

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

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

turned with the ticket in his fingers. He had a brief glimpse of the man he knew backing out before the two policemen—his wan, haggard face, the gleam of wretchedness in his eyes.' Wrenching the door wide again, he grasped the man's arm, and dragging him through into the yard thrust something roughly into his hand, and having himself passed out among the disappointed crowd outside, the door shut heavily behind him.

'Child, follow Me,' the Master said,

As He knocked full loud at my chamber door;
But the morn was fair, and my heart was gay,

'I'll dally a while on the primrose way,
And I'll come,' said I, 'when the morning's o'er.'

'Child, follow Me,' the Master said,

As He lingered patiently at the gate;
Grey shadows were falling, the night was near,

'Life's joys are so sweet, and my friends so dear,
I will come,' said I, 'when the night is late.'

'Child follow Me,' the Master cried,

As He walked away through the darkness deep;

And the night had fallen, and the birds were still;
'Linger,' said I, 'at the foot of the hill,
And I'll come when the world is hushed in sleep.'

'Master, I come,' I cried at length,
'Heart-weary to serve at Thine own dear side,
Thou hast called me long, but I come at last.'

But mine eyes were dim and my strength was past,
And I could not follow the Crucified.

FOR REFERENCE.

- Bentley (S.), *Parish Sermons*, 85.
Burton (J.), *Christian Life and Truth*, 22.
Darlow (T. H.), *The Upward Calling*, 46.
Farrar (F. W.), *Eternal Hope*, 90.
Kirk (J.), *Sermons*, 153.
McCombie (W.), *Sermons and Lectures*, 207.
Murray (W. H.), *The Fruits of the Spirit*, 463.
Selby (T. G.), *The Strenuous Gospel*, 184.
Walker (J.), *Memoir and Sermons*, 323.
Wilkinson (J. B.), *Instructions on the Parables*, 235.
Wilson (J. H.), *The Gospel and its Fruits*, 51.
Christian World Pulpit, vol. xiv. 397 (A. Scott).
" " " vol. xvi. 309 (H. W. Beecher).

Jesus Christ and Missions to the World according to the Gospels.

BY THE REV. H. U. WEITBRECHT, PH.D., D.D., LAHORE, INDIA.

Now that the second volume of the translation of Professor Harnack's *Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* has appeared,¹ English missionary students will the better be able to realize their indebtedness to the great German scholar for the light he has thrown on their task and its problems. One cannot but be disappointed that the conscientiousness of the careful investigator has deterred him from giving us, if only by way of essay, the maps which at first he planned. However, if the student, with an ancient atlas, marks the places given by Professor Harnack in his lists, he will no doubt impress on his mind the results and areas of the progress of the faith in the Roman Empire even more clearly than if he found the work ready done for him by the excellent map-engravers of Berlin.

The section which will afford the most sugges-

¹ *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*. Vol. ii. Williams & Norgate. 10s. 6d. Quotations in this article are made from the German edition.

tion and stimulus to the missionary student is probably the third, which deals with 'The Missionaries: their Methods and Opponents.' In this, two points are brought out very clearly: (1) The subordinate part taken by the professional evangelist in the spread of the gospel during the first three centuries. Even the diligence and acumen of Professor Harnack's research has failed to unearth the name of a single 'missionary' of note between the time of the apostles and that of Constantine the Great. 'Apostles, prophets, and evangelists' (Eph 4¹¹) there were in the apostolic and subapostolic age; 'teachers,' too, continued their office as instructors of non-Christians till the third century; but more and more each local church, with its bishop, presbyters, and deacons, became the evangelizing agency, and that chiefly through its individual members. 'Without being, strictly speaking, a missionary, the bishop exercised missionary functions. More especially it was his work to protect individuals from relapsing into

heathenism, and a bishop who came up to the requirements of his office would gain many new adherents, as we know, *e.g.*, that Cyprian and Gregory Thaumaturgus did' (p. 316). But 'the most numerous and successful missionaries of the Christian religion were not the professional "teachers" but the Christians themselves, in proportion to their faith and vigour. How little do we hear of successes gained by the former; how much of the effects produced by the latter! Most of all, every confessor and martyr was a missionary; not only did he strengthen those who were already gained, but by his testimony and his death he brought in fresh adherents. . . . And not only were the confessors and martyrs missionaries; it was characteristic of this religion that every faithful professor of it helped in its propaganda. Christians were to "let their light shine, so that the heathen (*sic*) might see their good works and glorify their Father in heaven." If they were penetrated by their convictions and lived according to the precepts of their religion, their manner of life would necessarily be a most distinct and forcible missionary sermon. . . . We cannot doubt that the great mission of early Christianity was in effect carried out by unprofessional missionaries, as Justin tells us in so many words. . . . And we may assume with confidence that women took a very important part in the spread of this religion' (pp. 266-268).

(2) Another point much insisted on by Professor Harnack is 'Church Organization as a factor in Christian Missions' (pp. 309 ff.). 'It is, perhaps, the grandest feature, as in Christianity itself, so in the work of Paul, that individualism raised to such a pitch—for how can it reach a greater height than in the all-prevailing maxim, "Save thy soul"—far from stifling the social impulse, has given to that impulse its greatest force.' The Church universal was so organized as to claim the whole known world, while yet each local unit had a right to be called 'the Church of God,' and to enjoy what that claim conveys. 'What a support must such a fact afford to the individual! What an attraction must it exercise when its aims were understood! This *body*, and not this or that evangelist, was the most powerful missionary. We may rest assured that the mere existence and the continuous activity of the several churches more than all else brought about the spread of Christianity' (p. 311).

If we have been told by bishops and other authorities of the Church of our day that the great missionary problem of the twentieth century is the right organization of missionary churches and the education of each local church and its individual members to be centres of evangelizing force, this is but an echo of the experience of the primitive ages: a common plea perhaps—but how needful to be kept in 'the thoughts of the imagination of the heart' of our own generation.

Another prominent task of the missionary is touched by Professor Harnack in dealing with the scholastic and literary activities of the primitive Church. 'The old doctors of the Church were also missionaries; heathens—not only catechumens—entered their schools and listened to their teaching. . . . And to the same sphere belongs the entire activity of the Christian apologists, the effect of which we can hardly suppose to have been small.' But, on the other hand, he regards the Christian literature of the Western Church during this period as a comparatively unimportant factor in the spread of Christianity, owing to the lack of style and culture in many of the writers. 'In the East, however, and among the Greek-speaking population of Rome, Christian literature since the third century plays an important part.' Much more must it do so in this age of universal education, with its missionary schools and colleges, and much more is the Church bound to concentrate the infinitely great resources of literature now at her command on the task of winning the world for Christ.

Among minor missionary problems the excursus on 'the personal names of Christians' throws interesting light on the same question as it presents itself in the mission field to-day. Should the Christian convert keep to the old name, with frequently a heathen or Muhammadan connotation? 'Strange,' writes Professor Harnack (p. 304), 'the Church of the earliest age extirpated from her midst all idolatry, and banished the heathen mythology as a work of devils; she lived with the characters of the Bible, and on their words; yet she continued without embarrassment to use the old heathen names.' A change in this respect did not take place till towards the middle of the third century; and strange, again: 'The line of demarcation between Christendom and heathendom was far more definite in the days when Christians still bore heathen names than at the

time when they began to call themselves Peter and Paul' (p. 306). The question has been differently dealt with by modern missionaries and their converts under varying circumstances; its treatment is much influenced by social and other considerations. But the principle remains: 'The letter killeth; the Spirit giveth life.'

Such are some of the points, not new in themselves, indeed, but on which Professor Harnack has cast the light of immense research and keen thought for which the student of the science of Missions is under deep obligation to him. There is, however, one pronouncement of his, and that on a fundamental matter, which *is* new, and which, if true, would have the most far-reaching effect on Christian Missions. In the course of a brief chapter (pp. 25 ff.) on 'Jesus Christ and Missions to the World according to the Gospels,' Professor Harnack lays down the thesis: 'In our judgment it results from these facts (*diesem Sachverhalt*) that Jesus never gave such a commandment,' namely, as that recorded in Mt 28¹⁹, to make disciples of all the nations, or Mk 16¹⁵, to preach the Gospel in all the world (cf. Lk 24^{47f.} and Ac 1⁸). 'Hence,' he adds, 'it has simply been constructed from the historical development of a subsequent time.' No doubt, he allows, it was a necessary development from the principles enunciated by Jesus, and thus the record of these commands is, 'ideally considered, true. . . . It was the spirit of Jesus—so they felt—which impelled the disciples to undertake a mission to the world' (p. 28).

How stands it with the truth of this proposition, scientifically considered?

In the first place we may note Dr. Harnack's words: 'In this connexion we must leave the Fourth Gospel entirely out of consideration' (p. 29). Obviously; for, as he further remarks: 'Even omitting the prologue, we at once come upon the utterance of the Baptist (Jn 1²⁹), "Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and the whole Gospel is transfused with directly universalistic utterances. Jesus is the Saviour of the world,' etc. It will hardly be maintained that the last word has been said in the controversy as to the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, but without attempting to go into that, it is germane to the present point to note that the agreement of the Fourth Gospel with the 'universalist' utterances of the Synoptics is treated by Professor Harnack as an argument against its

authenticity. If, then, these utterances of the Synoptics stand as historical, they will equally tell in favour of the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, as one example of the tendency discernible throughout it, to set forth the inner and spiritual principles of the acts or sayings recorded in the Synoptics.

What, then, are the proofs adduced by Professor Harnack to show that those special passages of the Synoptic Gospels, which represent Christ as contemplating or commanding the spread of His Gospels in all the world, are the product not of His own but of His disciples' consciousness?

He does not in general impugn the credibility of the Synoptic record of Christ's sayings. If he did, discussion would of course be futile, for one or many unreliable utterances could neither accredit nor discredit others of the same kind. If one set of these recorded sayings of Christ is to be regarded as spurious, it must be because they are contrary to some essential feature of the sayings and actions of Christ, taken as a whole. This feature Professor Harnack believes to be found in the particularist utterances of Christ when sending out His disciples on their first mission in Galilee (Mt 10^{5, 6, 23}), and in the story of the Syro-phœnician woman (Mt 15²⁴). And among these passages he lays chief stress on the words, Mt 10²³ οὐ μὴ τελέσητε τὰς πόλεις τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, ἕως ἔλθῃ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. 'This verse makes it impossible to take this discourse of Jesus only as a preliminary commission to those whom He sent forth. If these words are genuine, which I do not doubt, missions to the heathen cannot have lain within the purview of Jesus' (p. 25). In Dr. Harnack's opinion this overrides any dissimilar utterances of Christ, even in the same context. Thus in Mt 10¹⁸ He says to His disciples: 'Before governors and kings shall ye be brought, for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles.' Professor Harnack comments: 'The ἡγεμόνες and βασιλεῖς of Mt 10¹⁸ and Mk 13⁹ need not be understood of heathen rulers.' Yet these were technical terms, indicating Roman procurators, and kings who derived their authority from the Romans in Palestine at that time. Supposing the Galilean disciples to imagine that a persecuting Jewish king might arise, what would they understand by a Jewish procurator? In Mt 10¹⁸ the words (not contained in Mark) καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν 'can hardly be otherwise understood than as an addition in the sense of Mt 28^{19 f.}, though

they fit well enough into the context, as indicating the heathen subjects of heathen procurators and kings. 'Go not into any way of the Gentiles' (Mt 10⁶) 'confines the mission expressly to Palestine.' Yes, but which mission? Obviously, that of the men to whom he was then speaking, who executed it and returned with their report. How should this exclude the idea of a subsequent command to go to all the nations? Does it not rather suggest the mission to the world outside when the time of reserve and limitation should be past? 'What ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops' (Mt 10²⁷).

Of the Gospel of St. Matthew as a whole Professor Harnack writes: 'The First Gospel begins with the Wise Men from the East—though this passage admits of a strictly Jewish Christian interpretation—in 4^{18ff.} the writer evinces his interest for "the people that sitteth in darkness"; in 12²⁰ he designates Jesus as the one in whose name the heathen shall hope; in the eschatological discourse and the story of the anointing, he looks forward to the proclamation of the gospel among all the nations, and no positive grounds can be shown for regarding Mt 28^{19ff.} as an interpolation.' Now, besides the last of these passages, two previous ones stand as words of Christ: 'This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony unto all the nations (cf. Mt 10¹⁸) and then shall the end come' (24¹⁴), and 'Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her (26¹³). Yet we are told that—putting aside the final command 28¹⁹, the story of the Magi, and certain prophetic quotations—'we must acknowledge that Matthew and Mark have almost entirely resisted the temptation to carry back the beginnings of missions to the heathen, to the sayings and the history of Jesus himself' (p. 25).

How far the evangelists would feel flattered by this bland encomium on their steadfastness against seduction must remain as doubtful as any other strong improbability. But, unfortunately, their self-control is liable to further impeachment. Besides the explicit sayings regarding the preaching of the gospel in all the world, Matthew represents Jesus as telling his disciples in forcible simile that they are the 'light of the world' (5¹⁴). He says that 'many will come from the east and the west and sit down in the kingdom of heaven'

(8¹¹). He tells them in parable that the men of the city who rejected the invitation of the king to his son's wedding will be replaced by outcasts from without (22⁹), and that the kingdom of God will be taken from them—the Jewish leaders and their following—and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof (21⁴³). In Mark (11¹⁷) Jesus speaks of the temple as destined to be a house of prayer for all nations; and in speaking to the Canaanitish woman, to whom He had so strongly emphasized the Jewish privilege, He says, 'Let the children first be satisfied' (Mk 7²⁷).

The explicitly universalist passages of St. Luke (exclusive of the command in question, 24⁴⁷) are, as Professor Harnack indicates, chiefly in the opening chapters 1–3, and so not direct words of Christ. One there is peculiar to St. Luke 4^{26f.}, in which Jesus indicates plainly that His message, after rejection by Israel (no prophet hath honour in his own country), would be chiefly for the nations.

How are these passages dealt with by Professor Harnack? One can only reply, by *Machtsprüche*—arbitrary utterances—thus (Lk 4^{26f.}): 'The universalism of Jesus does not appear to exceed that of the prophets.' We need not ask for much more. Mk 7²⁷, first let the children be filled: 'the first is not to be pressed'; but is it not to be interpreted?¹ In Mt 20^{1ff.} and 22⁹ the heathen are 'not to be thought of.' Why not, when we consider the prophetic universalism that preceded these utterances? The nation 'that brings forth fruit' (Mt 21⁴³) is only 'in contrast to official Israel.' Did non-official Israel show promise of bringing forth fruit at that time when Jesus acted the parable of the Unfruitful Fig Tree? To say, 'Many shall come from the east and west,' was no more than what the Baptist said, 'God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.' Is not the assertion of a fact different from the statement of a possibility, and did a stone connote the same idea to a Jew as a stranger? The words, 'a house of prayer for all nations' (Mk 11¹⁷) 'may be left out of consideration' (*davon darf man absehen*). Why, we are not told. As for the two passages of the gospel proclamation in all the world, given both by St. Matthew and St. Mark, the first (in the eschatological discourse, Mk 13¹⁰, Mt 24¹⁴) 'puts a historical theological thesis

¹ It will be noted that in Mt 10¹⁸ the words *καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν* must be an 'addition,' the word *πρῶτον* here 'must not be pressed.'

(Theologumenon) into the mouth of Jesus which may, perhaps, be based on some prophetic utterance of his, but in this form hardly comes from him.' The other (Mk 14⁹, Mt 26¹³) is 'a saying slightly coloured by the subsequent world-wide mission—an excusable hysteron-proteron of tradition.'

The fact is that in each of the Synoptics we have (as Professor Harnack has sketched in the case of St. Matthew) a catena of utterances ascribed to Christ, and asserting the universal scope of His mission and its proclamation; and these are not confined to the close of the Gospels: they are mostly in the body of the record, and they link on to similar utterances of others, as in the song of Simeon (Lk 2³⁰⁻³²); or to events with the same implication, as the history of the Magi. To set against these we have—(1) the story of the Canaanitish woman, in which Jesus lays stress on His exclusive mission to the lost sheep of the

house of Israel, but also says, 'Let the children first be satisfied'; (2) the prohibition to His disciples when first sent out on a 'preaching tour' in their own land, not to go into any way of the Gentiles or city of the Samaritans. But in the same discourse we have the assertion that at some future time, the disciples in the course of their mission will have to encounter the hostility of Gentile rulers, and to bear witness before their subjects; and that the time will come when they will be called on to cast aside reserve in the proclamation of their message. How, even before His death, Jesus had modified, for another journey of His disciples, the limitation regarding Samaritans is seen from Lk 9⁵⁴. In both these passages there is clear evidence that the limitation of the mission of Christ and His disciples is regarded as temporary. There remains (3) the sentence (Mt 10²³), 'Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.'

(To be concluded.)

Literature.

SOCIOLOGY.

HEREDITY AND SELECTION IN SOCIOLOGY.
By George Chatterton-Hill. (A. & C.
Black. 12s. 6d. net.)

THE subject of this book is the subject of the hour. Whether Mr. Chatterton-Hill has made a contribution or not, he has certainly come at the right time.

The first thing to notice is that it is a purely scientific book. The topics with which it deals are topics which belong to the very heart of religion and morals. But Mr. Chatterton-Hill will not allow questions of morality to enter the range of his vision, and he treats religion as if it had never been born. 'Science,' he says scornfully, 'has nothing to do with arguments based on morality, but only with arguments based on fact.'

His interest, therefore, is wholly in the physical well-being of the race. In that, however, he is intensely interested. He burns with indignation against those who deliver homilies on Ethics and leave our young men and women uninstructed

regarding the things of the body. 'We have ourselves assisted,' he says, 'in the chapel of a public school at the homily of a reverend head master on the sin of breaking the Sixth Commandment; but this same head master would probably have been surprised had one suggested to him the utility of imparting some knowledge to his pupils of the dangers of syphilis.'

It is not in the body of the individual, however, that he is interested; it is in the physical framework of the race. His subject is not merely sociology, but heredity and selection in sociology. He would promote health and prevent disease by means of education. And who will deny that we are criminally behindhand in the teaching of eugenics? But he objects to such education on the subject as we at present have, because it trains the present generation to think only of itself. He says: 'The great fact of the solidarity between successive generations, the full comprehension of which is indispensable to the eugenic progress of the race, is lost sight of in the mists of economic and metaphysical individualism.'