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not only did not know God, but they knew not for certain whether there was a God or not. Whence, then, has the world found out that there is a God, and how is it possible to know Him? We answer fearlessly, By inspiration, and by inspiration only. We humble seekers after truth acknowledge the debt of gratitude which we owe to the archæologist and the philologist; and after we have heard all they have to tell us, we turn to the theologian also, and we ask him what he has to say; and he says: "Study the subject-matter of the first three chapters of Genesis, the oldest document in the Bible, and you will find in them alone that which the world has been seeking for, but to which it never could by its wisdom attain. You will find in them not only the knowledge of God, but you will learn from them at least fourteen of the most essential elements of the Christian faith. You will find in them the unity of God, the personality of God, the Trinity in unity, creation, revelation, the goodness of God and of all His works, the Fatherhood of God, the superiority of man over all animals, the equality of the sexes and races of mankind in God's sight, the institution of the Sabbath (God's first gift to man), the institution of holy matrimony, the ideal nature of sin and its fruits—shame and separation from God—its cure 'through a bleeding Victor and a conquering Victim,' and included in these last three, the personality of Satan. Thus, if the tablets of Tel-el-Amarna and the cuneiform monuments of Assyria and Babylon prove the Babylonian origin of these most ancient documents, we believe that their subject-matter proves far more conclusively that they have a far higher origin; that their true birthplace is in heaven; that they must be 'received, not as the word of men, but as they are in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in all who believe.'"

ROBERT BRUCE, D.D.



## ART. II.—THE INNER MISSION OF GREAT BRITAIN.

IT is exactly twenty years ago to-day, September 11, 1893, since I read a paper in Nottingham on "The Inner Mission of Germany and its Lessons to Us." The title "Inner Mission of the Church" had very profoundly impressed me, as setting forth, in contrast to the *foreign* or *outer* mission of the Church, its mission *within* the land in which it is planted, and as bringing into vivid relief and definite vision the immediate and practical work of the Church among all the people of that land. The object of the Inner Mission, accordingly, is that the

country the Church thus occupies shall become, not nominally, but in reality, a part of *Christendom* in which the institutions and usages of society and the condition of the people harmonize with the righteous will of God. It further suggests a combination of Christian agencies directed to this end—a union of Christian Churches that consciously, and with definite aim, seek to fulfil the command and inspiration of their faith, and by union encourage and sustain each other in their great undertaking.

It will be seen, therefore, that the phrase "Inner Mission" is taken by me, in a general sense, to denote the social redemptive work of the Church of Christ, by the diffusion of those regenerative influences which the living Spirit of Christ, in His grace and truth, imparts to it for the well-being of society; and, in a more specific sense, to denote a union of Christian Churches, the object of which is to give consistency, higher intelligence, and mightier effect to their separate and conjoint labours for the good of the people.

The convictions which gave birth to this movement in Germany, and which must continue to be its inspiration everywhere, are that they who believe in Jesus Christ as their divine Lord and Redeemer acknowledge the absolute authority of His law as revealed in His example and precepts, and are constrained by His measureless love to the devotion of obedience to Him. Further, that the Lord Jesus Christ summons His believers to be the witnesses of His redeeming truth and love by their example and their willing sacrifice to promote the good of men; and that they should unite to confess the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of men from every form of evil, and to prove that He is such by working under His leadership for the removal of every evil from society, so that all men may be blessed in Him, and "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." These sentiments have always been, and are still professed by the universal Church of Christ. The object of the Inner Mission, wherever it is formed, will be to give clearer utterance and manifestation to these sentiments, and to make them operative in revealing the true nature of the Christian religion by its regenerative influence in society, and the true unity of Christian believers, who, however they may differ, are ONE in their obedience to Christ and their service to men.

The four principles which underlie the Inner Mission, and which give meaning and urgency to it, are these:

*First.* The Church is the body of Christ, in which He lives to work out His own most blessed ministry of grace and healing upon earth: all His divine compassions and energies flow through it to this sorrowing evil world. Shall not His body,

the Church (*i.e.*, the union and fellowship of all who draw their life from Him, and are baptized into Him, and have His Spirit), now do the "greater works" of mercy which He promised that His disciples should hereafter accomplish in His name? *Secondly.* It is in this mission that Christians of all denominations can at once unite without any sacrifice or compromise of opinion or usage, and thus show forth their oneness in Christ to the world. Such manifest and practical unity is the sign which will lead the world to know that He is the Anointed, the Sent of the Father for the world's redemption; and experience has shown that if Christian men and women only are brought together, and know one another in Him and in His service, they are most assuredly drawn into blessed concord and unity of faith and love. *Thirdly.* Here in this mission there are infinite varieties of service for Christ, practical and real, in which each member of His body can take part, and thus have their grace developed, their spiritual feeling and purpose exercised in spiritual activities and embodied in spiritual habit. All of them will then be ennobled and thrilled with purest joy by sharing with their Lord in a world's redemption; for men become great and are greatly happy only as they are fired with a great idea and work to carry it out in a great fellowship and under a great leader. This, I think, should be the first care of the Church—to provide some real, loving, redeeming service, humble and simple for many, to be done for Christ, in doing which they will become strong, and fit for higher service. *Fourthly.* This need of the Church for her own members is the great need of the world: to see Christ living in His body everywhere as of old, healing all manner of diseases, bearing the sickness and sorrow of the world, and, by His grace in His members, bringing comfort and saving health to those whose need is sore, as was that of the afflicted in Galilee when He walked through its highways and byways. Mr. John Morley once said to me, "Show us that evidence of your faith, and the world will need no other apologetic." The answer Jesus sent to John the Baptist is the answer we must still carry to all who question us if He be the Messiah.

The paper which I read twenty years ago set forth these thoughts, and showed how Dr. Wichern, in founding the Inner Mission of Germany, had endeavoured to give them practical form and effective application in his own country. I then further showed how the same principles might and should inspire a similar movement in England. At the close of the meeting the following resolution, proposed by the Rev. Canon Morse, Vicar of St. Mary's Church, Nottingham, was adopted unanimously: "That a union, to be called the Inner Mission,

be formed in the town, consisting of the representatives of all existing Christian charities and Christian societies working for social ends, and of the representatives of the Church of Christ in this town. Its object shall be: first, to strengthen by such union these several Christian societies and charities, to make them acquainted with each other's work, and to manifest the unity of the Christian spirit that inspires them all; secondly, to collate and study facts connected with the physical, moral, and social condition of the town, and to impress on the public mind the practical relation and duty of the Christian Church with respect to these facts; thirdly, to take counsel and action with the civil agencies of the town on matters with which they are connected, and which affect the social well-being of the people; fourthly, to incite and direct individual and Church labours, so as to relieve distress and save from vice, and to inspire and regulate all social institutions with a Christian spirit; fifthly, where existing agencies and individual or separate Church action do not meet any special or urgent wants of the town, to institute and conduct such agencies as shall meet them; and, sixthly and lastly, to exhibit by such combined action for the well-being of the people the reality of Christian unity, and the social redemption that is effected by Christian love."

I further indicated in my paper how, whilst local or district unions of the Inner Mission might be formed in different towns or in rural districts, these should all be united in a central committee, consisting of leading representatives of every branch of the Church, so that the social work of the Church everywhere might be done systematically and under the guidance of the highest wisdom of the Church. It was felt that the leaders of the Church of Christ must unite in the study of the great social problem with which they deal, so that all sections of the Church and their members in all localities may work most efficiently and surely to secure the end sought without marring each other's work. In this great service of the Inner Mission of the Church the widest outlook, the most accurate information, and the clearest and most authoritative guidance which can be obtained and given by the highest spiritual statesmanship are necessary.

Soon after the committee appointed at this meeting to carry out the resolution had begun its operations I saw that the time was not yet ripe for this great national movement in England, and that much needed to be done in preparatory propaganda in order to accomplish it in the future. This propaganda has been undertaken in many directions, and many tentative efforts, which are partial fulfilments of the great work of the Inner Mission, have been begun. I propose now briefly to give an

account of these. I distinguish three great divisions: First, where a union of all the branches of Christ's Church has been contemplated and desired and has been in part fulfilled. Second, where union among free evangelical churches has been effected. Third, where large civic unions have been established, not professedly Christian, but wholly inspired by Christian sympathy and purpose, and, to a very large extent, organized and conducted by Christian men—representatives of all Christian Churches.

1. A conference was held a few years back between leading representatives of the English Church and of Congregational Churches in England, in order to consider the great beliefs held by all of them in common, and the beliefs which distinguished them, and, in a manner, separated them. At the conclusion of a two years' conference, which was conducted with a remarkable spirit of prayerful and loving amity, its results were published, and one conclusion to which the conference was led was strongly insisted upon, namely, that for the present, especially as a means of developing greater mutual acquaintance and fuller concord amongst Christian men of different communions, there should be immediate united action in every department of social work in which the enthusiasm and self-sacrifice of redeeming love can lessen or destroy the great evils of our time. As the immediate consequence of this conclusion and appeal, there was formed a "Christian Union for Promoting International Concord," of which the Bishop of Durham, Dr. Westcott, is chairman, and which consists of representatives of all the Christian Churches. The object of this union is to influence unitedly all branches of Christ's Church to seek for and to promote the concord and brotherhood of all nations, so that all nations may learn not only the lesson of peace, but of that divine relation of helpfulness and unity to which they are called as members of the one great body of redeemed humanity.

2. The House of Laymen for the province of Canterbury appointed a committee on April 30, 1891, under the following resolutions:

i. "That a committee be appointed to consider and report by what methods the investigation and removal of poverty, and the suggestion and supply of work, may be made most effective.

ii. "That it be an instruction to the committee to make inquiries as to the methods by which Christians of all denominations may co-operate in this work, so as to bring the whole power of Christianity to bear upon the social improvement of the people."

Under this second resolution the committee made the following report:

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

"Your committee proceed to report upon the second of the resolutions of the House, viz., 'the methods by which the co-operation of Christians of all denominations may be secured in this work, so as to bring the whole power of Christianity to bear upon the social improvement of the people.'

"Your committee are satisfied of the desirableness of such co-operation, and earnestly hope that some means may be found in the near future to lift charity out of the region of controversy of every kind. So long as the good object of relieving poverty and diminishing pauperism is sought to be carried out on the low ground of party politics or religious proselytism, the work is sure to fail. Combination from the highest motive is essential, and an endeavour should be made to raise our almsgiving to a higher level, so as to prevent its pauperizing the people, and thereby increasing the evils to which it is our desire to put an end.

"Your committee have been fortunate enough to meet with an instance where this co-operation is now being successfully carried out, viz., the parish of All Saints, Notting Hill. Attention was drawn to the following points :

"(1) The executive committee is composed of representatives of the Church of England, Roman Catholics, Jews, and every Dissenting body within the district in which it works. There has not been a single case of friction during the time the "Friendly Helpers' Society" has been at work, thus proving that it is possible for all religious denominations to co-operate in this work.

"(2) The secretary of the "Kensington Friendly Workers" asks the various denominations to supply him every week with particulars of applications made to him. All particulars of every case are entered in a book, which is kept at the office of the "Friendly Workers' Society," and may be inspected by the authorized representatives of any denomination. By this means we believe that we have entirely stopped the overlapping of charity in this neighbourhood. We discovered by means of this organization that some people had been receiving quite a comfortable little pension in the form of charity from various denominations.'

3. Earl Nelson, who was the chairman of the Langham Street conference, and a "leading member" of the House of Laymen, wrote an article on Christian Union in the *Contemporary Review* for February, 1889, in which, referring to the many social evils which are threatening to overwhelm us, he says : "(1) There is no doubt that, in the present divided state of Christendom, the religious zeal stimulated by these

very divisions has taken a *selfish* and *unloving* turn. We take more interest in our own individual salvation, and in the success of the Church or denomination to which we belong, than in the benefit of our fellows, and in the extension of the full flow of Christian benevolences, which, when rightly used, have an unbounded power for removing all social evils. (2) All Christians would, I believe, allow that it is a duty to consider, in the light of the principles, motives, and promises of the faith, the problems of domestic, social, and national morality with a view to concerted action. The question arises how far our different views on Church government and on the Sacraments, which are very great, though capable of much modification, hinder this clear duty of united action against social evils. (3) There are some examples of successful co-operation which should encourage us to further exertions. In England, under Wilberforce, Churchmen and Nonconformists did unite in putting down slavery, and now the Pope is himself proposing a congress of the nations in order to combine to save Africa from its demoralizing influences. Then a great deal has been done by united action against the drink traffic, and the Nonconformists, who began the work, have everywhere heartily welcomed the co-operation of the Church of England Temperance Society, though even here the demon of party has tried to set us apart by the over-zeal of the teetotaler against the partial abstainer. There is also some hope that we may join together with the Church of England Purity Society and the White Cross Army and other bodies in bringing Christian precept and example to check the growth and cruel consequences of the unlicensed indulgence of men's animal passions. Then there is the General Hospital Fund. In some districts Nonconformists and Churchmen have heartily joined in working the Charity Organization Society, which is of immense moment, not only for the relief of the real sufferer, but for putting an end to shams and impostures, and checking the immoral practice of making almsgiving a system of bribery for gaining so-called converts to particular denominations. But there is much more to be done, and what has been already done in these particulars might be done in a much more *statesmanlike and systematic way*. There are other works for good which are hindered from want of the *full, outspoken witness* of Christendom upon them. The question of peace or war should not be left to the Quakers. The immoralities of trade can only be effectually dealt with by a united Christianity. The defence of the marriage laws, the security of sound religious education (even if obliged to be apart from denominational teaching), and the care of our criminal population after leaving prison, alike demand joint effort. (4) I would ask, with Dr.



Paton, of Nottingham, whether a council could not be formed in every town or district, and, at some future time, a central council, to meet in London, of wise, sound, large-hearted men, chosen by each denomination as their representatives. These should meet regularly in friendly conference, studying earnestly, in the light of the revealed will of God, the intricate problems of society; exploring the accessible, but often remote and concealed, sources of human evil; and then guiding and systematizing the various institutions for good, so that they could more effectually forward the common work in a co-ordinate way, and without any jealous interferences with each other, and thus bring, in the different towns or districts where such councils are established, the full power of united Christian effort and example to deal more effectually with our many social evils."

4. In a letter which I sent two years ago to the Archbishop of Canterbury, I referred to the passage in his letter to General Booth, when General Booth started his social scheme, in which the Archbishop made the suggestion, and also gave the exhortation, that there should be a rallying of all Christian Churches in this great service of Christ for the poorest and neediest of his brethren and ours; for only, the Archbishop truly says, by such a union "could this service be effectively and continuously rendered." In my letter I appealed to him to take a leading part in forming the union which he himself desired, and to establish the Inner Mission of the Church for England. I used then these words: "How many are working out parts of this plan of the Inner Mission with most Christlike fidelity and grace! Throughout all the centuries it has been so. But now I think it is felt as never before that these parts must combine; that the one spirit which animates them all should be made manifest; that they should not overlap or collide as now they often do; that the great gap still left through which much of the good achieved slips away and is lost should be filled up; and that thus all of them should be harmonized into a comprehensive and wisely-adjusted plan, and be made infinitely more efficient by friendly co-operation and by the quickening inspiration of the union and wisdom gained for their special and combined direction from a vast and accumulating experience. I know well the difficulties that exist, but surely they are not too great for wise Christian statesmanship, inspired by Christian charity, to overcome. It would be a new era for our country, I will even say for our Christianity, when all the Christian redeeming forces of the land are seen arrayed together to uplift, to heal, and to save. That would be the true *Apologetic*."

In his reply to me the Archbishop says that he has the

subject with which my letter deals constantly before him, and that he sympathizes with the object in view, though the wisest means to the end need much careful thought and foresight. He then informs me that he is taking steps, in conjunction with those who have most experience in the matter, to initiate some experiments with this view.

Other bishops also, like Bishop Moorhouse of Manchester, have expressed the desire that "all Christian communions should unite in social work which presses equally and urgently upon them all."

JOHN B. PATON, D.D.

(*To be concluded.*)



### ART. III.—THE NATIONAL CHURCH AND UNITY.

IN the February number of this magazine there appeared an article by the Right Hon. Mr. Justice Warren, entitled "The Catholic Church—Schism." In that article the learned writer very properly condemns the indiscriminate application of the opprobrious term "schismatics" to members of the various non-episcopalian bodies which form part of Protestant Christendom. "Sin," too, and "sinful," are ugly words; and it is quite right that the dogmatic use of them in reference to the action of individual Christians in matters ecclesiastical should be strongly deprecated. But because we dare not positively assert that a particular act of physical separation from a Christian community is *sinful*, we are not, therefore, precluded from pronouncing it unjustifiable; still less are we necessarily bound to admit that it is justifiable. Mr. Justice Warren lays down that physical schism is sinful when a man, in opposition to the voice of his conscience, abandons one ecclesiastical unit and resorts to another; but it is not sinful when a man does so in obedience to the voice of his judgment and conscience. That proposition can only be maintained on the footing that there are no such things as sins of ignorance; and that, however uninformed or misinformed a man's conscience may be, he does not commit sin if he follows its dictates. The truth or otherwise of this premiss must depend on the meaning which we assign to the word "sin." It is clearly not true if we employ that word as the equivalent of the Greek *ἀμαρτία*. The judgment and conscience of an individual are no infallible criteria of the abstract rightfulness of his action in the matter of schism, any more than in other particulars of conduct. Mr. Justice Warren himself stigmatizes as schismatics Newman and Manning, and their associates,