

simple and yet universally embracing, carries with it, when applied in particular instances, the accumulated force of an avalanche, and compels reverence even from a cynical enemy. But whoever they be or whatever their chosen function, such men reveal themselves always as the propagators of their faith, the unconscious instrument in the hands of Eternal Wisdom.

I say then that as the herald and forerunner of Imperial rule the missionary has proved himself in the past an indispensable and praiseworthy ally of whatever is finest in our national life. Think of him in the lowest terms to which he can be reduced—an unrecognised, unpaid, and frequently maligned servant of the Crown—and he stands forth as one of the most heroic figures in the army of those who have carried the flag to the far corners of the world. Think of him in his highest terms—as messenger of the Cross, the preacher of an evangel which is rooted in Redemption, the prophet of a fraternity which is grounded upon the Incarnation—and he becomes one of the mighty, albeit unconscious, figures of the modern world's romance, worthy to rank with any knight or paladin of the palmy days of chivalry.

Have I suggested that the only messenger of our religion to whom we need pay attention is the man specifically appointed for its propagation? That would be a denial of all that I have attempted to say in this book. Not only through him, but through all those men, traders, soldiers, mariners, explorers, servants of the Crown, through every man who wanders about the world speaking our mother tongue (yes, even when he himself is not a believer in Christianity, for no man can wholly dissociate himself from the society into which he has been born)—through all these, Christianity is to-day knocking at the temples of all the gods, claiming to be heard where ignorance, superstition, tyranny, and vice have been the ruling agents for countless generations, laying its hand alike on the nations of the past and the peoples who hold the future of the world in pawn. We British men are perforce co-operators and even lenders in this divine adventure.

And surely it is a belief worth cherishing, this