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A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

warmly evangelical. The writer is like Charles Spurgeon, who said that from whatever point he started he made straight across country to Jesus Christ. To those who do not trouble about critical and historical questions, but simply hunger for the word of God, this little book will be very welcome.

The Psychological Teaching of St. Augustine, by the Rev. James Morgan, D.D. (Stock ; 7s. 6d. net), is a work of real scholarship on an interesting line of investigation. The lover of St. Augustine will have better appreciation of the outstanding ability of the great Bishop of Hippo after perusing this volume.

'Edinburgh 1933' will, for very many students, be marked with a white stone, for it was the place and date of the ninth of these great quadrennial Conferences of the Student Christian Movement that have meant so much to many young men and women. In *The Christian Faith To-day*, edited by the Rev. Hugh Martin (S.C.M. ; 2s. 6d. net), we have some of the more memorable addresses delivered at the Conference. We have Canon Barry's, Dr. H. R. Mackintosh's, Dr. Oldham's,

and the Archbishop of York's, as well as others. The general subjects were 'The Christian Faith in the World' and 'The Christian Task in the World,' and these addresses were worth preserving and spreading. This book will provide a happy souvenir to many who were present at the Conference, and a not less happy inspiration for those of us who had not that privilege.

The late Archbishop of Uppsala, the Right Rev. Nathan Söderblom, was a many-sided man—philosopher, scholar, musician, and saint. His death was a great loss to religion and to the communion of believers all over the world. As an act of piety to his memory, and as a gracious aid for 'holy week and other weeks,' the chapter from his great book 'The Story of the Passion of Christ' (the central chapter of the book) has been published under the title *The Mystery of the Cross* (S.C.M. ; 2s. net). It is translated by Mr. A. G. Hebert, M.A., of the Society of the Sacred Mission, and is a very helpful devotional exposition of the message of the Passion of Christ. The musician peeps out in the last section of the book, which is an exposition (and a delightful one) of the Passion music of Bach.

Missionary Problems of To-day.

The Apologetic for Foreign Missions: A Preliminary Survey.

BY THE REVEREND NICOL MACNICOL, D.LITT., D.D., EDINBURGH.

THE time has certainly come when we should estimate anew for ourselves the authority that lies behind the call of the Church to foreign missionary service. The Moravians, the pioneers of the modern missionary movement within Protestantism, celebrated last August the two hundredth anniversary of the beginning of their enterprise. Many years had to elapse after that beginning before the Church of Scotland sent forth Alexander Duff as her first ambassador to the non-Christian world, and the centenary of his arrival in Calcutta fell just three years ago. The completion of one century or of two need not have any special spiritual significance, but the retrospect may well awaken the questioning instinct within us. Apart from the mere coincidence of events, it is the case that this is a time when the foundations upon which men's thinking rests seem to be giving way beneath their

feet and a new defence is required, not merely of foreign missions, but of religion itself. Many, however, whom this fundamental anarchy has not affected and who are able to hold still quite confidently to the Christian religion no longer feel assured that it has a right to the pre-eminence that they formerly gave to it. Various elements in modern life contribute to create this uncertainty. There are the vague views that are prevalent on all sides of us of 'evolution' and of 'relativity.' Even if we know little more of them than the words suggest, we suppose that they imply that everything, religion included, is in a condition of continual flux and that there is no truth that can be considered absolute or final. The study of history, too, and especially the comparative study of the history of the religions, has brought to view similarities in their development and in the truths they teach

which seem to bring them all down to much the same level and to forbid any claim to exclusive authority on behalf of any single one among them. The whole situation demands examination if the claim of Christianity to possess a truth which, because of its value and its uniqueness, must be preached to the whole world, is to be maintained, and if the hope of the coming of a time when the kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ is not to dissolve in mist.

That a spirit is abroad even among those who believe themselves to be Christian that is having consequences of this character in their thinking in regard to Foreign Missions can hardly be doubted. But it is rather with an attitude of mind of another sort that we are concerned in this discussion. What we wish to consider is whether a change in the spirit and motive of those who hold to the missionary duty of the Church is demanded by the views that now obtain as to the great world religions, and whether there is a danger that any such change will diminish the power that has hitherto lain behind the discharge of that duty. If a real adjustment of attitude is demanded, can it be carried out without grave injury to the cause of Foreign Missions ?

This reorientation that is said to be required by the Christian mind of to-day may be illustrated by the opinions expressed in an important Report that has been issued in America by a Commission of laymen who have, at the request of the leading missionary societies in America, conducted an inquiry into the value of Missions in the East. Under the title of 'Re-thinking Missions,' this Commission, of which Professor W. E. Hocking of Harvard was Chairman, have issued a detailed and weighty account of the results of their investigation. In their introductory chapters, dealing with general principles, they state their view of what the functions of the foreign missionary should henceforth be. They take note of changes that have come about during the last century and that affect missions. These are 'the altered theological outlook,' 'the emergence of a basic world culture,' and 'the rise of nationalism in the East.' 'What is the total incidence of these changes upon the work of Missions ?' To this question they reply: 'The fundamental motive, the imperative of sharing whatever certainties we have in the field of religion, remains.' At the same time, they continue, 'the changes we have noted tend to lessen the apparent need, and certainly the insistent urgency of haste, of the work of the foreign preacher and evangelist.'

Further on, emphasizing the Church's need of such service as Foreign Missions have rendered, by whatever name it is called, the Report gives a fuller account of the value of that service as the members of the Commission conceive it. 'There can be nothing temporary in the need for the health of the Church that it have a permanent and ever-growing international function. The loss of the ideal of the Church universal and of the place of continued labour and sacrifice for that object would mean the sterility of the Church. On the other hand, the type of intercourse we view as permanent should mean not alone the continuous enlivening of the Churches at home and abroad through conversation with each other, but also the promotion of world unity through a spread of the understanding of the vital elements of all religion.' Still another passage may be quoted to make clear the conception that this Report presents of the kind of missionary and the kind of mission work that this new day requires. 'In whatever field he works the missionary is to live among men as an undiscouraged lover of their ideal interests, as well as of themselves: and in this way not to offer solutions, but to participate in solutions which, in the growing community of man, become increasingly co-operative tasks.'

This call to co-operation between the Christian missionary and the followers of the other religions which is to take the place of St. Paul's conception of an embassy in the name of God Himself, this call, that is, to share rather than to announce, certainly would seem to alter the emphasis of the message and the messenger. Whether it involves at the same time a lowering of the temperature of the Christian faith or whether this is what the normal temperature of a healthy Christian should be is not discussed by the Commission. They state their view and do not argue it. To come to a reasoned conclusion it would be necessary that we should consider with more fulness the source and character of such authority as the religions lay claim to, and should compare the values in life that each of them has actually in its history created. Such an examination is undoubtedly called for at the present time, but all that can be done here is to note some of the matters with which such a comparative study of the religions must be concerned. If we are to revise our conception of the place of foreign missions in the life of the Church and of the authority of Christianity as over against the other religions, we must do so, not as a consequence of an empiric survey of changes in the world about us, but as a conclusion based upon a reasoned and careful study

of the characteristics of the religions and the value of their influence. We must review with the utmost seriousness the apologetic for the missionary enterprise of the Christian Church.

If such an investigation is to be seriously undertaken, it will be well that we should begin by clearing our minds by the help of certain preliminary considerations of a general character. In the first place, it is well to make as definite as possible to our minds what in this connexion we mean by religion. Russian Communism, for example, is, it is affirmed, a new religion, and it is to be reckoned as such. It certainly possesses the main characteristics of what is usually meant by religion. It is, and claims to be, the central governing power in the emotional life of multitudes. It is, indeed, an anti-religion established as a religion and claiming authority in the same sphere. Much the same could be said of some of the extreme forms of nationalism. It is not, however, with such new religions as these that we are here concerned. By its denial of God and of the spiritual significance of human life, Russian Communism can be classed among those materialist world views which every spiritual religion is called upon by its very nature to oppose and resist. The religions, on the other hand, with which we are concerned are all on the side, in some sense or other, of God and a spiritual interpretation of the universe. They claim specifically to bring men to God and to bring to them by that means a spiritual deliverance. All the great historical religions belong to the same class as Christianity in the sense that they and it alike are religions of seekers, seeking some kind of deliverance from the ills of life by means that reach beyond the world of material things. Buddhism may appear to be an exception to this rule in view of its agnostic, and even atheistic characteristics, but this conception is superficial. It, too, is essentially a religion in the historic sense, in that it teaches an inward way to the breaking of the bondage of life and, in the words of Professor Pratt, 'an attitude to the Determiner of Destiny.' The modern materialistic religions are centrally religions of denial and exist by their rejection of the spiritual realities that the historic religions accept as axiomatic. The relation of Christianity to such systems can hardly be other than definitely hostile. Co-operation between them and it cannot be seriously contemplated.

Another exclusion that will obviously have to be made is that of the primitive or animistic religions. It is impossible for any serious person to agree with Mr. Gandhi that the followers of these religions of the lower culture should be left undisturbed among

their fears and tabus. All the higher religions are at one in their aim to find for men a way of escape from those very ills of which religions of the animistic type make their gods.

If we turn, then, to consider Christianity and the other religions that in various parts of the world claim men's allegiance in a similar sense to that in which Christianity claims it, we find that in the world of to-day there are many whose view of the relations of the religions to each other differs from that of earlier times. That relationship was one of unconcealed antagonism and rivalry. Each laid claim to men's allegiance on the ground that it was true and that the others were false. To-day there are many who, themselves professing one of these religions, adopt one or other of at least two attitudes towards the faiths that they formerly viewed as rivals. One common attitude, more or less frankly avowed, is that which declares for regional religion. Hinduism is good enough for the Hindus, Islam for the Arabs, Christianity for the white races. This is most often simply an evasion, adopted more or less consciously to conceal their selfish and predatory instincts or to justify their indifference. It is hardly compatible with any real monotheistic belief and, as the world contracts, it is becoming less and less possible for any one who thinks at all to hold it. In a world which is rapidly approaching the position of an ancient Greek city-state where each citizen was within hearing and sight of all his fellow-citizens, a unified spiritual allegiance is as natural and reasonable as a common acceptance of the laws of Nature. Regional religions will continue just as long as human selfishness and jealousies and rivalries rule among men. But if there are real contradictions between the religions they cannot all be accepted by honest men as true.

But the second method of reconciling the religions to one another that many now adopt is actually the acceptance of them all as equally true. There are, it is often maintained, no real contradictions separating them; they are diverse paths all leading alike to the same haven of truth. This is a position which can be seriously held only by those who interpret the universe in the terms of pantheism. Only a pantheism which, in the words of Baron von Hügel, 'flattens everything out,' bringing all life into identical relationship with the Whole, of which each individual is a part and an organ, could maintain such a thesis. Theism, with its emphasis upon personality in both God and man, is irreconcilably opposed to such an obliteration of distinctions. It would seem as if there was at least one real contradiction that no intellectual jugglery

could ever reconcile, that between a radical pantheism and an equally radical theism. Certainly it is impossible to contemplate an accommodation of any kind of Christianity with pantheism if pantheism can indeed be described in Baron von Hügel's words as 'in principle and incurably a supra-moral, a non-moral, and a non-personalist position within which there is really no place for a distinct and definite God, for sin, for contrition, for the sense of our being creatures, and for adoration.'¹ When we contemplate the issues that separate us as theists from a view of the universe that has such consequences as these we are compelled to say to it, 'Stand thou on that side for on this am I.'

In fact the argument, based upon the premisses of pantheism, that holds that all religions are equally true is soon discovered to be at the same time an argument that all religions are equally false or unreal. There is no room in such a doctrine for religion at all, except in the sense of a cosmic emotion. Religion in any sense that creates a missionary duty must be a source of spiritual succour and renewal, not, as the religion of pantheism can only be, the resigned acceptance of a static and frozen universe. Theism—and certainly Christian theism—is in its essence an evangel, a faith in a Power that can make a better world.

If, then, these short cuts to acquiescence in the religious *status quo* are unsatisfying, what is the deduction that follows? It obviously is that some religious systems are more in accord with the facts of things than others, and that among the ways by which men have sought God some are at least better than others, and it may be that one among them is best. If we survey them and consider how they may be placed in order of worth, it would appear that three tests at any rate can be applied to them, and that their relative significance can in some measure at least be adjudged accordingly. These tests are those of their universality, of their value, and of whether they possess an element that can be called divinely revealed, and so gives them a special authority.

First, it seems clear that no religion can be final which is not universal in its scope, seeking to include all things, to explain all things, and to make all things in some sense one. This can be done by denying difference, which is the way of pantheism or monism, or by referring all things to an ultimate supreme Reality who is their source, which is the way of theism. No other unification of the whole of things seems conceivable if it is to be compatible with what can be described as religion in any

¹ *Essays*, ii. p. 233.

spiritual sense of the word. But, as has already been affirmed, pantheism also, postulating a unity 'which is little more than a blank space,' can hardly be said to provide what religion seeks. To be 'hypnotized into unity'—to use Dr. Oman's description of what pantheism in this respect does²—is not to achieve the aim which underlies and evokes the demand for universality. That demand, in so far as it is religious, is due to dissatisfaction with the world of ordinary experience and to an unquenchable longing to reach a solution of its problems and tragedies and thereby to attain to peace and blessedness. The higher religions of the world cannot all, however, be relegated without qualification to the category of theism or pantheism. Thus, while Hinduism in some of its forms is the most thoroughgoing of pantheisms (cosmic monism), it has other forms which approximate to a monotheistic theism. Buddhism, again, has characteristics that make its classification similarly ambiguous. It may even be said of such theisms as Christianity and Islam that they have had phases in their history when pantheistic modes of thought and feeling seemed in danger of submerging them. At the same time it can be agreed that the religions that may be said to satisfy the first test are Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Muhammadanism, and Christianity. Both Hinduism and Buddhism, in so far as they are pantheisms, should, in this view, be excluded from any claim to an equal right with the theistic faiths to become the religions of mankind. It has also to be noted that they have within them elements of polytheism which are not reconcilable with this requirement.

The second test that we would apply to the religions is that of value. By that is to be understood the result in human life and character that the religions produce. It is not possible to examine here what these results are and their relative worth. One important group may be indicated. A religion may be ranked as higher or lower according to the strength of purpose that it creates in men for the realization of the good that is set before them. It is on the whole admitted that here, again, there is a marked contrast between theism and pantheism. The effect of the latter is to create apathy, what in the Middle Ages was called 'accidie,' a despairing acquiescence in things as they are. That that has been the fruit of such a religion as monistic Hinduism can hardly be denied, and, indeed, the desire to change this and 'to put iron into the blood' of the anæmic Hindu is an avowed aim of those who are seeking to revivify the old religion. It is true that

² Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 284.

Christianity also is not infrequently attacked as providing an opiate for men. If that is ever a true charge it would seem to lie chiefly against a Christianity which approximates to the Islamic view of a divine despotism and human impotence. A fatalism due to such a view of God and man has similar consequences to a pantheism that views all things as happening by a pre-determined necessity. If Christian theism is to deserve the highest place when judged by this test, that will only be if it is a theism fully Christian. What that qualification signifies cannot be discussed here, for behind it lies the Christian view of God and the Christian motive of the love that God has called forth in Christ Jesus.

This is, indeed, the test by which the authority of the Christian Mission will be vindicated to the world if it is vindicated at all. We have a plain right and duty to bring the Christian religion to men if it releases in them a power to deliver the world from evil and to create good such as no other religion, in fact, is able to do. Among the various elements within it that help to justify this claim is its eschatology, its promise of the creation of a new world, a Kingdom of God. A true theism with a really ethical conception of God at its heart would seem to demand this outlook. Such materialistic systems of to-day as scientific humanism—in some at least of its forms—may be classed along with the pantheistic religions as ultimately weakening human energy and purpose, for the reason that these theories exclude any real hope of the achievement of human betterment.

The third test that has been suggested is one that cannot carry full conviction except to the followers of the faith that claims to possess a revelation. At the same time Christians—and some of the adherents of other faiths as well—will be ready to recognize that God has revealed Himself beyond the bounds of His own faith as well as within it. It is the relative value of the different revelations that have come to men from a source beyond their own reach that is the real test here, and here again it is those within the religion—those who have received and experienced the spiritual manifestation—who alone can judge of its power and worth. To the Christian for whom the coming in history of Christ Jesus is the summit of the Divine revelation, the possession

inwardly of this crowning disclosure of God is the ultimate and sufficient warrant for the proclamation of this message to every member of the human race.

Apart, however, from this final and commanding conviction, a belief in a revelation—however made—would seem to be inseparable from belief in a God who is the source of good. 'I was a hidden treasure,' the Muhammadan represents Allah as saying, 'and I desired to be known.' That is the reason for the creation, and equally for every divine movement in human history. The difference between the missionary and the non-missionary religions surely lies here. The closed circle of the pantheist or of the modern humanist allows of no invasion of power from beyond man. If all we can do is to help one another by means of our own experience and our own strength there is too little of an evangel in such an outlook to create and sustain the missionary enterprise. This is the religion without enthusiasm of the eighteenth century, and it seems also to describe the scientific humanism of to-day. The Report of the American laymen, which has been already quoted, would seem to be affected by a similar mood. Their deity has a close resemblance to that of Professor Dewey, a God who is little more than 'the possibilities of nature and associated living.'

That is not the conception of God which a living theism gives to us and, giving to us, constrains us to give to others. Apart altogether from the unique revelation which the Christian believes to have been granted in Christ, and of which he believes himself to be a steward, to believe in a God who is not merely a Great First Cause but 'the Father of lights' is to be constrained to lighten with His illumination the dimness of all men's condition. Lord Balfour in his Gifford Lectures defines the God of his faith as 'a God whom men can love, a God to whom men can pray, who takes sides, who has purposes and preferences, whose attributes leave unimpaired the possibility of personal relation between Himself and those whom He has created.' Whoever believes in such a living God, be he a Christian or other than a Christian, must proclaim His message, and must proclaim it to every one capable of loving and worshipping such a God of love.

