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

**VOLUME 3; CHAPTER 19. WHAT MISSIONARY MOTIVES SHOULD PREVAIL? "THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US" (1 CORINTHIANS 5:14)**

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**VARIOUS KINDS OF MOTIVES**

When we contemplate the motives which largely prevail in these days in respect to missionary service, we meet with a surprise. Instead of discovering, as we should anticipate in such a relationship, that these are always upon the high plane of the divine and heavenly, we find often that they are upon the low plane of the human and earthly. And it is to be noted that this condition, as compared with the past, marks a change in the kind of motive which is being presented to men in order to induce them to give themselves to missionary service. There was a time - within the memory of many - when the motives proclaimed were markedly scriptural and spiritual. But more recently there has been in many quarters a positive decline in this respect, the scriptural and spiritual giving place either to the selfish or to the simply humanitarian. And this has resulted in a development of weakness, both in the appeal and in its results. It is certainly true, as men say, that non-Christian nations are in a pitiable state, governmentally, educationally, commercially, socially and physically; and it is equally true that nothing but Christianity will alter the conditions which are existing. But such conditions do not constitute the appeal which God makes to His people when He urges them to Christianize the nations. The conditions above named are all "under the sun," and they have to do with the present temporal life. Besides, though a total transformation might be secured in these respects, the peoples so affected - as the present condition of Japan demonstrates - would have been brought no nearer to God than they were before. For, while it is always true that Christianity civilizes, it is never true that civilization Christianizes.

It would appear from the above, if souls are to be reached, if men are to be made inwardly right, if the things which make for eternal security and blessedness are to be obtained, that divine motives, leading to divine methods and results, must prevail. This is the reason why God sets such high motives before the Church. He would have Christians look high in order that they may live high; and He would have them live high in order that they may lift others equally high. It is supremely important, therefore, to discover from the Scriptures what the divinely given motives are. Our starting text indicates that Paul felt that these could be expressed in one phrase: "The love of Christ" - that is, Christ's love for us - "constraineth us." But other portions of the Word indicate that the Spirit expands the thought so expressed, the one motive including several others. May we anticipate sufficiently to say that these motives appear to be three in number. It is our purpose to consider these, one by one.

**A FIRST MOTIVE**

During the earlier portion of the ministry of Jesus on earth, that is, between His baptism and crucifixion, He spoke very little about missions; but during the later portion, that is, between His resurrection and ascension, He spoke of nothing else. This last is a striking and impressive fact, especially as there were many other matters, in those last days, about which His disciples might have wished to have Him speak and with which He might have desired to occupy Himself. It is evident then, during the forty clays of His ascension, that one theme was uppermost in His mind and that one burden lay most heavily upon His heart. His redemptive work having been accomplished, He longed to have His disciples proclaim the glad tidings everywhere; and hence He spoke of this, and of this alone.

Moreover, on the several occasions when He discoursed upon the theme of missions, He always spoke as a master would address his disciples, as a captain would address his soldiers, as a king would address his subjects. At other times and in other relationships, He suggested, He exhorted, He urged But here, without exception and without equivocation, He commanded. Not once did He explain how He could demand what He was requiring; not once did He ask if there were any arguments to be expressed in answer to His proposals; in full knowledge of the terrible cost, without allowing any escape from the obligation imposed, He simply said, "Go!"

In face of such a burning passion and heavily imposed obligation, there is but one conclusion to reach; the Church of Jesus Christ has no choice as to whether she will or will not do the thing ordered. One who has purchased His people with His own blood, One who owns them in spirit, soul and body, One who is indeed Master, Captain and King has positively commanded that His Gospel shall be preached throughout the world. Of course, the Church, if she chooses, may disobey, as - speaking generally - she is disobeying. But under the conditions prevailing, this on her part is high treason, and it is at her present loss and future peril. The thing which Christ has commanded, in all rightful consideration, is the thing which ought to be fully and immediately undertaken. This then, is the prime motive which God sets before Christians, individually and collectively, namely, that He who has had a right to command has done so, and that the command, because of the Person, calls for unhesitating, uncompromising and continuous obedience, until the task ordered is fully and finally accomplished.

**A SECOND MOTIVE**

There are five separate passages in the Gospels which speak of Christ as having, or as being moved with, compassion. One is when Jesus saw two blind men and where He gave them sight; another is where He saw a leper and where He touched and healed him; another is where He saw a widow mourning the loss of her dead son and where He raised that son to life; another is where He saw the hungry multitudes and where He fed them; and the last is where He saw multitudes uncared for and where He asked His disciples to offer prayer in their behalf.

Now, all of these passages are interesting, as revealing the heart of Christ, He being the "God of compassion" whose "compassions fail not." But the last passage is particularly interesting, as it gives to us a view of present world-conditions and of the thought of God concerning them. For what was true that day in Galilee is still true the world over; and what Christ was He still is. Let us, for a moment, consider the passage.

Jesus had come to His own city of Nazareth, and later He had gone forth from thence throughout the neighboring districts. Both in the city and out of it, He had dispensed His largess of healing, from, apparently, early morning until late evening. As a result of His ministrations, He had gathered at last great crowds about Him, made up of men, women and children, and now these had no place to turn to for the night and had many physical and spiritual needs still unsupplied. That Jesus had had compassion upon the people all through the day, His words and acts attest. But now, seeing the multitudes in such a pitiable condition, it is recorded - for this is the implication - that He had peculiar compassion upon them. He saw that they were hungry and weary, just as sheep are at the close of the day when they are unfed and exhausted; and He saw also that they were like a great harvest field, whose past-ripe grain, for lack of hands to gather it into the garner, was rotting on the stalk. Then it was - these physical conditions suggesting the spiritual - that the great heart revealed its longing, and that there came forth the appealing, pathetic cry: "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest."

We would not imply, for a moment, that there was not sufficient cause in the sight of the multitudes that day to thus mightily move the heart of the Son of God. At the same time, we can but think that not a little part of the emotion which Jesus experienced was occasioned by the fact that the multitudes before Him were a picture of those other, greater multitudes which went to make up a lost world, and also of those other and still greater multitudes which were yet unborn and which would go to make up the lost world which was yet to be. For Christ ever looked on things with a divinely prophetic eye; and there was everything in that present view to suggest the wider vision. And so the heart bled out its grief; and so the voice plaintively asked the help of man. And thus this same Christ is ever looking down from heaven's throne, the same heart is ever feeling its weight of compassionate woe, and the same voice is ever pleading with His disciples to see as He sees and to feel as He feels. This then is the second motive which God sets before Christians, namely, to enter into Christ's compassion for the lost souls and lives of men, and thus to be moved as He was moved, and to be constrained to do as He did.

**A THIRD MOTIVE**

The Gospels, recording the earthly life of Jesus, are full of promises - mostly from the lips of the Master - concerning a coming which would be for the purpose of establishing a kingdom. The Epistles, representing the testimony of the risen and glorified Christ, continue this theme, and always give the same order, first the coming and then the kingdom. And at the end of the New Testament, a whole book - Revelation- is taken up with the expansion of the now familiar thought and tells in detail how Christ will come, and what the kingdom will be.

In addition to the above, Gospels, Epistles and Revelation speak of a work to be accomplished, which is preliminary to the coming and kingdom, and which, in the divine economy, makes the one and the other possible. As these passages are more than interesting, as they are vital to our subject, we make a selection from them, quoting them without comment: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring; and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold [flock] and one Shepherd." "Go ye therefore, and teach [disciple] all nations." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." "Ye are witnesses of these things." "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." "Delivering thee from the people [the Jews], and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee; to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins." "That by me the preaching might be fully known and that all the Gentiles might hear." "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." "And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." "A great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues."

Impressive as these passages of Scripture are, and clear as their teaching is to the effect that missionary service is related to all the world and is for the purpose of gathering to God an innumerable number of people in preparation for the King and the kingdom, there is yet another passage which is even more impressive and clear as related to the same particulars. As if to remove any possible misunderstanding in regard to the divine plan, the Spirit led to the declaration and preservation of words which tell us what God purposes to do in this present age in preparation for the age to come, and what part the Church is to play in the fulfilment of the purpose so announced. We refer to Acts 15:13-18. There James, quoting Peter, is the spokesman, and the great Apostle confirms his utterance by stating it as a foundation truth that "known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." He thus says: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name; and to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

Here then, is a divine utterance and program. And simply speaking, it sets forth the following facts in the following order: first, a present work of grace in which God visits and gathers out, pre-eminently from the Gentiles, a people for His name; second, the return of Christ; third, the restoration and establishment of the Jewish theocratic kingdom with its attendant worship; and fourth, the salvation in the kingdom-age of the "residue" of the Jews, and of "all" the Gentiles upon whom God's name shall be called. And this program, in its first article, makes it clear what share the Church has in its fulfilment. To put it in a single sentence, it is this: God is visiting the nations, and Christians have the high privilege of visiting them with Him. He goes forth, in the persons of the missionaries, not to convert all the world - since not all men will accept of Him - but to gather out from it a willing people, heavenly in quality and innumerable in quantity, which shall be to the glory of His name throughout time and eternity. And, manifestly, this preparatory work will bring to pass the event which is described as following it, that is, the coming of Christ. This then is the final and consummating motive which God sets before Christians, namely, to go forth everywhere, preaching the good tidings to every creature, in order that the Church may be made complete and that the King and the kingdom may come.

**THE EFFECT OF SCRIPTURAL MOTIVES**

It will need only passing consideration to discover that the three motives which have been mentioned, namely, the command, the compassion and the coming of Christ, are like the God who gave them, and are thus worthy of being accepted by the noblest and most devoted of men. And there are two reasons why they are this. First, because they represent spiritual and eternal truths; and second, because they make for the highest glory of God and the greatest good of mankind. As to the last effect, no other motives are so uplifting and purifying to the person who is moved by them, and no other motives are so sure of divine favor and blessing in their exercise. There is enough power in these motives, singly and collectively, to raise the missionary propaganda above everything earthly, selfish and narrow, and to place it, where it ever belongs, upon the plane of the heavenly, the spiritual and the infinite. Moreover there is enough potency here to turn the "forlorn hope" of present-day foreign missions, in which a Gideon's band of men and women are bravely fighting on against overwhelming odds, into an ever victorious army of the Church, where the battle will not only be fought but also be won, and where the end of saving the elect, and thus of bringing back the King and bringing in the kingdom, will be surely and speedily brought to pass. For what foes on earth, or what demons in hell, could stay the onward progress of a people which had determined, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to obey Christ's command, to show forth His compassion, and to press forward with uplifted faces to the rapturous and victorious meeting with Him who one day will descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God? Such motives as these are not simply constraining; they are invincible and triumphant.

**AN ILLUSTRATION**

Some years ago, while living in Toronto, I received a call from a Miss Kathleen Stayner, of that city. Miss Stayner had come to confer with me about the possibility of her serving in China. I saw at once that she had been born and bred a gentlewoman; and I learned afterwards that she had had an exceptionally good education both in Canada and in Europe; that she was an heiress; and, being an orphan, that she was free to come and go as she might choose. Also, I perceived, as our conversation advanced, that she was a young woman of great devotion, having turned her back upon all social allurements and having committed herself to an earnest and self-sacrificing service for Christ, including work for the Chinese in Toronto. The situation in respect to her going to China, therefore, was a most promising one, for there was nothing to hinder her proceeding to that land. But my growing confidence as we talked was suddenly arrested by Miss Stayner, for she unexpectedly declared that there was one difficulty in her way which was insurmountable. Asking what this was, I received this reply:

"I have to confess that I do not love the Chinese." And then she explained: "They are so ignorant and dirty!"

This was a real obstacle, especially as she had been working among the Chinese. But in spite of it I replied:

"Do you know, Miss Stayner, I do not think the question whether or not you love the Chinese is the one to be considered; it seems to me that the real question is whether or not you love the Lord."

At this, her eyes kindled and she exclaimed: "Oh, yes, I do love Him!"

"Then," I said, "if you love Him, how can you do anything else but obey His command and go?"

At this, she looked at me earnestly and said: "Do you think then that I may dare to go?"

"Under the circumstances," I replied, "I do not see how you may dare to stay."

A few days later Miss Stayner applied to the Mission; a few months later she was accepted for service; and shortly after her acceptance she went on her way to China.

Miss Stayner, however, was not to have the easy time in China which many missionaries experience there. For a period all went well and happily. She was located at the inviting station of Wenchow; she entered into the old, well developed and very promising work at that place; she made remarkable progress with the language; and she gained the confidence and love of the people. But one night, when she was staying with her Bible-woman at an out-station, she was suddenly aroused from her sleep by lights and voices, and thereupon discovered that robbers had forced their way into her room and were stealing what they could lay their hands upon. Miss Stayner protested, whereupon one of the robbers struck her with a bamboo pole. Later, she and the Bible-woman got out of a door at the back of the house, and, clad as they were and in the cold of the winter night, they fled over the hills to a clump of trees and bushes and hid themselves from view. There they remained for a long time, chilled and horror-stricken, until the robbers had sacked their house and departed. After this they were found by some of the villagers and brought back to their almost ruined home. Miss Stayner was seriously affected, physically, by this trying experience, and it became necessary that she should visit Shanghai for quiet and rest. Just at that time I visited that place, and I was thus able, one evening, to ask her about her work and to hear from her lips the account of her recent experiences. After the tale had been told, I said:

"Miss Stayner, may I ask you a question?"

"Yes," she replied, "what is it?"

"It is this," I answered; "do you love the Chinese?"

I shall never forget the look of astonishment which she gave me. "Why," she said, "what do you mean? Of course, I love the Chinese!"

"I was just wondering," I replied, "if, having gone through such an experience at their hands, you were sorry you had come to China, and if possibly you now almost hated the Chinese."

This remark perplexed her more than my first had done. But I then reminded her of our conversation in Toronto, which had quite passed from her mind.

"Oh," she finally answered, "I had forgotten that I ever said that; but that was before I knew the Chinese; I love them all now!"

But Miss Stayner was not at an end of her appointed trials. For only a few years had passed when she became afflicted with a climatic disease, which is terrible in its process and effects. It soon became evident that she must leave the country. This she did, coming home to Canada, and later going to a certain "Spa" in Germany. Happily she got better, and at last she was able to go back to her much loved work. But still later, her old trouble returned. She fought against it, and for a considerable time would not give up. But at last it was a question of life and death, and she reluctantly took her way back, first to Germany and then to England. Here, her strength gradually failed, and, finally, she finished her earthly course by falling asleep in Christ. It was my privilege to see our friend during this last visit. She was, in spite of her youth, a physical wreck, her hair being gray, her face being thin, and her strength and vigor having departed. But she had not one word of regret to express at having gone to China and was full of grateful praise to God that such a privilege had been hers. And she confessed that the one thing which had led her on and which gave her ever ample compensation for all that she had suffered was the knowledge that she was doing what she could to take the Gospel to the heathen and thus to hasten the return to earth of her beloved Lord.

**AN APPLICATION**

Miss Stayner's life is more than an illustration; it is an interpretation. For it shows beyond misunderstanding what is the effect upon an open mind and heart of true scriptural motives. Here was a woman who had everything, naturally speaking, to keep her at home, but who deliberately chose to go abroad. Here was one who had faced the question of her responsibility toward the heathen, not emotionally, but calmly, and who finally had gone forth for no other reason than that her Master had commanded her to do so. Here was one who at first had little love for the heathen, but whose heart, in the path of obedience, became filled with compassion for them. And here, finally, was one who had remained steadfast and even praiseful through all her suffering and sorrow because she had learned to serve with her eyes fixed upon Him who is the Coming One. And thus the interpretation becomes an inspiration. For Miss Stayner's life and service are a constraining call, to all who know and love the Lord, to do as she did, in being wholly obedient to God and in committing all to Him. And it is not too much to say that if Christians should follow her as she followed Christ it would not be long before there would be produced a veritable revolution in missionary methods and results. Then indeed we might hope to see foreign missions turned into an apostolic triumph, where the old figure of speech, "terrible as an army with banners," would but feebly express what God would make His Church on earth to be. For it is manifest that our Father in heaven has large thoughts toward the heathen, and that He is ready to use His saints in their fulfilment whenever they will allow Him to do so. But it is to be remembered, that this last can only come to pass in the measure in which the followers of Christ are possessed and controlled by those motives which are truly and wholly divine.