

## Christianity a Crusade.

In various ways expression has been given to the truth that life is the product of deeds, not of years,—that in order to make the most of life it is necessary, not so much to live long as to live well.

While this is a truth which we would do well practically to remember, yet faithful observance of it may fail to lead us to the highest goal and bring us into possession of the absolute *summum bonum*.

It is important to know that that concrete something called "life" is determined by the character of the acts with which the lifetime has been filled; but it is of even greater importance to know that these acts are themselves products of conceptions lying back of them, or rather of one all-controlling conception. I place an untutored savage and a civilized, educated, Christianized man side by side and ask myself, "What is it that determines the great difference between the two men?" I may endeavor to answer the question by contrasting their modes of living, and thus discovering wherein the separate acts of their daily lives differ. But in this way I can at best discover only separate points of difference between the two men. That which gives to each his distinct character can be known only when I have ascertained their ruling conception of life, the ideal of each. Having discovered this I have traced the stream to its fountain head.

What is thus true of the individual is also true of the nation. Wherein one nation differs from another, the differentiating cause is found in the respective ideals in accordance with which the national life has been developed. In this all outward practices have originated.

The aim then of all true education, of all proper training, is the implanting of right ideals. All endeavor to build up a worthy character, which loses sight of this, is the vain attempt to purify the stream while the fountain from which it issues remains impure.

What is the aim of all Christian teaching? Is it not the implanting of right ideals? rather of the right ideal? The ultimate aim undoubtedly is the building of true Christian character. But as a means to this end the formation of a right ruling conception of what Christianity is we must regard as indispensable.

The church militant is reminded by her very name that her mission is to fight, that the Christianity of which she is the embodiment is essentially a crusade against sin. And the name, church triumphant, which she shall assume when the bridegroom comes to receive her unto himself, reminds her that her mission is accomplished only when every foe is completely and forever vanquished. Until the church has awakened to this conception of her mission she has failed to enter into the purpose for which God has placed her in a dark and sinful world.

Not long ago the writer listened to an address given by a leading advocate of pre-millennial doctrine, in which the speaker affirmed that it is not God's purpose to win the world to Christ through the church. That by this means he proposes to gather in only a select few, and that not until Christ appears in person can the larger task of the world's complete evangelization be undertaken and accomplished.

If the church takes up her God-appointed task under the inspiration of such a conviction as this, she may well regard her present achievements with a feeling of complacency and satisfaction. The "select few" are now being gathered in; and, according to the pre-millennialist, God's purpose is even now being fully realized. The "select few" may mean literally a few, or it may mean a great many. There is no limit set by which the church may know whether she is doing all that God expects her to do. Without the stimulus of an unrealized ideal before her, stagnation dangerous and fatal would inevitably result. But the church need never fear stagnation while she obeys the instructions which her great Head has given her. Doing this she realizes that her mission is not to gather in a "select few" but to "make disciples of all the nations."

And what does this mean but the utter extinction of every foe of righteousness! To "make disciples of all the nations" means something far more than to preach the gospel in all lands, or even to every creature. Indeed when this has been accomplished the mission of Christianity has been but well begun. The powers of darkness must fall before the powers of light, the kingdom of error must become absorbed in the kingdom of truth and righteousness. The gospel must eventually leaven the whole mass of corrupt human society.

Every metaphor which Christ employed to describe the mission of Christianity in the world points conclusively to the fact that it is to bring all things into subjection to itself. The "salt of the earth," the "light of the world," the leaven in the meal, these are the figures by which Christ illustrates the mission of his disciples upon earth. And all of these figures teach as plainly as metaphors can teach that the triumph of Christianity is to be complete and universal. Nor do we think that Scripture justifies any expectation that Christ will bring about this complete triumph in any other way than as he is present with his disciples, according to his promise "even unto the end of the world." The church which he has redeemed with his blood and endowed with his Spirit is the sole agent in this sublime undertaking.

If then the mission of the Christian church be the conquest of the world for Christ, what should be the ruling conception in the mind of the person who has become a member of the church of Christ? Should he not regard himself as one through whose efforts God purposes to make some contribution towards the one great end which he has in view? Surely to fail to do so would be to mistake the purpose for which God has called him out of darkness into the light of his kingdom. The nineteenth century disciple must conceive of the Christian life as Paul conceived of it. The life of faith meant nothing to Paul if it did not mean aggressive and continued fighting against unseen foes within and without. No one could see more clearly than he the bright and joyful aspect of the Christian life. He seemed at times to bask in the unclouded light of God's love. At such a time we hear him exclaim, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" But Paul was no idealist who looked only on the bright and attractive side of things. He took an all-round view of the life into which he had been led. While he delighted to bask in the sunshine, he fearlessly entered the clouds and the darkness; and then we hear him exclaim, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." But soon we see him emerge from the smoke and carnage of battle with the shout of triumph upon his lips, "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." There is reason to fear that this aspect of the Christian life does not receive the prominence today that Paul gave to it. We love to think of it as a life of peace and calm in the midst of earth's troubles and turmoils; as a life of perfect safety in the midst of unnumbered dangers; as a life of unbounded joy, untouched by the sorrows of earth. We love to walk in quiet meditation through the green pastures and beside the still waters, and in these delightful retreats to think of God as a tender Shepherd leading us on to greener and richer pastures and to purer and more soul-refreshing streams. The contemplative side of the Christian life has so great fascination for us that our thoughts never weary in their endeavor to sound its unfathomable depths.

Yes, this is indeed a very inspiring theme which may well lead us to an ecstasy of joy. But it must be the theme of eternity rather than that of time. Or, if it occupy our thoughts here, it must be only as we rest for a moment on our arms, after we have prostrated our enemies at our feet. There is a sterner aspect of the Christian life which must be uppermost and foremost in our thoughts now. The immediate prospect is not that of the peaceful and fertile pasture land, but rather that of the hard-trodden field of battle, where we must lay down our lives in defence of the truth.

The gospel with which we have been entrusted is a gospel of peace, but it is very far from being a peaceful gospel. In its very nature it is belligerent; and the peace of the gospel, while no less real than its conflict, comes only as the fruitage of battle. While sin remains in the world the gospel of God's righteousness must cry out against it and fight it to the death. Now, when the gospel becomes incorporated in a man's life it instils within him this belligerent spirit. He feels at once that his mission is to fight for God. Not to dream of a coming day when perfect harmony and peace shall prevail. This he regards only as the reward of faithful service. For the present his business is to fight. Under the inspiration of the spirit of the gospel he enters upon the new life with this thought and purpose supreme:

"Since I must fight if I would reign,  
Increase my courage, Lord;  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by thy Word."

In the practical age in which we live, and in pursuance of the practical task which God has assigned us, this conception of the Christian life should be the prevailing and controlling one.

But the soldier must not rush to the battle-field without making due preparation to meet his foe. Any amount of enthusiasm cannot atone for the lack of his armor, boundless courage is a poor substitute for a sword. The same mailed warrior of the Cross who bids us "fight the good fight of faith," with equal earnestness exhorts us to "put on the whole armor of God." He enumerates the separate pieces of the soldier's complete outfit, all of which are indispensable to success in the battle against sin. Five pieces of armor furnish the soldier's absolute protection, one—the invincible "sword of the Spirit"—equips him for aggressive fighting. To go forth to battle with any part of this armor lacking is to invite defeat and failure.

Grecian mythology tells us that Achilles, the captain of the Grecian army during the Trojan war, was, when a child, dipped by his mother in the river Lethe, in order that he might be safe from the attacks of his enemies. The magic waters rendered invulnerable all parts of the body except the heel by which the mother held her child. But the vulnerable heel furnished a convenient target for the arrow of Paris who, in after years, succeeded in slaying his almost invulnerable enemy.

From this the Christian warrior may learn that to be almost absolutely safe from the darts of his great adver-

sary is only to be exposed to danger. To be safe he must be armed *cap-a-pie* with the whole armor of God. The provision of such protection may well inspire the Christian with courage.

But if any fear of defeat still exist the presence of our great Leader dispels it. We go forth to battle, not alone, but under the leadership of the great "Captain of our salvation." Clad in armor which God has forged, wielding the Sword with which he has bidden us conquer the world, inspired by his continued presence, what need the soldier of the Cross fear though he be called to face a world in arms?

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## Modern Missions.\*

BY AN ANGLICAN MISSIONARY.

Mission work is divided into three branches, although the three often overlap, namely, the Evangelistic, the Pastoral and the Educational. They have been arranged in logical sequence and order of importance, but this order is seldom fully observed and often reversed, and for convenience's sake we will reserve it now. Education, on which so much stress is laid—and rightly laid so long as the religious aim is steadily preserved—may be subdivided into two parts. First, there is the teaching of Christian boys and girls in scattered villages the three "Rs" and the foundation truths of religion; and, secondly, there is the influence exercised on the upper classes in Mission Colleges and High Schools. After experience of both, the present writer has no hesitation in assigning the highest place in importance to the former. Missionaries have a sacred duty to the children of their converts not to allow them to grow up as heathens. This duty is often greatly neglected from want of funds, and the latter difficulty, rises from the expense entailed in higher education. A college at best only exercises an indirect religious influence, but sometimes does not gain even that for its money. There may be a perfunctory half hour occasionally assigned to the reading of a gospel, and that is all, for it is known that if the college is worked as a real missionary agency, with religion as its *raison d'être*, it will in many cases be cut out by competition with Hindu or Roman Catholic colleges which do not teach Scripture in class. The whole educational position has materially altered in the last twenty years. There is no doubt that Mission Colleges have their use; still they have largely become expensive luxuries. An enormous amount of money is spent on them which could probably be utilized to more advantage by letting "the poor have the gospel preached to them." The S. P. G. has colleges at Trichinopoly and Tanjore, and the C. M. S. at Masulipatam and Tinnevely. This means a terrible expenditure of money and a terrible waste of missionary energy. What is wanted is one central college for Christians with a theological department attached, having residential rooms, chapel, hall, library, and so on. From a purely missionary point of view, one such college would be worth more than all the existing ones put together. It may be objected that the local influence would thus be lost, but that would be small compared with the vast gain on the other side.

Next there is the Pastoral work. This is done for the most part by native clergymen under English supervision. In the opinion of the late metropolitan, the development of the existing Christian congregations should be the church's first care. This is no doubt true; but such development may be taken in two different senses. The native Christian is apt to argue: "Yes, we must no longer be treated as children, and must have more independence. We need graduates for our clergy, and so salaries must be raised. We must have less English interference, and we do not want English missionaries to domineer over us. Let them collect funds, but let both the missionaries, the pastors, and the funds be all under the control of the native council, which must be absolutely independent. Thus the church will develop." The missionary, on the other hand, so far from wanting to lord it over the native, is only too anxious to get rid of some of the burden of responsibility from his own shoulders the moment he can safely do so. But he cannot, and every practical missionary knows that he cannot. The natives are eager enough for honor and salary, but they will not take the responsibilities entailed by the former, nor contribute the funds required for the latter. They dearly like to call the tune, but flatly refuse to pay the piper. They will criticise, but not put the shoulder to the wheel. As to church councils, the plea is often raised: "The infant church must be trained; it will stumble at first, but never mind. Let it have a chance of learning; do not always keep it tied to its mother's apron strings." This sounds so fair and sensible that the average Englishman is captivated at once; but not so the experienced missionary. He knows that the native is no more a tottering child than he is. He is quite as shrewd as himself, and just as little likely to go wrong from want of training or intellectual qualifications. Then

\*This article is published at the request of one of our missionaries of much experience in India.