

life "Thus saith the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O Spirit, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." And once again the breath shall come upon them and they shall live, "and ye shall know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord."

## The Challenge in Regard to the World.

BY THE REV. P. J. HEATON, M.A.

**T**WO centuries ago John Wesley made his oft-quoted declaration "The world is my parish." The startled ecclesiastic to whom it was addressed little thought that this utterance was a seed that would germinate into missionary societies, blossom into such world-wide missionary enterprises as the past 150 years have witnessed, and bear fruit a hundredfold in flourishing native churches in practically every country in the world.

The World-vision has ever been a hall-mark of Evangelical Christianity. The exaltation of the Gospel, the Evangel, as the supreme thing in Christianity, by the remorseless logic of its Universalities, led inevitably to acceptance of the duty of World Evangelisation. The founders of the Missionary Movement, beginning with Carey 150 years ago, were men of world vision. Fifty years ago the young enthusiasts who founded the S.V.M.U. proclaimed their slogan "The Evangelisation of the World in this generation."

To-day, however, a World Outlook is no monopoly of missionary enthusiasts. Statesmen, journalists, and secular publicists all urge us—as they say in America—to "think globally." All planning for after the war—whether political or economic—must be on a world scale. Two world wars have knocked the bottom out of all mere narrow nationalism. So in the sphere of religion men must learn to think globally, Churches to plan globally, and strive to hasten the day when "the kingdoms of the world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ."

Our discussions so far have had an intentionally limited reference—our own country and Europe. But all the problems raised are also world problems, and often found in far acuter forms in other lands. Moreover, the study of such problems against the background of disintegrating non-Christian civilisations will certainly reveal more clearly their real nature as fundamentally spiritual problems, even than when they are considered against the background of shattered Western Christendom.

Now before painting in the world background I want to say two things. The *first* is that the Challenge of the World is not merely a challenge to Anglican Evangelicals but primarily a challenge to the whole Christian Church. We readily recognise the wonderful missionary achievements of the Free Churches, both here and in America, of European Missions, to say nothing of the Anglo and Roman Catholic Missions.\* Not the least service rendered to us all

\* Max Warren has recently reminded us that "*the Roman Church is by far the most successful missionary church of all.*"

(Idea of a Missionary Society—in *East and West Review*, July, 1943).

by the publication of that authoritative symposium on the South India Church Union Scheme in the Record of June 16th was the reiterated mention of Free Church achievement, the reminder that all Anglican missionary effort is less than one-seventh of the total non-Roman activity, and the emphasis on the emergence of a real Christian world-consciousness, culminating in the World Council of Churches.

Unity and Co-operation was one of the liveliest issues at the great Tambaram Conference and produced the most moving appeal from the so-called Younger Churches. The founding of the World Council of Churches as an organ for the growing Ecumenical Movement is an impressive response to that appeal, which in brighter days may well bear abundant fruit.

The second thing I want to say is that within the total response of the Christian Church to the world situation we Evangelicals of the Church of England have a vital contribution to make. There is a special challenge to us, both as Anglicans and as men who put the Gospel first—before church-building, church organisation, before education and social uplift, before moral reform, economic relief, and medical service—but who can use all these things as vehicles of the Message.

What that contribution and that challenge is will become clearer as we study the world background of the day.

*What then is the world situation that will confront us after the war?*

This question, so far as it affects Europe, has received some answer already. My task is to envisage the probable situation in other continents. Time is too short to do other than sketch the broadest outlines. We presuppose of course, a United Nations Victory both East and West, leaving Great Britain, America, Russia and China as the Four Great World Powers. No one can guess how many years of bitter and exhausting struggle lie ahead before "Unconditional Surrender" is forced upon our enemies. But we can look for nothing less.

Starting then, with the Far East—we shall expect to see China as the great victorious land power and the U.S.A. as the victorious naval and air power, faced with a prostrate Japan. The humiliation, despair and disillusionment of a conquered and defeated Japan can be dimly imagined when contrasted with the pride and boastfulness, the pompous self-deceit of her so-called Divine Mission in East Asia. While statesmen will have to deal with the problem of the people of Japan, the Christian Church will be faced with a terribly disillusioned Japanese Church, which because it so whole-heartedly shared the imperialistic ambitions of its Government will also be not only disillusioned, but probably very bitter, sore, and resentful, jealous of its own autonomy and autarchy, sensitive for its own honour especially in regard to the criticisms and suspicions of other Christians regarding its compromise with the national Shinto cult and its imperialistic activities among the Churches of Occupied China, and elsewhere in the sprawling Japanese conquests: yet a Church sorely needing the help and fellowship of other Christian Communities after so many years of isolation. The problem of re-establishing relations with the Church of Japan will need the most sympathetic and delicate handling—even if,

as is quite probable, invitations are sent to Britain and America by Japanese Christian leaders. The whole approach will have to be poles apart from the traditional "missionary" approach. Yet one thing is certain, Japan will need the Gospel then more urgently than ever before to stay the hate and heal the wounds of war, and to lead her people into the way of peace.

And China, vast, triumphant, united, will be the dominant military power on the mainland, bearing suzerain sway over restored Korea, Manchuria and perhaps Formosa, Indo-China and Malaya. Thank God the Chinese are not militaristic, but there are totalitarian tendencies to be found even in the present Government at Chungking—as an able article by Gilbert Baker in the current East and West Review has shown. Will her ancient tradition of village democracy, her agelong gentlemanly code of Confucian ethics, which her leaders are trying to integrate into the National New Life Movement, above all, will the human instincts and objectivity and sense of humour ingrained in her people survive the heady wine of victory, even though won at tremendous cost?

Thank God, Free China welcomes missionaries and admires the Christian Church in her midst. No greater need and no greater single opportunity confronts the Church than in that vast and needy land. Nowhere would prodigal outpouring of spiritual treasure yield such mighty dividends. Yet only a trickle of men and supplies can enter, by plane, that spiritually open but war-locked land. And its chaotic economic condition makes the maintenance of existing work a nightmare to Mission Boards. But the Chinese Church needs help now—help to train and maintain an adequate pastoral ministry both of men and women, help to make the Christian schools both a real evangelistic force and a seed-bed of Christian leadership, help to develop medical services with the highest Christian motives and methods, above all help to evangelise its teeming suffering millions, to win its thousands of disillusioned students, seeking a surer basis for life and a more satisfying purpose than national service. The present force of missionary personnel in China has served many long years without home furlough. Where are the recruits to replace them? The Synods of the Chinese Church are crying out for evangelistic missionaries.

But perhaps the greatest single need is LITERATURE. With 45 million new literates a vast new reading public has arisen. But there is almost a famine of the Word of God. The planes that enter China are so full of materialistic cargo that there is no room for Bibles. The Church itself is being starved of the Scriptures, as worn-out Bibles cannot be replaced.

Such is China's challenge to Evangelicals to-day.

Turning to India we are met by a veritable kaleidoscope of need, suffering and frustration. The political deadlock overshadows all. The magnificent achievements of Indian troops, the vast extension of India's war industry, the creation of a vast military base for future operations against Japan, lose lustre and significance against the stubborn facts of political frustration. The three main parties for the deadlock blame the other two, but make no move themselves. The atmosphere is one of mutual suspicion and distrust, of

fear, selfishness and jealously guarded prestige. Work this out in terms of British Government, Congress, and Muslim League. It betokens not political but moral and spiritual bankruptcy and impotence. The solution lies in a "change of heart" all round—a phrase popularised by Gandhi, but applied by him to all except himself.

The Church alone knows the secret of a change of heart. But the Church in India is weak and divided, poor and dependent. Much has been attempted by individuals and organisations as the July number of the *International Review of Missions* reveals. But no apparent impression has been made in any quarter.

And it is all so *unreal* too. The average man goes about his ordinary work with little concern for politics. He enjoys a large measure of personal freedom, and amuses himself with litigation under impartial British law. There is hardly any unemployment in the cities and the intelligentsia are being largely absorbed into the war-effort. Seven Provinces now have responsible ministries and functioning legislatures, and the Indian states are waking up.

Whatever the final political set-up may be, the missionary task in an independent India will be just as urgent, even if compassed with greater difficulties. Presupposing some sort of Partition as demanded by the Moslems, whether under a stronger or weaker central Authority, missionary work will probably be drastically controlled. Hindu leaders have long echoed Gandhi's denunciation of "proselytism," and when in power will seek to stop it. Moslem Governments will seek to enforce the Shariat Law against "Apostasy" from Islam. Conscience clauses will be enforced in all schools and probably Hospitals too, where any Government aid or recognition is received. Indian Christians will find public employment of all kinds virtually closed to them. All this will happen unless specific clauses on religious liberty are included in the Constitutions to be drawn up by the Indians themselves, and perhaps in defiance of such clauses. Yet so great and so beneficent has been the contribution of Christian Missions in India in the past, especially in rural areas, that I cannot conceive any responsible Government banishing or even crippling that effort.

But the day of missionary imperialism is past. Missionaries must in future go out as servants and colleagues of the Indian Church. Responsibility and initiative must be turned over to Indian leadership. Funds and property must be trusted to Indian hands.

Yet where are the leaders and what is the Church? Four-fifths of the Christians are in the South, four-fifths of the missionaries in the North. Apart from the Syrian Church nine-tenths of the Christians of the South are of outcaste or depressed class origin. Paramount needs are Leadership, Unity and Literacy. Hence the great importance of the Union Scheme and Adult Literacy Campaign.

The Indian Church will need the highest Christian Scholarship of the West for the training of Church Leaders. One of the most encouraging signs of the past year in India has been two gatherings of Indian Christian theologians, called by the N.C.C. to discuss the Presentation of the Gospel to modern Hinduism and Islam. Papers they read there have been published in the N.C.C. Review, and not only reveal a very high standard of theological knowledge and

independent thinking, but also give the lie to one of the most timid and unworthy criticisms that has yet been levelled against the South India Union Scheme by its opponents in this country, namely that a local Union of Churches there would tend to become syncretistic in doctrine and compromise the Christian Faith amid the surrounding Hinduism. That suspicion is based upon utter ignorance. While it may be true that one or two Indian Christian leaders have shown the influence of Hindu philosophic systems in their Christian thought, such a tendency is entirely absent in the village Pastorate, and the Indian theologians whose papers I have read show no trace of it.

This brings me to my "special reference," the South India Union Scheme. This has been so ably dealt with elsewhere that I will not go into its details. I will only refer you to *The Record* for June 16th which most of you will have seen already and to the books and pamphlets recommended there.

The Challenge to Evangelicals there is plain and urgent. We are to testify to the true nature of the Church and Ministry and the actual teaching of Scripture and our Anglican Formularies about them, to study the Scheme and its History and take our full share in combatting the organised opposition of the Anglo-Catholics. There is need too for persevering Prayer. Our Christian brethren in South India are not yet fully agreed upon the Scheme. The Methodists and three of the four Anglican Dioceses concerned have already voted in favour. So have some other dioceses of the C.I.B.C. Others have yet to discuss it. The S.I.U.C., however, are in a dilemma. Six out of eight councils have voted in favour, and constitutionally that Church can now go forward to Union. But the two dissident Councils are the largest, containing between them about half the entire membership of the Church—Travancore and Telugu. One or two Councils have since voted to go on with the Union in spite of the hesitation of the two, in the hope that they might join in later when they see the fruit of Union in other places. One Council has voted for delay until the requisite three-quarters majority be finally secured in the other two Councils. The General Assembly of that Church is to meet in October to decide what to do next. One reassuring piece of news has come recently : that a Union Theological College has been started in Travancore comprising C.M.S., L.M.S., and Mar Thoma Syrians. The fact that the most divided part of the Indian Church has led the way in this matter is to me a beacon of hope. Indeed Patience and Prayer may yet see a Union achieved even greater and more comprehensive than the present Scheme. One of the points made by opponents of the Scheme is that there must be something very "fishy" about it since the 600,000 Mar Thoma Syrians refused to enter the negotiations. May it not be the Purpose of God to delay this Union still longer in order that it may embrace them too ?

Since the original date, 1944, for the inauguration is almost certain to be deferred—both because of S.I.U.C. hesitation and because of the constitutional reference of the Scheme to the Metropolitan of other Anglican Provinces—Time has now been gained for the education of Evangelical Clergy and laity in the principles of the Scheme, and for the education by them of the rest of the Church !

This process of education should be accompanied by an all-out

advocacy of Re-union at Home on the lines of South India. There is too much apathy about Reunion at Home. Some of us suspect Free Church ministers of being Modernist and unsound, forgetting the wonderful testimony of some of their leaders and the faithfulness of their rank and file. Let none of us be guilty of using the South India Union Scheme merely as a means to score a victory over the Anglo-Catholics. It has a message that speaks even to the heart of our desperate spiritual situation here at home.

It has been impossible in the time at my disposal to attempt to deal with Africa and the Moslem World. Our Colonial Empire in Africa presents a great opportunity for Christian Education and Evangelism, only the fringe of which is being touched at present. The Moslem World is still the greatest single religious opponent of Christianity and I see at present no gleam of hope that the Gospel will be welcomed there. I trust some members with knowledge of that field will enlighten us.

In conclusion I would point out that the World Challenge to Evangelicals involves a costly support of the existing evangelical agencies for World Evangelisation. The Societies are faced with colossal problems and an unparalleled need. Why should they be burdened also with the duty of incessant education and propaganda here at home? If every Evangelical incumbent would make himself a master of *one vital* missionary topic and be ready to go round and speak about it in other parishes, the Societies would be relieved of much costly and arduous deputation work.

But the greatest and one indispensable contribution of Evangelicals towards meeting the challenge in respect of the World is in faithful Evangelism at Home. The need is not only in respect of the tremendous repercussions that a Britain brought back to the obedience of Christ would have in the whole family of Nations, but also in the necessity for converted men and women with a world-vision carrying on the mighty enterprise of world-evangelisation. Brothers, let us see to it that our ministry be crowned by a procession of definitely and progressively converted lives.