**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 3; CHAPTER 18. A MESSAGE FROM MISSIONS TO THE MODERN MINISTRY**

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It is not my purpose to enter into a defense of, nor champion the cause of, missions. They stand there immovable in the purpose of God. They are the corner-stone as well as the crown in the fabric of the Christian Church. This stone which for so many years was rejected is now become the head of the corner, and whosoever shall fall upon it - whatever church shall ignore its claims - shall be broken.

It is my purpose rather to seek in the field of missions for some message to the modern ministry, for some inspiration to the home church. I know it is impossible to divorce the Church from missions - they are both one; but if we may do so in our thought for a time, we shall find that missions are not so much in need of the home church as the home church is in need of missions. The home church today is not so much the source of encouragement to missions as missions are the fountain of inspiration to the home church. The question is no longer whether the heathen can be saved without the Gospel, but whether the Gospel can be saved for the home church if it is not given speedily to the heathen.

Across the whole Church today is an appalling dearth of aggressive spiritual life. Earnest souls are discouraged, and many almost despairing. They are groping and asking what is the trouble and what can be done. Whatever of encouragement there is comes largely from the mission fields. On the other hand, the fires on mission altars are burning brightly, souls by tens of thousands are being born every year. The faith of the missionary was never stronger, nor his hope brighter. The only cloud that crosses his horizon is the fear lest the church at home may not live up to her privilege.

If we in the home churches, with all our machinery and members and wealth and education and favorable conditions, as we think, are largely cumberers of the ground; and if missions against great odds, improperly supported, with very imperfect equipment, humanly speaking - if they are sowing and reaping abundantly, and to a large degree are saving the Church from utter humiliation when the Master comes year by year seeking fruit, then we ought to ask missions the secret of their power. If our lamps in the home churches are burning dimly, if out of our twilight and shadows we see the light in the far away distance shining steadily, it might be well for us to ask what kind of oil fills that lamp. Like Apollos the eloquent, the home church ought to be willing to be instructed by this Aquilla and Priscilla in "the way of God more perfectly."

Now if I read aright the story of missions, the secret of their power, the message they bring to the modern ministry and to the whole Church is the emphasis upon this trinity of doctrines: Atonement in Christ, Ministry of the Spirit, and Prayer.

**I. THE ATONEMENT AND MISSIONS**

In emphasizing the atonement in Christ we believe that missions have good Scriptural grounds for their position. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ," was Paul's battle cry. No doubt, on going to Athens and Corinth, Paul may have been tempted, because of their education and culture, to preach differently from what he did to the rough people of Galatia. But he did not. This is his testimony as to the kind of preaching: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3). And this was done in a most earnest fashion. "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). So deeply did that first great missionary feel the importance of this truth that he prays a curse upon anyone who preaches a different doctrine. So vital was this to Paul and so large a place has it in Scripture, that we believe the words of a recent writer are true: "The death of Christ has not the place assigned to it, either in preaching or in theology, which it has in the New Testament." And again: ''It is not unjust to say that no man will so preach the Gospel as to leave the impression that he has the Word of God behind him if he is inwardly at war with the idea of the atonement" (Denny - "Death of Christ" - Introduction and p. 285).

Passing over the intervening ages till we come to the "Father of Modern Missions," we find him saying: "It is absolutely necessary that we keep to the example of Paul, and make the great subject of our preaching Christ, the crucified" (Carey's Covenant). Look at the Moravian Church; for every fifty-eight communicants in the home church they support one missionary in a foreign land, and for every member in the home church they have two and six-tenths members gathered in congregations among the heathen. What is the inspiration of this church which so inspired Carey that he exclaimed: "See what these Moravians have done!" Their secretary of missions in a recent address tells us that the compulsion of the Moravian Church is not from the great commission, but from this prophecy: "When His soul shall make an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, because He poured out His soul unto death." From this they have their battle cry: "To win for the Lamb that was slain, the reward of His sufferings." The only way they can reward Him is by bringing souls to Him. They are the only compensation for His suffering. (Ecumenical Conference Report, I, 79.)

To show the place and power of the atonement in missions I have time to give only one illustration from each of several different mission fields.

In 1721 Hans Egede left Holland for Greenland. His idea of mission methods is given in his own words: "The first care taken in the conversion of heathens is to remove out of the way all obstacles which hinder their conversion and render them unfit to receive the Christian doctrine, before anything can be successfully undertaken on their behalf" ("Holy Spirit and Missions," p. 122). For fifteen years this heroic soul toiled amid the ice and snow without a single convert. At the end of that time he gives up in despair, preaching the last time from: "I have labored in vain: I have spent my strength for naught: yet my judgment is with the Lord and my work with my God!" But in 1730 Frederick Beck went to the same field. The natives travestied and ridiculed his doctrine. In the meetings they pretended to be asleep and snored. They would ask him to sing, only that they might drown the music with howls and drums. They pelted him with stones, broke into his hut and broke or stole his needed things. They destroyed his boats, and when on the verge of starvation would sell this brave Moravian no food. Awful was their condition; dwarfed in body, they were still more dwarfed in soul. Mothers licked their children as a cat does her kittens, and they wallowed like swine in their filth. After eight years, Beck was translating the Bible, and the natives were curious to see how paper could hear, remember and repeat the Word of God. He read them the story of the cross. The miracle was wrought, and stony hearts were broken. Kayarnak came near and said to Beck with pathetic face and voice: "How is that? Tell it to me once more. I, too, want to be saved." Tears ran down Beck's face to think that after these years there was one inquirer. He told the story again and again. Kayarnak came day after day. Soon twenty came with him. On Easter, 1739, he, his wife, and two children were baptized. He became a preacher and taught the missionary to depend, not upon logic but upon the story of the cross. In 1747, twenty-five years after Egede had landed, the first church was built for the three hundred members. The workers wrote at the time: "A stream of life is now poured upon this people. As we speak or sing of the sufferings of Jesiis, ... tears of love and joy roll down their cheeks" ("New Acts of the Apostles," p. 215):

In 1828 in far away Burma Adoniram Judson had been laboring many years with but little success. He hears of the Karens far in the interior. The only Karen man he could find was Kho-Thah-Byu, a slave fifty years of age. As a youth be had been dull, vicious, and brutal. As a man he had murdered thirty men by his own hand. Judson paid his ransom and took him to his own home. His darkened mind was at last lightened by the story of the cross. He was baptized and went immediately to his people to preach. For twelve years he made itinerating tours of from one week to six months among the six hundred thousand Karens. Whole villages were converted, and today there are forty thousand native Karen Christians as the result almost wholly of the preaching of Kho-Thah-Byu, a result second only in mission annals to the work in the South Sea Islands. And this is one testimony of his preaching: "He sought in every sermon to bring into prominence the vicarious death of Christ. And the result was that a larger number of converts understood justification by faith than could be found among an equal number of Christians in a Christian land."

Rev. Henry Richards gives this experience at Banza Manteke, in Africa. For four years he labored in vain, teaching the people about God as Creator, that He was good and they were sinners. He went home for a vacation, and while there was advised to preach the law when he went back. On returning he translated the commandments. They said the ten commandments were very good and that they kept them all. Thoroughly discouraged, he turned to God's Word and was soon deeply impressed with "Go preach the Gospel," not the law or commandments, but the Gospel. If he were to preach Christ crucified they would want to know who Jesus was. So he began translating Luke and reading it to them. He got on very well till he came to chapter 6:30, "Give to every man that asketh." Here he was puzzled, for these men were notorious beggars. In order to have time to think he took them back for a two weeks' review. After struggling over what the commentaries said and what common sense would say was the explanation of this verse, he decided it meant just what it said. He so read it to the natives, saying that this was a high standard of life but that he intended to practice what he preached. Of course, they took him at his word, as well as took nearly everything he had. One day he overheard a conversation. One native said to another: "I got this of the white man." The other replied that he, too, was going to ask for a certain article, whereupon a third said: "No, buy it. This must be God's man, for we never saw anyone like him." At last they came to the story of the cross. He said: "You say you are not sinners? There is Jesus dying for you. he never did anything wrong, but died for your sins and for mine." After seven years the battle was won by the story of the cross, and there are now fifteen hundred Christians in the church at Banza Manteke. ("New Acts of the Apostles," p. 273; Ecumenical Conference Report, II, 93.)

Thirty years ago, in the city of Mukden, with its 400,000 population, there was a little street chapel. When nothing else would reach those stolid Chinamen, the story of the cross, the sufferings of Jesus, reached them when told by ignorant "Old Wang," the converted confirmed opium smoker. Thirty years ago there were on the roll of the Presbyterian Church in Manchuria three members; four years ago there were in Manchuria, won mostly from Mukden as a center, twenty-seven thousand Presbyterian Christians. Would you know the secret of this remarkable work? "In order to gain the Chinese to Christianity, all other conceivable methods combined cannot compare in efficiency with public preaching. ... But, however the vessel of the preacher may be led in all directions by the flowing or the ebbing tide of his hearers' inclinations, though it move up and down on the waves of a thousand various subjects, and however long its chain, the anchor must ever be fast immovably in what is known as the cross of Christ. The mercy and love of God as revealed in the life and confirmed in the death of His Son, must be the center around which all the preaching revolves, and on which it is based. This is the great central truth on which the church in Manchuria has been founded" (Ross, "Missionary Methods in Manchuria," p. 332).

Such is the testimony to the power of the cross from far distant and different witnesses. The conclusion drawn by the Scotch professor and by the missionary in China are one and the same. "There is nothing in the world," says Prof. Denny, "so universally intelligible as the cross" ("Death of Christ," p. 200). And Dr. Ross from China says: "The cross of Christ with its implied doctrines satisfies the soul of the Chinese. It is the intelligent response of love to the cry of their distressed heart" ("Missionary Methods in Manchuria," p. 90). Nothing more impressively, than the preaching of the cross to every creature and its acceptance by them, demonstrates to us so conclusively that our Gospel is an eternal Gospel; that the power and need of Christ's blood to save never goes out of date.

This story of the cross wins its way among all peoples because it is the old, old story. It is older than Wesley, older than Calvin, Augustine, Paul, Moses, or Abraham. It is as old as God, this story of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Did you ever hear of a Unitarian mission? You may have. Then did you ever hear of a Unitarian mission having a revival in a heathen land? I never did. And the reason is they have no cross, no atonement to preach. When you steal the cross, you take the crown of missions. When you despise the blood of Calvary, you will have strangled missions.

Somehow I feel that Peter often went back, at least in thought, to that courtyard where he denied his Lord. And while there he renewed his vows, asking God to help him never again to deny or forsake his Saviour. And somehow I feel that we who have been denying the power of the cross in our preaching ought to go back to the places where we have thus put our Master's sacrifice to an open shame, confess our sin, and promise there to be faithful in lifting up "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

**II. THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MISSIONS**

Every age has its own test of fidelity. In Old Testament times the test was the unity of God. After Christ came, the test was the Son of God as Divine Saviour and King. The test for the Church today is its readiness to accept the Holy Spirit as the Divine administrator of God's kingdom in this world. Dr. Steele is right when he says: "The conservator of orthodoxy in every successive age is the Holy Spirit." And if the Church is apostate today one place more than another, it is in not enthroning the Holy Spirit. It is on mission fields and in mission work that this is most nearly done, and there God is honoring those that honor Him.

In the first place, the Holy Spirit must be enthroned as administrator and director. "His time is no less important than His way." The Church never has been able to select the proper time and place for labor. As we read the "Acts of the Apostles" we feel that they are the "Acts of the Holy Spirit." The foretokens of foreign missions were when the Holy Spirit directed Philip to the eunuch and Peter to Cornelius. And the first act in the world drama of Christian conquest was when in the church at Antioch "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And no missionary of modern times has been successful but what has gone out under a like ministration of the Holy Spirit as director.

Paul's being turned back from Asia and Bithynia by the Holy Spirit, because hearts in Europe were ready for the Gospel, can be paralleled over and over again in the administration of the Spirit in modern missions.

When Judson went to India and landed at Calcutta, the East India Company forbade his landing. Feeling certain he had been called to the mission field, he retired to the Isle of France, and a year later went to Madras, where he was also unable to stay. The only place open was Rangoon, Burma, the last place he wished to go. But he went, led of the Spirit, or rather, compelled of the Spirit, against his wishes and judgment. Burma was ready. Judson knew it not, but the Spirit did, as testified to by the Pentecostal work that followed.

I have no doubt that Philip's and Peter's surprise was great when the eunuch and Cornelius were found so wondrously prepared by the Spirit to receive the message. In 1820, when the ship "Thaddeus" furled sail in Oahu harbor with eighteen missionaries on board to begin the fight with cannibalism and paganism in the Hawaiian Islands, what was their surprise when Obookiah, their native-born lad, who had gone ashore in a boat, returned bearing this news, "Oahu's idols are no more." And it was so. Before the missionaries had landed, the Holy Spirit had moved the pagan king and the priests to destroy all the heathen idols.

How God moves upon the hearts of whole communities by the Holy Spirit in answer to the prayer of a devoted man! On Nov. 7, 1837, Titus Coan had been laboring two years at Hilo, Hawaiian Islands. Some ten thousand natives had come in from the surrounding tribes to hear the Gospel. Their little booths lined the shore, and some six thousand were crowded into the crude church building at the hour of evening service. Suddenly the sea, moved by an unseen hand, began to roar and the volcanic wave fell upon the people, sweeping hundreds out to sea. An awful night that was! But mighty as was the sea, it was not to be compared with the waves o-f the Spirit that rolled over that people. All the next day, though the sea was giving up its dead one by one, the meeting continued, and the kingdom of darkness gave up its victims by the hundreds. So mighty was this work of the Spirit that on the first Sunday in July, 1838, Mr. Coan, on that afternoon, baptized 1,705 men, women and children, and some 2,400 communicants sat down at the Lord's table. During the next three years, the Spirit all the while moving upon the people, 7,382 persons were received into the church at Hilo. And during his thirty-five years of work there Mr. Coan baptized with his own hands 11,960 converts.

Somehow these "new acts of the apostles" strangely stir our hearts, even when we read about them. The very Spirit seems to breathe through the record, as through the Book of Acts, giving it life. What then must it be to be present in such an atmosphere where such scenes are being enacted! We are not surprised that Bishop Foster says of the first prayer meeting he attended at a mission station that he never saw such manifest presence of God in a mid-week prayer meeting. And his wonder grew when told that this was not an exception, but they were all like that! And Bishop Foss, after attending a camp-meeting at the foot of the Himalaya Mountains, writes: "Never in my life, in any period of the oldtime camp-meeting fervor, have I heard more sermons, and exhortations, and prayers, and experiences on the subject of the gift of the Holy Spirit" ("Cleveland Missionary Convention," p. 209).

"My brethren, we have unlearned the Holy Spirit". These words are true. He who was the inspirer of the first missionaries; who again and again has awakened the Church from her slumber and pointed out the duty still not done; who is today giving proofs of His power to direct and to obtain results - this Holy Spirit we have ignored, if not forgotten. We here at home have not realized, as have the missionaries, that the life that was "born from above" must also be directed from above; that the Church with a supernatural beginning must have a supernatural leadership; that as Christ was necessary, by His atonement, to set men's feet in the way of life, so the Holy Spirit, by knowing the will of God, is necessary to keep men singing and triumphing in that way. From many a mission field, yielding bounteous harvests, the Holy Spirit is calling to us here at home to yield to Him the right of way, promising to convict men of sin, of righteousness, of judgment, and to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us and unto many.

**III. PRAYER AND MISSIONS**

Prayer preceded Pentecost. Prayer preceded God's raising up needed workers. Prayer preceded the sending out of the first missionaries. The reason given for appointing deacons was that the Apostles might give themselves unto prayer. Every man or woman who has been mighty on the mission field has first been mighty on his knees before God. In many "a going apart," in scores of "all night" seasons, again and again, in many a Gethsemane, he has fellowship with, and catches the Spirit of, the Master. The spirit of the true missionary is that of Neesima, of Japan, when he said: "We must advance on our knees."

The nine children of Rev. and Mrs. John Scudder, of India, have all given their lives to missionary service in that land - seven sons and two daughters. This one family has given a total of five hundred and thirty years of continuous missionary service for India. The only explanation is that given by Mr. Scudder: "The children were literally prayed into the kingdom by their mother." She was accustomed to spend the birthday of each child in all-day prayer for him.

There is Eliza Agnew, forty-three years a missionary in Oodooville, Ceylon. During all that time she never once returned to England, never once took a vacation. "I have no time," she said. She is called "the mother of a thousand daughters," having taught the daughters and grand-daughters of her first pupils. When she died it was found of the thousand girls who had gone entirely through the school, not one returned to her home a heathen. Like her Saviour, she could say: "Of all those whom thou hast given me, I have lost none." And out of that one school alone, while under Miss Agnew's care, over six hundred girls went to carry the Gospel light to the zenana homes of India. The secret? She spent literally hours every day praying for the girls by name! "I know My sheep by name. They hear My voice and follow Me."

In Japan, from April, 1900, to May, 1902, there was continuous, united prayer by Christians throughout the kingdom. In May, 1902, the revival broke out, and during the year to the Church of forty thousand native Christians there were added twenty-seven thousand converts in answer to that prayer. In answer to prayer by the China Inland Mission, Dr. Schoiield, after winning seventy-five hundred dollars in prizes for scholarships in English colleges, gave himself to medical work in China. He labored only three years before he was "called up higher;" but during that time his wife tells us she often heard him praying in his study that God would thrust out of the English universities young men to work in China. His early death was lamented and not understood. Christ died at thirty-three, after only three years of toil and prayer. One year after Dr. Schofield's death the "Cambridge seven" went forth. Before they went to China they made a tour of English and Scotch colleges, and stirred the student life of all Great Britain for God and missions. Today one is bishop of West China, one is assistant superintendent of the China Inland Mission, one a pioneer missionary to Tibet, and all the others are useful workers.

Dr. Gordon's Church, of Boston, was giving five thousand dollars annually to missions. One day Dr. Gordon said in the pulpit: "It is not enough; let us still use all our plans and agencies that have been successful in the past. But in addition, in the Sunday School, in the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, in missionary organizations, at the family altar, in secret, in the public service, let us pray that God will enable us to do more generously for this great cause." Result: the next year they gave over ten thousand dollars to missions, the Christian Endeavor alone giving sixteen hundred dollars!

Do we stop often to think that one of the mightiest missionary organizations of our day has been prayed into being? Listen to the story:

J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, was a child given in answer to a father's prayer for a son to be given him who might evangelize China's millions. This son tells us that when a young man, "God said to me, 'My child, I am going to evangelize Inland China, and if you would like to walk with Me, I will do it through you.' " While still in England he was led to believe in the limitless possibilities of prayer. He tells us he said to himself: "When I get to China my only claim will be on God. How important, therefore, to learn before leaving England to move man through God by prayer alone" ("China Inland Mission," p. 66). The decision to open the mission is made. For months Hudson Taylor has been bearing the burden of unevangelized China. But the far greater burden is that he cannot trust and pray for God to raise up the workers for China and support them. It seems his life will go out under the fearful strain. He goes to Brighton by the sea for relief. There on the beach, on a bright Sunday morning in June, we see him fully trusting God, and the burden lifts. Then it was that on the margin of his Bible he made a little record, which ought to be forever memorable in the annals of missions: "Prayed for twenty-four willing, skillful laborers at Brighton, June 25, 1865. The conflict was all ended. Peace and gladness filled my soul" ("China Inland Mission," p. 224). This number and more sailed to China.

In the autumn of 1881, at Wu Chang, the China Inland missionaries gathered to meet Hudson Taylor. Funds were low. Five years had passed since the Chefu Convention, which opened every province to the missionary, and every province had been entered by this heroic band. They said: "God has opened the doors to once-sealed lands; why are laborers so few?" The answer came: "You have been definite in prayer for doors to open; why not be definite in prayer for workers to enter them?" Conscious of failure, this little company sits down, each one with pencil and paper. They go over the eleven provinces of Inland China, asking what God's work must have. Twenty-eight women and forty-two men, just seventy in all! There they are, a little band, poor, uninfluential, hardly known outside of England, though known, we believe, to God and all His angels on high. Whole working force after fifteen years' work now less than a hundred. How could they ask for seventy? But here was the need. God had taught them, they fully believed, to pray as they ought. They dared not ask for less and still believe in God, the Father Almighty. They prayed for seventy, also "for large re-enforcements for all the evangelical societies." But they could not rightly care for so many in one season, so they asked that they be sent during 1882, 1883, 1884. They were later led to pray that God would lead some of His wealthy stewards to make room for a large blessing for himself and family by giving liberally of his substance for this special object. One said: "Would it not be delightful if three years hence all now here could gather and give thanks when the last of the seventy shall have reached China?" Clearly that could not be. "Why not have the thanksgiving tonight in which we may all unite?" one said; and it was so, they rejoicing over what they had taken of God by faith. Before the close of the time seventy-six workers were on the field, and in February, 1882, the Berger family, of England, gave three thousand pounds - fifteen thousand dollars. Five thousand dollars for father, five thousand for mother, one thousand for Mary, one thousand for Rosie, one thousand for Bertie, one thousand for Amy, one thousand for Henry. "Exceeding abundantly above all that ye ask or think."

Again, in November, 1887, Mr. Taylor and others met at Nanking to consider the need. They were led to ask for one hundred missionaries and ten thousand pounds additional during 1888. Further led to ask that the money might come in large sums, that their clerical force might not be taxed in acknowledging it! Results, one hundred new missionaries came during 1888, and not $50,000, but $55,000 additional in eleven separate gifts, the smallest being $2,500, and the largest $12,500. This mission stands there today as an example of work begun in prayer, relying on prayer entirely for men and means. We may say what we please about visionary schemes, but here are visible fruits. Think of this story! Not back in apostolic times, but in this busy, crowding, materialistic, twentieth century!

Prayer is the mightiest power in our hands today. Is it not a great sin that we do not use this talent of all talents? What blessings we are withholding from ourselves, the Church, and missions by not praying! If, like Pastor Gossner, we could learn to "ring the prayer bell rather than the beggar's bell," we might have his success - one hundred missionaries put into the field who gathered thirty thousand converts before his death at sixty-three - and be worthy of his epitaph; "He prayed mission stations into being and missionaries into faith; he prayed to open the hearts of the rich, and gold from the most distant lands." But prayer is a costly exercise, and this possibly is why so few people dare pray really in earnest. If you pray earnestly a year for China, you will feel you ought to go. If your Church prays earnestly a year for China, she will double her missionary offering. If at the family altar a father and mother plead earnestly for India or Africa, God will ask a son or daughter of them for far-away service. If we pledge the price we can claim the power. The picture of my boyhood was that of Atlas holding the world on his shoulders; but the picture for boy and girl, for man and woman, for minister and missionary today, is Christ bearing the world upon His heart. The world with Atlas' shoulder under it we know is a myth, but the world with Christ's heart under it is the mightiest reality of the ages.