

Tennyson was buried. It was prompted mainly by the thought of the noble patriotism of the man :

“ Here slumbers our last poet, pure and great ;
 With genuine tears let England bless his name,
 Not only that his glory swell'd her state,
 But that he loved her with a votary's flame.”



Foreign Missions and Christian Unity.¹

By ROBERT E. SPEER, M.A.

I WISH to speak of three points. First, the considerations which call us to Christian unity on the foreign field, and which indicate its possibility ; second, the kind and degree of unity to which these considerations call us ; and, third, the measure in which this unity has been attained.

I. First, with reference to the considerations which indicate that Christian unity on the foreign mission-field is both desirable and necessary, I would suggest five.

In the first place, the magnitude, the difficulties, and the urgency of the work demand the most fruitful and effective use of all our resources for the missionary task. We have to evangelize a thousand millions of our fellow-creatures—that is, to carry spiritual truth, the most difficult of all truth to carry, to two-thirds of the human race—and not only to persuade men to embrace this truth, but to place their characters under the transforming influence of the Lord of this truth. We have to do this not in any one land or in any uniform set of conditions or in any one language. It has to be done under very trying climatic conditions—conditions that break down the health of many strong men and women ; it has to be done in many scores of languages, which have to be expanded in order to express this truth, and against difficulties beyond the reach of our

¹ An address delivered before the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, at Philadelphia, in January, 1909.

imagination here. The task is too great and too difficult, as the late Bishop of London wrote to my friend, Mr. W. H. T. Gairdner, for any one Christian body to hope to accomplish. Even if that one Christian body might hope to accomplish it in many generations, we cannot wait for it, for these multitudes are passing away, and before they pass are entitled to know of the Lord who died for them, and no one denomination has a right to claim the whole world as its preserve, the generations to wait until it can compass them all in its own denominational name. The need is too urgent. There are, moreover, great forces astir throughout the world that will not wait for their permanent die and stamp. If we do not seize them in this generation and claim them for God, they will set and harden in permanently atheistic form. The magnitude of the missionary enterprise, the difficulties and the urgency of the task, forbid all waste and inefficiency.

In the second place, the elementary needs of the non-Christian peoples to whom we go call primarily for what is fundamental and essential in Christianity. The great evils of the world are impurity and inequality and hopelessness. The world does not know the character of God, and therefore it is unclean; the world does not know the love of God, and therefore men are not brothers; the world does not know the life of God, and therefore men despair alike of the present and of the future. And these three things—the character of God, and the love of God, and the life of God—are not the things on which we disagree. They constitute the great fundamental and elementary things in Christianity, and it is for these, and not for any of the points about which we are at variance, that the world primarily calls.

In the third place, the simplicity of the missionary aim invites unity, and shows to us how indispensable unity is. The great aim of the missionary enterprise is the naturalization of Christianity in the national life of the different non-Christian peoples. It is not the extension there of any particular view of Christian truth or any particular form of Christian organiza-

tion. I belong to the Presbyterian Church, but I have not the slightest zeal in seeking to have the Presbyterian Church extended over the non-Christian world. I believe in one Church of Christ in each land. It is far more important that the Presbyterians of Japan should relate themselves to the Methodists of Japan than that either of those bodies should retain any connection whatever with any ecclesiastical organization in the United States. We may be very slow in recognizing this here at home. We are so slow that many of us are prepared altogether to deny it; but the great body of our representatives who have gone out to the other side of the world recognize that it is so.

It is the money subsidies by which we maintain our separate organizations in Asia which are in some measure responsible for the perpetuation of those organizations, and when the day comes that we throw these great bodies of Christian believers independently on their own support, and pass over into their own hands, as we must, whether we will or no, the control of their own ecclesiastical government, we may be slow to assent to their coalescing here; but, believe me, the moment that day dawns they will pour together in great nationalistic organizations in their own lands. I do not say they will not break apart again, but if they do, the shame of their division will rest upon themselves, and their denominations will spring out of reality, and not out of alien and imported traditions. The simplicity of the missionary aim shows us not only how desirable and practical, but also how indispensable and necessary unity is.

In the fourth place, we are already agreed—all of us here in the Evangelical Churches of the West—on the intellectual basis that is necessary for such unity abroad. We believe in one God and Father of us all, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, and in one Holy Spirit, and in one Bible, and in one Faith, and in one Salvation. We have got already, in these great common convictions, an adequate basis of intellectual agreement for our enterprise there. We differ, perhaps, as to the symbols in which Christianity expresses itself and as to the institutional

forms in which it is embodied, but we are all agreed as to the spiritual principles which are expressed in these symbols and embodied in these institutions ; and I believe that agreement in these spiritual principles is the fundamental and essential thing, and that even in a great united Church, when it comes, there will be room made for some disagreement as to our symbols and our institutional forms. We are agreed enough, I say, in our common intellectual convictions regarding the fundamental elements of our Christian faith to make union out in the non-Christian world an entirely practicable thing.

The one other suggestion that I have to make under the first head is that the Occidental character of our divisions makes it unnecessary that they should be imported into the non-Christian world. Our divisions here, we will grant, have their own historic value ; they root back into great experiences of our fathers, and perhaps we do right in cherishing them and in letting them go with great slowness. But we will do better to let them go. And those great differences are not native to the lands to which we carry the Gospel on the other side of the sea. Thank God, there are many of them that you cannot transport there. I remember reading a little while ago, in a Methodist paper published in the city of Shanghai, a lament of a certain Methodist missionary that there was not one volume of theology available for the Methodist Churches in China that was not tinctured with Calvinism. I rejoiced as I read that complaint, and I hoped that it might also be true that there was not one volume of theology available for the Presbyterian Churches there that was not tinctured with Arminianism, and, more than that, that did not have a very heavy saturation of it. You cannot transport to these other lands our divergent intellectual views on Christianity such as separate the Arminian and the Calvinistic parties in the West. The universal mind will not be responsible for the perpetuation of such divisions. The great things that keep us apart here do not root down to what is fundamental in Christianity or universal or really transportable ; they root only into those things which are Occidental

and superficial, and that we could not transport and make genuinely native to these non-Christian lands if we would. The Occidental character of our differences invites us to union abroad.

II. Now, secondly, to what degree and kind of unity do these considerations of which I have been speaking summon us? In the first place, they call us to a union manifestly that shall prevent all waste and friction; for all friction is disloyalty to Christ, and all waste is disloyalty to the world. All friction is disloyalty to Christ because it argues another principle superior to His principle of brotherly love and unselfishness, and all waste is disloyalty to the world because it denies to great masses of our fellow-men a Gospel that might be carried to them if there were no waste and duplication and overlapping. The considerations of which I have spoken demand of us a kind of union that will prevent all waste and friction on the foreign field.

But, more than that, they call not only for an avoidance of collision; they call for the presence of a co-operation that bids us to say to one another, not "Hands off," but "Hands together." They command us not to divide, that we may march separately, but to draw near, that we may march together. The great things that are to be attained in the world's evangelization cannot be done by companies of Christian men who agree to differ; they can only be done by great companies of Christian men who relate themselves for common and united action. Not only do these considerations demand that we should avoid negatively the things that impair the efficiency of our efforts, but that we should provide positively the things that make our efforts more powerful and more effective.

In the third place, these considerations call not only for this external form of co-operation of which I have spoken. I am one of those who believe that they call for the most living and real and spiritual unity. And I believe this, first of all, because this was the kind of unity for which our Lord prayed. I hear men say now and then that what we need on the mission-field

—and that we need nothing more—is fraternal relations. Our Lord did not pray “that they all may be one, as John and James are one, or as brothers are one,” but “that they all may be one, as Thou and I are one.” The kind of unity for which He prayed was not a unity of fraternity, not a unity of relationship of men externally bound to one another. The ideal that He held out was not the ideal of the unity of human brotherhood, but the ideal of the unity of the Godhead itself; and because I believe that was the kind of unity for which our Lord made His prayer, I believe that is the kind of unity that should be our ideal on the mission-field.

And I believe this, not only because I believe that this was the kind of unity for which our Lord prayed, but also because any other kind of relationship among Christians misrepresents His Gospel. You cannot express one God in a split Church. The Gospel is a message of a one God, of a one Saviour, of a one human family, and until we have got that embodied in a great human symbol that speaks of a unity as real and complete as that, we have not got a symbol that represents correctly the great Gospel of the Saviour of all the world. And I believe in this corporate oneness, in the third place, because until we have that kind of unity our Gospel never can put forth its full power. You must give Christ a body in which He can express Himself to the one humanity that He came to save. You must give the Holy Spirit a channel through which He can pour Himself out over the whole world that He came to keep in the salvation and the purity of the Saviour. And until we have a oneness like that our Gospel will go lame and halt, and never can have the fulness of that Divine power for the world’s conviction which our Lord Himself said it would have only when at last His people had arrived at a unity perfected into one as He and His Father were one.

III. And now, last of all, to what extent has this degree and kind of unity been attained on the foreign field? In the first place, we have in no small measure desisted from importing into the various foreign fields our denominational titles and

proprietary claims. Happily, there are some of them that cannot be translated. By God's great mercy, the Chinese language will not lend itself to the translation of many of these names. You cannot translate the word "Presbyterian," or the word "Methodist," or the words "Protestant Episcopal" into a great many of these heathen languages; the languages have no such terms. You can transliterate them, and then teach the heathen what the names mean, but they have no words that correspond to those and can serve as translations for them. Happily, even in the lands where such terms exist, the missionaries have often been wise enough to sink them into the background. It was agreed at the outset in the Philippines, for example, that the Evangelical Churches should bear one common Christian name. If anybody wanted to throw in a little parenthesis at the end, perpetuating the Western denominational name, they could do so, but the outstanding conspicuous name was one. The same agreement, I believe, has been reached in Korea, and in many other lands from the very beginning our Western denominational titles were not known. And while here and there a particular missionary institution may bear some proprietary title, yet for the most part it is known as the Mission Hospital, or the Mission School, or the Mission Press, and no particular name is tied to it to create distinctions in the minds of those who may know of it. First of all, then, we have made a long step in advance in leaving behind us the names. Abandon the names, and the ideas that the old names embodied will sooner or later fade away.

In the second place, we have long accepted territorial divisions. In almost all of the mission-fields now Christian bodies recognize the superior obligation of each body to its own territory, and avoid all overlapping and duplication. We have not reached the goal as yet. There are lands, like India, where there are many things left undone, still to be done in this matter; but, for the most part, over all the non-Christian world the principle of a territorial division of the field is well understood. I think there are very few Christian bodies who would

not assent to, if not go beyond, the words of the Lambeth Conference of 1887: "That in the foreign mission-field of the Church's work, where signal spiritual blessings have attended the labour of Christian missionaries not connected with the Anglican community, a special obligation has arisen to avoid, as far as possible without compromise of principle, whatever tends to prevent the due growth and manifestation of that 'unity of the Spirit' which should ever mark the Church of Christ." And there are very few missionaries now, happily, who are not of the same mind with Alexander Duff, who years ago declared that he would as soon leap into the Ganges as he would to take one step to entice a Christian believer away from another Christian body, or to do work that fell in the natural sphere and was the duty of any other Christian organization.

In the third place, the different Christian bodies in the foreign field have come, in the main, to recognize the ordinances and the acts of discipline of other Christian organizations, so that if in any one territory men are baptized, they are baptized for the territory of other Churches also; so that if in any one territory acts of discipline lie upon agents of that native Church, the validity of those acts is regarded in other Christian organizations, whether adjacent or far away.

In the fourth place, we have come on the mission-field to an advanced union in the spirit of prayer. Our Week of Prayer sprang from the foreign field. It was in its inception a great appeal in prayer for the pouring out of God's Spirit upon the unevangelized world. The great united prayer movements from that day have usually been related in one way or another to the foreign mission-field. Appeal after appeal has gone out within the last ten years on the mission-field to missionaries of every name to unite themselves in great bodies of prayer. I doubt whether there is any one object in the world for which as large a volume of prayer is rising to-night all over the nations as for this one thing—the unity of Christendom in its representation of Christ to the non-Christian world. I read again the other day a noble appeal for prayer thoroughly representative of

scores, published seven years ago in Japan by two of the Bishops of the Anglican Church.

I see in this gathering volume of prayer a hope for the removal of the most massive obstacle in the way of the union of Christendom. I mean the conscientiousness of Christian people. It has been the case from the beginning of the world that the greatest evils have rooted themselves in the consciences of men. "The day will come," our Lord told His disciples, "when those who kill you will think that they do service unto God." We hide ourselves behind what we call our conscientiousness of principle, as though that were an adequate reason for our delaying the day of the unity of the Church. Some of the heaviest crimes that have been done against the life of humanity have been done in the name of conscience. The very thing that we stand most in need of to-day is such a searching of the eyes of God upon our inner life as will reveal to us the moral colour-blindness, the obliquity of vision, the distortion of judgment, and the misconception of His Spirit in our own hearts which stand most in the way of the unity of the body in the life of our Lord. And we shall never have that exposure, that revelation of our own misguided conscientiousness until we come in prayer, in great humility and self-distrust, to the fear that where we think we stand, we may have fallen worst in His sight whose eyes can search us and show us the truth within and the truth without.

In the fifth place, we have come in many lands to the establishment of little bodies of men, authorized by those whom they represent, to adjust questions of difficulty, to settle points of conflict and friction. We have in America now, established by the Annual Conference of the Foreign Mission Boards, and ratified by those Boards, a little Committee of Reference and Counsel, representing all these Boards, gathering them together into one, to which any question of separate judgment can be referred. The great Missionary Conference in Madras in the year 1900 established a great Court of Arbitration and Appeal for the whole land of India, and appointed representatives of

forty different missionary societies on the Committee to organize that Court. Twenty-five of these societies approved of its establishment, and we have now in India one great Central Court of Arbitration, with seven provincial Courts, from which any questions can be carried up, that there may be no unseemly strife among brethren. But we have gone far beyond this appointing of committees to adjust differences on the mission-field. In five or six of the great mission-fields there are committees on co-operative work now that bind together men and women and great organizations to do a common task. Missionaries have arranged not only to refer to some central body questions of divergence of view that may arise, but also to bind their missions together in one common united work.

In the sixth place, there are illustrations of this co-operation that present themselves at once to your thought, in organic union in different missionary enterprises. I can count twenty different institutions, three of them theological institutions, where different denominations have united themselves to support those institutions in common and to carry on together the work which those institutions represent. We have in China now all the medical missionaries gathered in one medical association, all the missionaries in educational work gathered in one educational association. And this organic union extends not only to educational and medical institutions and publishing enterprises like our common Christian hymn-book in Japan; it extends to Churches. We hesitate to assent to the proposition that the elimination of denominations abroad as far as possible was a desirable thing. Well, I do not see why we need to be so slow to ratify what has been done and what is going to be done in spite of us, anyhow. I know of nine cases now where they have been already eliminated. There have been three great eliminations in Japan. The Episcopal Churches of Great Britain and America are now one in Japan. All Presbyterian and Reformed bodies have been one in Japan for twenty-five years. All the Methodist bodies were made organically one in Japan a year or two ago. There is scarcely a mission-field

where there have not been instances of this organic melting together of different denominations. In every country where the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches of this land are working, outside of the United States, they are working as one organic Church. In this Christian land we are two; in every heathen land we are one. Over in India, three or four years ago, all the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches and the Calvinistic Methodists came together in one great Church of Christ for India, and only this last year the Southern section of that Church separated from the rest with the goodwill and approval of the rest, in order to unite with the English and American Congregationalists of South India, and make a larger union numerically—a larger union in the inclusion of different types of denominations, although for a little while it made a smaller union geographically. But it was done as a step to the larger union yet to be. And an even wider unity is proposed than the consolidation of cognate denominations. The conception of a visible corporate oneness of the whole Church is increasingly dominating the thought of great bodies of missionaries. In Japan, the last great Conference in 1900, and the Centenary Conference in Shanghai in 1907, spoke out in comprehensive and commanding conviction. And thus they provide for the day, which they hope to be near, when there shall be no Church of Christ Presbyterian in China, and no Church of Christ Methodist in China, and no Church of Christ Episcopal or Baptist in China, but one Church of Christ with no qualifying adjectives whatever.

It is no enmity to our past to believe that it did not exhaust God. I do not see any disloyalty to the past in believing that God means the future to be better than it. Unless the past has made ready for a better future, the past was a bad past. Only those things are good that make ready for better things to come after them, and those men are disloyal to the past, not who believe that it made preparation for greater things, but who believe that all the great things are in a golden age gone by. The worst disloyalty to the past is to mistake it for the future.

Very great and glorious that past has been, but that past will have failed to teach its lesson to us, that past will have failed to fulfil its mission in the will of God, if it binds men for ever in the chains of its institutional forms, if it has not made them ready for larger and completer things, and led them on to such a unity as Christ Himself, we must believe, longed for while He was here, and waits for now where He is gone.

The younger men—and I know their heart well—have their own day coming, and when their own day comes you may believe that that unity will be near. They do not believe that loyalty to their fathers who went before them means disloyalty to their sons who are to come after them. They believe in ringing out an old that has fulfilled its end, and ringing in the new and the larger things which are in God's will for His Church, if, like the path of the just, it is to shine brighter and brighter unto the fulness of the day.



The Day of Atonement and the Vanished Ark.

BY THE REV. ANDREW CRAIG ROBINSON, M.A.

THE great atonement for sin under the Mosaic Law was the ceremonial of the Day of Atonement, which took place once a year on the tenth day of the seventh month. On that one day only of all the year was the high priest permitted to enter into the Most Holy Place, within the veil, before the mercy seat,¹ which was upon the Ark, where, shrouded in a cloud of incense, he was to sprinkle on the mercy seat the victims' blood, and make atonement for himself and all the people.

Now, this fast of the Day of Atonement is not mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel in connection with his ideal Temple, nor by

¹ A plate of pure gold forming the top or cover of the Ark. At each end of it were the two cherubims, their faces bowed over the mercy-seat, and their wings overshadowing it from on high (Exod. xxv. 17-21).