

progress of Christianity is not as rapid anywhere as we would like to have it. More than half of the adult males of the United States do not attend any church, and that, too, in a land where we see on every hand evidences of the advantages which Christianity has brought to our country. If, where the environment tends to bring people into the church, so many remain outside, we must not be surprised if the spread of our religion is even more slow among the heathen where it is often necessary for one to leave home and friends and to submit to social and business ostracism to become a follower of Christ.

But in spite of all the opposition met by the missionaries Christianity is spreading. The growth of Christianity from its beginning on the banks of the Jordan, until today, when its converts are baptized in all rivers of the earth is steady and continual.

A fourth objection is advanced by a few, namely, that our missionaries may by their mistakes get us into trouble with other nations. Of course, people are liable to make mistakes, whether they live abroad or at home. We all make mistakes, the non-Christian as well as the Christian, the layman as well as the preacher, and a minister may make mistakes in Asia as well as in the United States, but I am convinced that the good that the missionaries do far outweighs any harm that can come from their mistakes. They make us more friends than enemies. The Americans who go into foreign lands to make money are much more apt to involve us in diplomatic controversies than the missionaries who devote themselves to the uplifting of the people among whom they go.

The cause of missions has been abundantly vindicated by experience and the representatives carry a priceless message. Our missionaries in Asia are entrusted with the important duty of carrying the gospel back to the land of its birth.

The Bible, both the old testament and the new, came from Asia; the Holy Land, where the prophets walked and where Jesus taught and wrought, is Asiatic territory. The Saviour complained that, when he came unto His own, His own received Him not; but now that Christianity has vindicated itself in the new world it returns to conquer the old.

The leaders of thought in the Orient are accustomed to philosophizing; they defend their religions as moral codes, and the representatives of Christianity are, therefore, the more sure of triumph in the end, because they represent the highest code of morals, the most perfect system of philosophy, ever promulgated—a system which fits into every human need and is world-wide in its application.

As Elijah overcame the prophets of Baal with his prayer test, so our missionaries can challenge the non-Christian world to accept, as the basis of comparison, the test set up by the Nazarene: "By their fruits ye shall know them."

The representatives of Christianity can present conclusive proof of the superiority of the system which they offer. There has been little, if any, progress in the non-Christian world during the last fifteen hundred years that is not traceable to the influence of the Christian religion; it is the leaven which is gradually but surely leavening the entire lump. While other religions are withdrawing their outposts, Christianity is expanding, and the unselfish character of the Christian spirit is shown in the fact that schools spring up wherever it is planted and all the energies are quickened.

A religion that does not make one fruitful in good works is not worthy to be called a religion. While the purposes and motives of men are invisible, these purposes and motives manifest themselves in life; they are embodied in deeds.

Paul declared that Christ came to bring life, as well as immortality to light and, if higher authority is desired, it can be found in the language of the Master Himself, who, in defining His mission, told His hearers that He had come "That they might have life, and have it more abundantly."

There is need of Christ in the present life to interpret life for us. We need Christ in the western world, and no one who has visited the non-Christian countries can doubt that there is need there, also, of Christ's conception of life. The happiness and welfare of the people will be advanced by the light which Christ's teachings and example throw upon life's duties and responsibilities. Those who enjoy the blessings of Christian civilization must, therefore, out of gratitude as well as because of direct command, bring the Bible to the attention of those who know it not.

The idea that the character of a tree is to be determined by its fruit—one of the most

fundamental principles in our study of nature—runs through the Bible. In the last book of the Word, and in the last chapter of the book, we are told that the tree of life bears "twelve manner of fruits," and that it yields its fruits twelve times a year. The verse concludes with a declaration, suggestive of missionary work, namely, that the leaves of the tree are for the "healing of the nations."

If Christianity is to be the tree of life to the world it must be a fruitful tree; if the individual Christian is to be a worthy representative of the tree he must not only bear fruit, but he must bear such fruit that all may see that he is one of those of whom it might be said: "Ye are the branches."

The fruits of the spirit are so numerous that it is difficult to select a limited number and describe them as the most important ones, but I venture to submit twelve propositions which are fundamental—twelve truths which must be woven into the Christian life if that life is to be "neither barren nor unfruitful." These truths may be added to indefinitely but the number can not easily be reduced, since Christ Himself has placed emphasis upon each and every one of them.

First—Belief in God, as Creator, Preserver and Father.

The existence of God need not be proven; it is a self evident truth. "In the beginning was God"—we can not go beyond that. We must commence somewhere; we must start with something, and the Christian starts with Jehovah. The mystery of creation is not made clear by assuming that matter and force are eternal; the Christian begins with a more reasonable assumption, namely, that God is eternal.

If it is difficult to understand how there can be an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving God—the Creator of all things, it is still more difficult to understand how there can be a world, such as we see about us, without such a supreme and eternal being as its author and director. It is easier for the human mind to believe in such a God than to believe in any other theory of creation—hence the almost universal belief in a Creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." His power, His wisdom, and His love are all manifested in the provision He has made for the welfare of His children. And how dependent we are upon Him! "Give us this day our daily bread," is not a formal petition. If He ceased to gather the mists from the ocean and form them into clouds, all life would disappear from the earth, but we have His promise of the early and the later rain, of seed time and harvest. If He drew a veil between us and the Sun, night would bring with it a sleep that would know no waking, but light and heat are meted out to us each day according to our needs, and He gives as freely to the humblest as to the greatest. No wonder He is called Father, and Father of all, whether they acknowledge their indebtedness to Him or not.

Christ draws a vivid picture of the Father's care, when He tells us that even the hairs of our head are numbered, and what tenderness and comfort in the assurance that He is more willing than an earthly father to give good gifts unto His children!

The relations which man fixes between himself and God is the most important influence that enters into a human life; and it means a revolution in the life when this relation is changed. Man needs the inner strength that comes with the conscious presence of an all-seeing God; man needs the inner strength supplied by a sense of responsibility to a Creator for every thought and word and deed. If those, thus fortified, sometimes in the presence of temptation fall, how helpless and hopeless must those be who rely upon their own strength alone!

Second—Belief in Christ, as Son and Saviour, and as "the way, the truth and the life."

The divinity of Christ is a material part of the Christian creed; it can not be omitted. If Christ is to be a Saviour, or even an authoritative example, He must be first a Son. It is not necessary to rely upon His birth, upon His miracles, or even upon His resurrection to prove His claim to sonship. In fact the natural process of reasoning is to confirm the Bible account of His birth, His miracles and His resurrection by showing what He said, what He did, and what He was. When He is understood, nothing said of Him will seem impossible. He is a fact which can not be disputed—the greatest fact of history. That a mere man should have said what He said, should have done what He did, and should have died as He lived and died

is incomprehensible. Reared in a carpenter's shop; without contact with the sages of other lands and without knowledge of the sages dead, except as He gained it from the Old Testament, He, at the age of thirty, announced His messiahship, gathered a few disciples about Him, set forth a code of morals surpassing anything known before—surpassing any code that the non-Christian world can formulate today—and then was crucified.

And yet from this beginning His religion spread until millions have become His followers and have been willing to die rather than surrender the faith which He put into their hearts. Here is One who, for 1900 years, has exerted an increasing influence over the hearts and minds and lives of men—One who wields more power today than ever before! How can it be explained? It is not a matter to scoff at; the question, "What think ye of Christ?" is not a question to be brushed aside; it is a question that must be answered. It is easier to believe Him divine than to explain in any other way His words, His life and His death.

And the same conclusion is reached by another course of reasoning. The work to be done was more than a man's task. No man, aspiring to be a God, could save his fellows from their own selfishness and sin, fortify them against the temptations that come with appetite and passion, and bring them into harmony with the divine will. It needed a God, condescending to be a man, to work in the human heart that continuing miracle which is witnessed when one begins to love things he hated, and to hate the things he loved—when one who, before the change, would have sacrificed a world for his ambition, stands ready, after the change, to give his life for a principle and finds pleasure in making sacrifice for his convictions.

Neither could a mere man furnish an example sufficiently binding upon the conscience. The best of men have their limitations, their frailties, and their easily besetting sins; and there is danger that these will be imitated instead of the virtues. As the plant, to repeat what another has said, reaches down and draws inanimate matter up into the realm of life, so we need some divine power to reach down and draw us up into the realm of spirit. Man can respond to a summons from above, but he has no physical or mental force within him which can, unaided, carry him to moral heights.

The foundations of character are laid in youth. Most of us receive our life-inclinations from environment before we are grown—before the reason is sufficiently developed to be trusted as a guide. Youth needs some book to which it can refer in times of doubt and say: "It is written;" youth needs to lean upon an arm stronger than its own and to hear a voice that commands.

"Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Even in our maturer years we need an ideal which defies complete embodiment in the flesh. It is a low ideal that can be easily reached; when we overtake our ideal, our progress stops. It is the glory of the Christian ideal, embodied in the words and life of our Saviour, that while it is within sight of the weakest and the lowliest, it is yet so high that the best and the noblest are kept with their faces turned ever upwards; and Christian civilization is the highest that the world has ever known because it rests upon a conception of life which makes that life a continuous ascent, with no limit to human advancement and development.

Third—Belief in the Holy Spirit, God's messenger to man, and man's comforter and inspiration.

If God is a Spirit, and we worship Him in spirit and in truth, it is only natural that there should be some means of communication between God and His worshippers. Christ taught that such a line of communication could be established, and no one will dispute it who has learned how to pray.

It is not necessary that I should be able to explain how, in olden times, the prophets spake as the Lord commanded them, or how the Bible was written by inspiration; man could see the lightning's flash and feel the shock long before he understood the laws which govern the action of that wonder-working fluid which we call electricity; so, until I have more complete knowledge of the subject, I am content to know that there is an unseen Power which can speak peace to the troubled heart and renew the flagging zeal—sometimes manifesting itself in the "still, small voice," sometimes pouring itself out in a pentecostal flood.

Fourth—Man's highest purpose; to "seek