and one time though He was, and that race the most centripetal of all races, Christ thought and wrought in universals. He looked forward over all ages and outward over all nations. The bread which He would give was His flesh, which He would give for the life of the world. He was the light of the whole world. If He should be lifted up He would draw all men unto Himself. His disciples were to go into all the world and make disciples of all nations. His sheep were not of a Jewish fold alone. It was not of a race but of a world that the Father had sent Him to be the Saviour. He did not regard Himself as one of many saviours and His revelation as one of many revealings. He was the only Saviour of men, and His was the only revelation of the Father God. "I have long ago ceased to regard the history of the Hebrew race as unique," writes a well-known Christian leader of our day. "It was well for us in our early days that our studies were directed towards it, and we saw how the Hebrew people found God in every event in their history, but we believe that Assyria and Babylon, Nineveh and Rome, could have similar stories written of God's dealings with them." Now, whether the history of the Hebrew race is unique or not is not a matter of theory. It is a simple question of fact. If it was not unique, then where is its like? What other history produced a vocabulary for a revelation? What other history yielded God to humanity? What other ended in a Saviour? As a simple matter of fact, Christianity, which sprang out of this race and this history, is unlike all other religions in its kind. As such, it never contemplated anything else than a universal claim. If it shrinks into a mere racial cult, it separates itself from its Founder and life, and utterly abandons its essential character.

Not only is the missionary duty inherent in the nature of Christianity and in the Christian conception of God, i. e., in the real character of God, but it is imbedded in the very purpose of the Christian Church. There were no missionary organizations in the early Church. No effort was made to promote a missionary propaganda, but the religion spread at once and everywhere. The genius of universal extension was in the Church. "We may take it as an assured fact," says Harnack, "that the mere existence and persistent activity of the individual Christian communities did more than anything else to bring about the extension of the Christian religion."

Bishop Montgomery in his little book on "Foreign Missions" recalls Archbishop Benson's definition of four ages of missions, "First, when the whole Church acted as one; next, when missions were due to great saints; thirdly, to the action of governments; lastly, the age of missionary societies." The Church at the outset was a missionary society. The new Christians were drawn together spontaneously by the uniting power of a common life, and they felt as spontaneously the outward pressure of a world mission. The triumphant prosecution of that mission and the moral fruits of this new and uniting life were their apologetics. They did not sit down within the walls of a formalised and stiffened institution to compose reasoned arguments for Christianity. The new religion would have rotted out from heresy and anaemia in two generations if they had done so.

As an old writer of the Church of England has put it: "The way in which the Gospel would seem to be intended to be alike preserved and perpetuated on earth is not by its being jealously guarded by a chosen order and cautiously communicated to a precious few, but by being so widely scattered and so thickly sown that it shall be impossible, from the very extent of its spreading, merely to be rooted up. It was designed to be not as a perpetual fire in the temple, to be tended with jealous assiduity and to be fed only with special oil; but rather as a

shining and burning light, to be set up on every hill, which should blaze the broader and the brighter in the breeze, and go on so spreading over the surrounding territory as that nothing of this world should ever be able to extinguish or to conceal it." The sound doctrine of the Church was safeguarded by the wholesome hygienic reflex action of service and work and conquest. And its light and life convinced men, because men saw them conquering souls. The Church was established to spread Christianity, and to conserve it in the only way in which living things can ever be conserved, by living action. When in any age or in any land the Church has forgotten this, she has paid for her disobedience. So long as there are any unreached men in the world or any unreached life, the business of the Church is her missionary duty.

The fourth deep ground of missionary duty is the need of humanity. The world needs Christ today as much and as truly as it needed Him nineteen centuries ago. If Judaism and the Roman Empire needed what Christ brought then, Hinduism and Asia need it now. If they do not need Him now, no more was He needed then. If they can get along without Him just as well, the whole world can dispense with Him. If there is no missionary duty, the ground falls from under the necessity, and therefore from under the reality of the incarnation. But that world into which He came did need Christ. Men were dead without Him. It was He who gave them life, who cleansed their defilement, who taught them purity and service and equality and faith and gave them hope and fellowship. He alone can do this now. The non-Christian world needs now what Christ and Christ alone can do for it.

It needs the physical wholeness, the fitting of life to its conditions, which, as a matter of fact, men get just in proportion as they get Christ. We do not need to go for proof of such needs to any overcolored, distorted accounts of those who see only the good of Christendom and only the evil of heathenism—heathenism is a good word, and it describes

facts. Sir John Hewett's account, as Lieutenant-Governor, of the conditions of sanitation in the United Provinces of India, will suffice: "Speaking generally, the death rates recorded in the Provinces in recent years, both in urban and rural tracts, are nearly three times as high as in England and Wales. It is estimated that in India nearly one out of every ten of the population is constantly sick, and a person who has escaped the diseases and dangers of childhood and youth, and entered into manhood or womanhood, has an expectation that his or her life will extend to only 68 per cent of the time that a person similarly situated may be expected to live in England. Infantile mortality is nearly twice as great as it is in England. It is lamentable that one out of every four children born should die before he or she has completed a year of life. The average number of persons per house (which frequently consists of two rooms, or even of only one) is 5.3 in important cities, and 5.5 in the rest of the country. It is estimated that the average superficial area per head of the population is something like 10 square feet, and the breathing space 150 cubic feet—just half what is required in common lodging-houses in England." Conditions in Christian lands are not what they should be, but they are infinitely superior to the conditions in other lands, and in proportion as they are Christian, famine and disease and want are overcome. Are these blessings to be ours alone?

The world needs the social message and redemption of Christianity. Paul tells us that it met and conquered the inequalities of his time, the chasm between citizen and foreigner, master and slave, man and woman. These are the chasms of the non-Christian world still. It has no ideal of human brotherhood save as it has heard of it through Christianity. Not one of the non-Christian religions or civilizations has given either women or children, especially girl children, their rights. There is human affection. The statement of a recent writer regarding China, that "children are spawned and not born," is

surely most untrue save on the basest levels of life. But the proverb of the Arab women of Kesrawan too truly suggests the Asiatic point of view: "The threshold weeps forty days when a girl is born." And between man and man the world knows no deep basis of common humanity, or if it knows, it has no adequate sanction and resources for its realization. Its brotherhood is within the faith or within the caste, not as inclusive as humanity. It wants what all the world wanted until it found it through Christ. "In his little churches, where each person bore his neighbor's burden, Paul's spirit," says Harnack, "already saw the dawning of a new humanity, and in the Epistle to the Ephesians he has voiced this feeling with a thrill of exaltation. Far in the background of these churches, like some unsubstantial semblance, lay the division between Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, great and small, rich and poor. For a new humanity had now appeared, and the Apostle viewed it as Christ's body, in which every member served the rest, and each was indispensable in his own place." The great social idea of Christianity is still only partially realized by us. But we do not have it at all unless we have it for humanity, and it can be made to prevail anywhere only by being made to prevail everywhere.

The world needs, moreover, the moral ideal and the moral power of Christianity. The Christian conceptions of truth and purity and love and holiness and service are original. Every ideal except the Christian ideal is defective. Three other sets of ideals are offered to men. The only other theistic ideals are the Mohammedan and the Jewish. The Mohammedan ideal expressly sanctions polygamy, and the authority of its founder is cited in justification of falsehood. The Jewish ideal is wholly enclosed in and transcended by the Christian. Buddhism and Shintoism and Confucianism offer men atheistic ideals, i. e., ideals which abandon the conception of the absolute and cannot rise above their source in man who made them. Hinduism, with its pantheism, is incapable of the moral dis-

tinctions which alone can produce moral ideals, and as a matter of fact owes its worthy moral conceptions today exclusively to the influence of Christianity. But it is not ideals alone—it is power for their realization that the world requires. That power can be found only in life, in the life of God communicated to men. Who offers this or pretends to offer it but Christ? How can it be offered by religions which have no God, or whose God has no character?

For this is the great need of the world. It needs the knowledge and the life of the good and fatherly God. Its own religions have given it neither of these, and its own religions are disintegrating. Christianity has detached small companies of people from them, but the influence of Christianity has penetrated them to the marrow. Let alone, it would war against their vicious elements and preserve all in man that is capable of redemption. But it will not be let alone. Other influences are at work upon the religious conceptions of the non-Christian world, and under those influences the conceptions and the institutions of the non-Christian religions are doomed. Never did men face a more solemn responsibility than confronts us now. "The ancient beliefs and customs of the non-Christian peoples," said Lord Bryce while in America, "are destined soon to pass away, and it becomes a matter of supreme importance to see that new and better moral and religious principles are given to them promptly to replace what is disappearing; and to endeavor to find methods for preventing the faults or vices of adventurers and others who are trying to exploit the uncivilized races from becoming a fatal hindrance to the spread of Christianity." Christian peoples are standing face to face with judgment here.

Throughout the non-Christian world there are multitudes who are conscious of their need. They may not regard Christianity as the answer to their need. It is not surprising if they do not. In what way has Christendom not misrepresented Christianity to them? But they know their need. "You speak

as if our country is already a dead thing," says one of the characters in Uchimura's dialogue on "The Future of Japan." "Yes," is the reply, "immoral nation is already dead. With all its shows of stability, a nation without a high ideal is a dead corpse. Japan under the Satsuma Choshu Government is a dead nation." "You speak very determinedly." "Yes," replies Uchimura, "I have to; I cannot bear to see my nation die." And there are many who do not wish to see their nations die in Asia, who turn to Christ. "All over India," wrote Dr. Cuthbert Hall to the missionaries there when he left India, with India's need upon his heart and its poison in his blood, "all over India are men unprepared to identify themselves with any Christian denomination, to whom the popular forms of the ancient faith have become inadequate, if not distasteful, and for whom the name of Jesus Christ and the distinctive truths connected with that name for the redemption of individuals and the reconstruction of the social order, are taking on new attractiveness and value." The fact that the world is awaking to its need, whether it understands Christ or not, adds a pathos to its mute appeal to those who have in custody the Gospel of God in His Son.

For it is only that Gospel that can meet the world's need. Commerce and government, philanthropy and education, deal with it superficially, and in the hands of shallow or evil men only accentuate it. A force is needed which will cut down to the roots, which deals with life in the name and by the power of God, which marches straight upon the soul and reconstructs character, which saves men one by one. Here we are flat upon the issue, and not to evade or confuse it, I will put it unmistakably. It is our duty to carry Christianity to the world because the world needs to be saved, and Christ alone can save it. The world needs to be saved from want and disease and injustice and inequality and impurity and lust and hopelessness and fear, because individual men need to be saved from sin and death, and only Christ can save them. His is

the only power which will forgive and regenerate, which will reach down deep enough to transform, and will hold till transformation is fixed.

And Christianity does this by striking down to the individual and saving him. It saves him by the power of God in Christ, working in and upon him. The missionary duty is this duty. "I hold education," says Uchimura, "as essentially personal and individualistic." And he uses the term education in its broad sense. There is more to education than this. Society is something more than the sum-total of individuals, but it begins and ends with individuals, and the need of the world is primarily the need of its individuals, and the salvation of the world in Christ's way can only be the salvation of its soul through the salvation of its souls.

A few years ago we heard a great deal about the need of educating and civilizing the world before we try to change its religion. Dr. George Hamilton advanced this argument in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1796: "To spread abroad the knowledge of the Gospel among barbarous and heathen nations seems to me to be highly preposterous in as far as it anticipates, nay, as it even reverses the order of nature. Men must be polished and refined in their manners before they can be properly enlightened in religious truths. Philosophy and learning must, in the nature of things, take the precedence. Indeed, it should seem hardly less absurd to make revelation precede civilization in the order of time, than to pretend to unfold to a child the 'Principia' of Newton, ere he is made at all acquainted with the letters of the alphabet. These ideas seem to me alike founded in error; and, therefore, I must consider them both as equally romantic and visionary." We do not hear so much of this view now. Civilization has shown what a vain and empty thing it is, and we know that the sin and passion in human hearts, which it cannot destroy, are as real and dreadful in America and in all the neutral nations as they are in the nations at war. God is man's one

need. Man cannot save himself or make anything out of himself. He needs what God and God alone can do for him. If that is true of Europe and America it is true of all the rest of the world. Jesus Christ is the one Saviour of men and each man in the world needing that Saviour has a right to look to those who know of Him to tell of Him to all mankind.

Even as a purely religious movement, however, there are some who object to foreign missions on the ground that there are other religions in the world which are true for their followers and which meet their needs as truly as Christianity meets ours. They say that a fair comparison of Christianity with other religions destroys the claim of Christianity and makes foreign missions unnecessary. Is this true? What are the conclusions which such a comparison presents?

1. In the first place it is a significant fact that Christianity is the only religion which is trying to make good its claim to universalism. None of the non-Christian religions is making any real effort to do so. Mohammedanism is spreading in Africa and India, but it makes no effort of any significance to convert America or Europe or Japan. The bounds of Confucianism are contracting. Shintoism has withdrawn from the lists as a religion, and claims now only the place of a court ceremonial and a burial rite. Zoroastrianism, one of the worthiest of the ancient religions, has almost vanished in the land of its origin, and numbers comparatively few adherents in India. Hinduism is geographically limited, save as a philosophy, by its principle of caste, and Buddhism is rejected in Japan by the very men who might succeed in propagating it elsewhere. But Christianity is moving out over all the earth with steadily increasing power, with ever multiplying agencies, with ever enlarged devotion, and with open and undiscourageable purpose to prepare for Christ's kingship over the world. And not less significant than the fact of Christianity's missionary purpose, is the method of it. With no trust in secular support, in spite of all slanders which charge otherwise, with purely moral agencies

and with fair comparison of its treasures with anything that the world can offer, Christianity goes fearlessly forth to deal with all the life and thought of man and to solve his problems and meet his needs in the name and strength of God.

2. At the root of all things is the idea of God. Here all religions meet to be judged. "The truth and the good inherent in all forms of religion is that, in all, man seeks after God. The finality of Christianity lies in the fact that it reveals the God for whom man seeks." (Jevons, "Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion," p. 258.) The best that can be said of any non-Christian religion is that it is seeking for that which Christianity possesses—the true and perfect God. "The conception of God with which Christianity addresses the world, is the best that man can form or entertain."

If it is asked, "What is that excellence in Christianity by virtue of which it is entitled to be a missionary religion and deserves to be received by all men?"—the answer is:

"Christianity is entitled to be a missionary religion and to displace all other religions, because of its God.

"There are many glories in the religion of Jesus Christ, and it can do many services for men; but its crowning glory, or rather the sum of all its glory, is its God. Christianity has such a conception of God as no other religion has attained; and, what is more, it proclaims and brings to pass such an experience of God as humanity has never elsewhere known. It is in this that we find that superiority which entitles Christianity to offer itself to all mankind.

"It is necessary to tell in few words what this God is who is the glory of Christianity and the ground of its boldness in missionary advances—this God so infinitely excellent that all men may well afford to forget all their own religions, if they may but know Him. The God of Christianity is one, the sole source, Lord and end of all. He is holy, having in Himself the character that is the worthy standard for all beings. He is love, reaching out to save the world from sin and fill it with

His own goodness. He is wise, knowing how to accomplish His heart's desire. He is Father in heart, looking upon His creatures as His own, and seeking their welfare. All this truth concerning Himself, He has made known in Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, in whom His redemptive will has found expression, and His saving love has come forth to mankind."

Set over against this conception of God the views which we have seen that the non-Christian religions take of Him, and it does not need to be shown that the religion of the Christian God has supreme rights among men.

"A religion that can proclaim such a God, and proclaim Him on the ground of experience, is adapted to all men, and is worthy of all acceptance. Since Christianity is the religion of such a God, Christianity deserves possession of the world. It has the right to offer itself boldly to all men, and to displace all other religions, for no other religion offers what it brings. It is the best that the world contains. Because of its doctrine and experience of the perfect God, it is the best that the world can contain. Its contents can be unfolded and better known, but they cannot be essentially improved upon. At heart, Christianity is simply the revelation of the perfect God, doing the work of perfect love and holiness for His creatures, and transforming them into His own likeness so that they will do the works of love and holiness towards their fellows. Than this nothing can be better. Therefore, Christianity has full right to be a missionary religion, and Christians are called to be a missionary people."

3. From its unique and adequate conception of God, it follows that Christianity has a message to the world which is full of notes which the non-Christian religions do not and cannot possess. Even ideas which some of these religions share with Christianity, such as "belief in an after life, in the difference between right and wrong, and that the latter deserves punishment; in the need of an atonement for sin; in the efficacy of

prayer; in the universal presence of spiritual powers of some kind;" belief in the sovereignty of God, in the immanence of God, in the transitoriness and vanity of this earthly life on one hand, and in the infinite significance of this life and the sacredness of the human order on the other,—have a relationship and a significance in Christianity, with its perfect God, which makes them totally different from the conceptions of other religions. And beside these, Christianity has a whole world of conceptions of its own—the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, redemption, the incarnation of a personal God, atonement, character, service, fellowship.

4. In its conception of sin, in its provision for sin's forgiveness and defeat, and in its ideals of salvation and the free offer of its salvation to every man, Christianity is unique and satisfying. Christianity sees sin as the supreme evil in the world, it regards it as a want of conformity to the perfect will of God, or as transgression of His perfect law; it teaches that sin is not a matter of act only, but also of thought and desire and will—a taint in the nature; it insists that God is not responsible for it or for any evil; it emphasizes the guilt and horror of it, and the deadly consequences both for time and for eternity, and it opens to man a way of full forgiveness and clean victory. In contrast with this view, Mohammedanism teaches that sin is only the wilful violation of God's law; sins of ignorance it does not recognize; its doctrine of God's sovereignty fixes the responsibility for sin on God and dissolves the sense of guilt, and it denies the evil taint of sin in human nature. In Hinduism sin as opposition to the will of a personal God is inconceivable; it is the inevitable result of the acts of a previous state of being; it is evil, because all existence and all action, good as well as bad, are evil, and it is illusion, as all things are illusion. In pure Buddhism there can be no sin in our sense of the word, because there is no God; sin there means "thirst," "desire," and what Buddhism seeks to escape is not the evil of life only, but life itself; and

its conception of the sins that impede, while including much that is immoral, does not include all, and does not include much on the other hand that has no immoral character at all. Confucianism makes no mention of man's relation to God, and totally lacks all conception of sin. In one word, Christianity is the only religion in the world which clearly diagnoses the disease of humanity and discovers what it is that needs to be healed and that attempts permanently and radically to deal with it.

And so, also, Christianity alone knows what the salvation is which men require, and makes provision for it. In Christianity salvation is salvation from the power and the presence of sin, as well as from its guilt and shame. Its end is holy character and loving service. It is available for men here and now. In the Mohammedan conception salvation consists in deliverance from punishment, and deliverance not by redemption and the sacrifice of love, but by God's absolute sovereignty. The Hindu idea of salvation is to escape from the sufferings incident to life, to be liberated from personal, conscious existence, and this liberation is to be won by the way of knowledge, knowledge being the recognition of the soul's essential identity with Brahma, the impersonal God, or by the way of devotion, devotion being not faith in a God who works for the soul, but the maintenance by the soul of a saving attitude of mind toward the deity chosen to be worshiped. This is actual Hinduism, not the nobler doctrine of the Vedas. In Buddhism salvation is the extinction of existence. Indeed, there is no soul recognized by pure Buddhism. There is only the Karma, or character, which survives, and every man must work out his own Karma unaided. "By one's self," it is written in the Dhammapada, "the evil is done; by one's self one suffers; by one's self evil is left undone; by one's self one is purified. Lo, no man can purify another." The best Northern Buddhism draws nearest to Christianity in its conception of a salvation by faith in Amitaba Buddha, but even here the salva-

tion is release from the necessity of continued rebirths, not a creation of new character for human service in Divine loyalty. Confucianism has no doctrine of salvation. The Chinese soul has had to turn, in the attempt to satisfy its needs, to other teachers. In its ideal and offer of salvation Christianity stands alone. (Kellogg, "Comparative Religion," chapters IV, V.)

5. Christianity is the only religion which is at once historical, progressive and spiritually free. Therefore, it is the only religion which can claim universal dominion. Each religion of the world has filled a place in history, but Mohammedanism is the only one whose historical facts are essential to it, and, as Bishop Westcott says:

"Christianity is historical not simply in the sense in which, for example, Mohammedanism is historical, because the facts connected with the origin and growth of this religion, with the personality and life of the Founder, with the experience and growth of His doctrine, can be traced in documents which are adequate to assure belief; but in a far different sense also. It is historical in its antecedents, in its realization, in itself; it is historical as crowning a long period of religious training which was accomplished under the influence of Divine facts; it is historical as brought out in all its fulness from age to age in an outward society by the action of the Spirit of God; but above all, and most characteristically, it is historical because the revelation which it brings is of life and in life. The history of Christ is the Gospel in its light and in its power. His teaching is Himself, and nothing apart from Himself; what He is and what He does. The earliest creed—the creed of baptism—is the affirmation of facts which include all doctrine.

"Dogmatic systems may change, and have changed so far as they reflect transitory phases of speculative thought, but the primitive Gospel is unchangeable as it is inexhaustible. There can be no addition to it. It contains in itself all that

will be slowly wrought out in thought and deed until the consummation.

"In this sense, Christianity is the only historical religion. The message which it proclaims is wholly unique. Christ said, I am—not I declare, or I lay open, or I point to, but I am—the way, the truth and the life."

6. The ethical uniqueness of Christianity entitles it to absorb and displace all other religions. It alone makes the moral character of God the central and transcendent thing. Judged by its God, no other gods are really good. It alone presents a perfect ethical ideal for the individual and it alone possesses a social ethic adequate for a true national life and for a world society. It is pre-eminently the ethical religion. All its values are moral values. All the best life of Christian lands is an effort to embody the Christian ethics in life, and those ethics shelter absolutely none of the evil of Christian lands. "There is hardly a more trustworthy sign and a safer criterion of the civilization of a people," says the anthropologist Waitz, "than the degree in which the demands of a pure morality are supported by their religion and are interwoven with their religious life." And this is the true test of religions also. Do they supply men with perfect moral ideals? Do they condemn evil and refuse to allow evil to shelter itself under religious sanction? On one or both of these issues every non-Christian religion breaks down. There is much worthy moral teaching in each of the non-Christian religions, but the Koran enjoined the enslavement of the women and children of unbelievers conquered in battle, and authorized unlimited concubinage, and its sanction of polygamy cannot be defended as in the interest of morality. "Polygamy," said Dr. Henry H. Jessup, "has not diminished licentiousness among Mohammedans." Even in the Vedas there are passages which are morally debarred from publication. "I dare not give and you dare not print," wrote the Rev. S. Williams, "the ipsissima verba of an English version of the original Yajar Veda Man-

tras." ("Indian Evangelical Review," January, 1891.) In the Bhagavata Purana the character of the god Krishna is distinguished by licentiousness. And worst of all in the Hindu ethics, even in the Bhagavadgita, it is taught that actions in themselves do not defile one, if only they are performed in the state of mind enjoined in the poem. While Buddha and Confucianist ethics are deficient in active benevolence and human service. "Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect," is a conception peculiar to Christianity.

7. Christianity is the final and absolute religion, because it contains all the good and truth that can be found in any other religion, and presents it to men in its Divine fulness, while other religions have none but partial good; because it is free from the evils which are found in all other religions, and because it alone can satisfy all the needs of the human heart and of the human race. It is the one true religion. We are glad to find any outreach after truth in other religions which shows that the hearts of those who hold them are made for that truth and capable of receiving it in its perfect form in Christianity. Christianity is final, because there is no good beyond it and no evil in it, and because it cleanses and crowns all the life and thought of man. It is the end of all men's quest. "I maintain," says Tiele, "that the appearance of Christianity inaugurated an entirely new epoch in the development of religion; that all the streams of the religious life of man, once separate, unite in it; and that religious development will henceforth consist in an ever higher realization of the principles of that religion." And Christianity is absolute as well as final; that is, it fills the field. There can be nothing higher or better. There can be nothing else in the same class. As Bishop Westcott said:

"A perfect religion—a religion which offers a complete satisfaction to the religious wants of man—must be able to meet the religious wants of the individual, the society, the race, in

complete course of their development and in the manifold intensity of each separate human faculty.

"This being so, I contend that the faith in Christ, born, crucified, risen, ascended, forms the basis of this perfect religion; that it is able, in virtue of its essential character, to bring peace in view of the problems of life under every variety of circumstance and character—to illuminate, to develop, and to inspire every human faculty. My contention rests upon the recognition of two marks by which Christianity is distinguished from every other religion. It is absolute and it is historical.

"On the one side, Christianity is not confined by any limits of place, or time, or faculty, or object. It reaches to the whole sum of being and to the whole of each separate existence. On the other side, it offers its revelation in facts which are an actual part of human experience, so that the peculiar teaching which it brings as to the nature and relations of God and man and the world is simply the interpretation of events in the life of men and in the life of One who was truly Man. It is not a theory, a splendid guess, but a proclamation of facts.

"These, I repeat, are its original, its unalterable claims. Christianity is absolute. It claims, as it was set forth by the apostles, though the grandeur of the claim was soon obscured, to reach all men, all time, all creation; it claims to effect the perfection no less than the redemption of finite being; it claims to bring a perfect unity of humanity without destroying the personality of any one man; it claims to deal with all that is external as well as with all that is internal, with matter as well as with spirit, with the physical universe as well as with the moral universe; it claims to realize a re-creation co-extensive with creation; it claims to present Him who was the Maker of the world, as the Heir of all things; it claims to complete the cycle of existence, and show how all things come from God and go to God."

As absolute, it must displace all that is partial or false. It must conquer the world. The people who have it must be a missionary people.

This is the solemn duty with which we are charged by our personal experience of the treasure that is in Christ, and this is the solemn duty with which any true comparison of Christianity with the world religions confronts us. Alike from the look within and from the look without we arise with a clear understanding of the missionary character of the religion that bears the name of Christ. The attitude of that religion is "not one of compromise, but one of conflict and of conquest. It proposes to displace the other religions. The claim of Jeremiah is the claim of Christianity: 'The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens.' The survival of the Creator, joyfully foreseen, is the ground of its confidence and its endeavor. Christianity thus undertakes a long and laborious campaign, in which it must experience various fortunes and learn patience from trials and delays; but the true state of the case must not be forgotten, namely, that Christianity sets out for victory. The intention to conquer is characteristic of the Gospel. This was the aim of its youth when it went forth among the religions that then surrounded it, and with this aim it must enter any field in which old religions are encumbering the religious nature of man. It cannot conquer except in love, but in love it intends to conquer. It means to fill the world." It must do so in order that the nations may have their Desire and the world its Light.