

A SHORT COURSE OF READING

*“The Living
Christ
in the
World
of Today”*



in preparation for
The Eleventh Quadrennial Convention
of the
STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT
Buffalo, N. Y. Dec. 30, 1931-Jan. 3, 1932

Buffalo Paper No. 2

Theme: *The Living Christ in the World of Today*

SECTION A

Books primarily exhibiting the world of today

- *The Clash of World Forces by Basil Mathews. \$1.50
- Humanity Uprooted, by Maurice Hindus. \$3.50
- The Acquisitive Society, by R. H. Tawney. \$1.50
- The Good Earth, by Pearl S. Buck. \$2.50

SECTION B

Books primarily exhibiting the living Christ in the world of today

- *What Can I Believe About Christian Missions?
By K. S. Latourette. (A pamphlet) \$.10
- The Story of Agricultural Missions, by B. H. Hunnicut and W. W. Reid. (Paper) \$.60
- The Bantu Are Coming, by Ray E. Phillips. \$2.
- Jungles Preferred, by Janet Miller. \$3.50

All these books are vivid and exceptionally readable. Everyone coming, or wishing he *could* come, to the Convention should read them all. Those starred give a general survey and are the absolute minimum of preparation for delegates.

SPECIAL PRICE

All the above books if ordered in one lot, of the Student Volunteer Movement, will cost only \$10.50, or 30% less than the combined retail prices.

419 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

THE CLASH OF WORLD FORCES

A Survey of the Social Climate of Contemporary Missions

Try listing the features in which the world surveyed by Mr. Mathews differs from the world into which Francis Xavier or even William Carey went as missionaries in 1541 and 1793 respectively. (Include at least physical science, mechanical inventions, national divisions, interrelations of peoples as convenient baskets for your details.)

What seem to you to be the chief traits of European civilization as pictured in chapter II? Are they also American traits? Chinese? Indian? Christian?

What bearing can the "map of Europe" have on the other continents? On the view of Christ and Christians held in other continents? (For a magnified exhibit consider Africa and compare *The Bantu Are Coming*.)

Evaluate analytically the four chief social movements described by Mr. Mathews:

European and American nationalisms

The world program of Bolshevism

The Chinese revolution

The Gandhi movement

Isolate the elements in each harmonious with and discordant to the purposes of Christ.

Try to get the "feel" of the social climate which each of them will throw around Christianity. How far do you think Christ's personality will make easy headway and how far be thwarted and rejected in each? How will a modern missionary have to think and act differently in these new climates from—say—Adoniram Judson (1813)?

HUMANITY UPROOTED

The Break-Up of Traditional Thought and Conduct

Consider the accepted thought patterns that the Russian communists have broken and the new patterns that they are laying down instead: about God, property and production, the motives of men in society, the relations of the sexes, the function of the family. To what extent do you think the new patterns false and bad for society? Compare these with changing patterns in our own thought.

Consider the motives of the chief leaders in creating and enforcing these new patterns. At what points do they seem to you identical with, at what points contrary to, Christian motives?

Consider the conduct resulting from these patterns and these motives. To what extent do you find it destructive of Christian principles? To what extent harmonious with them? Compare our own ethical changes.

Now project this entire experiment into Asiatic and African societies, where it is in fact being introduced (See *The Clash of World Forces*).

1. What will happen (or is happening) to non-Christian religions and philosophies when the communist thought-patterns impinge on them?
2. How will the Chinese, Japanese, Indians, Bantu (consider them separately) differ in moral conduct from the Russians and from one another, when suddenly released from their old dogmas?
3. If you were a mission board secretary visiting a field where this raw and hybrid communism was springing up, what attitude would you advise your missionaries to take toward it, as a system not of government but of thought and conduct?
Total hostility?
Critical neutrality?
Sympathy with goals and repudiation of methods?
Effort to secure for their society the communist goals by Christian methods?
Some other attitude?

THE ACQUISITIVE SOCIETY

(Especially chapters I—IV and XL)

The Industrial Background of Foreign Missions

- I. Consider the impact of the acquisitive society on the hitherto rural or primitive cultures of Asia and Africa.

Accept, at least for the moment, Mr. Tawney's thesis that because industry is not regarded as a social function but as an opportunity for personal gain or advancement or display, the economic life of modern societies is in a perpetual state of morbid irritation.

1. Now consider the checks to this anti-social system which tend to curb and socialize it in the west.
2. How many of these exist in Asia and Africa?
3. What social changes would you expect to find in an Asiatic or African society soon after the introduction of unchecked profit-motivated industries? (For records of actual changes see Vol. V of the *Jerusalem Conference Report* (on Industry); *Indian Industry* by Miss M. C. Matheson; *The Bantu Are Coming* by Ray E. Phillips; Articles in the January number, 1931, of *Far Horizons*.)
4. What results would you predict from "the power of those who do not work over those who do" when the latter are in Formosa and the former in New York?
5. Do the "rights" of American and British owners of capital in India, China, the Philippines, Nicaragua and elsewhere seem to you to be "functional"—i.e., based on a fully equivalent return in service rendered to the inhabitants of those countries?
6. Can you think of some social situations where labor will be compulsory in fact, even though not so ostensibly? Can you

point out places in the non-white world (other than Liberia) where there is a "veiled and decorous form of slavery"?

II. Consider the relation of the Christian church to the outposts of the acquisitive society in foreign mission fields.

1. At what points do the principles of the acquisitive society as explained by Mr. Tawney seem to you contradictory to the principles of Jesus?
2. Do Christians at present aid in taking that acquisitive society to mission fields?
3. If so, how can they disengage themselves?
4. In any case, what can they do with it when they meet it there?

For example:

Can they create in the new Christians there the will to "collective responsibility"? social instead of personal motives in industrial life? the type of mind that understands industry for production instead of for profits?

Can they enter the departments of political and economic relations in their countries of residence?

Can they have as their aim a new kind, and a Christian kind, of society?

Can they set up socialized and "functional" industrial plants as experiments and models?

What else can they do to forestall the complete absorption of African and Asiatic societies by the acquisitive society?

THE GOOD EARTH

A Novel of Rural China

Observe that this novel does not pretend to be an epitome of all China.

Consider it as a fragment snatched from the creeping glacier of peasant life, essentially the same among millions of men who have never heard of China.

Consider it as a record of typical human beings struggling against the typical forces of the world—drought, flood, capitalism, poverty, cruelty, war—finding life essentially bitter yet not without dignity and worth.

Consider the *motives* and *responses* in their various life-experiences of Wang Lung, O-lan, Lotus, Ching, Peach Blossom and the other distinctive individuals. Do they seem to you true to life as you know it outside China? How different from your own?

What traits in them do you regard as “good,” i.e. suitable to build a stable and happy society upon?

What traits as “bad”?

Can you strike a balance of these and evaluate peasant society as a whole?

If you were living in Wang Lung’s village what would you do or say toward creating a better society? If you were living in the city of the South where “opulence was laid upon foundations of poverty”?

Do you feel sure that yours *would* be a better society than these?

Would you say anything to Wang Lung about God if you met him
in the drought-stricken field in front of the little images?
in the city under the rich man’s wall?
in the tea-house of Cuckoo and Lotus?

If so, what? Would you guarantee it to be helpful to him in those situations?

WHAT CAN I BELIEVE ABOUT CHRISTIAN MISSIONS?

Consider this pamphlet as a complement to *The Clash of World Forces*: in such a world to what degree are Christian missions adequate?

How do the eleven values of missionaries, sketched here, compare with your mental picture of the men and the enterprise?

How many of the eleven are solvents for the difficult world-complex pictured by Mr. Mathews?

How many of them are identical with the values pursued by the Communist Party as described by Mr. Hindus?

To what degree do the missions here described seem to you in a fair way to solve the problems of the world pictured in the first four books of this course?

From any source of information at your disposal, how *generally* do you judge they are now solving them?

Are any of those problems wholly untouched by missions?

How could missions become more nearly adequate to the present world situation:
by cooperation with other social forces? by changes in spirit, method or emphases? by basic reconstructions or additions?

Note that the following books illustrate in detail how some missions are operating in rural, industrial and primitive situations respectively.

THE BANTU ARE COMING

A Christian Mission in an Industrial Situation

Complete carefully the provincial African background with reference to the wider one in *The Clash of World Forces*.

Analyze the several forces of the South African social complex:

Industrial development for profit without reference to the social good of the Bantu

The virtual compulsion of the Bantu into industry by their rural suffering and by the theft of their land

Their moral and psychological maladjustment in the industrial environment

The moral and social irresponsibility of many whites

The race prejudice of the whites resulting in personal contempt and legal disabilities

The new bitterness of the Bantu intelligentsia.

Now evaluate the attitudes and methods of Ray Phillips in this situation. Are they Christian? Too drastic? Too moderate?

Has he gone far enough toward combating the industrial system itself or been too contented with temporary relief of the Bantu workers?

Has he interfered in economic and political situations beyond his right? beyond sound policy?

Is his course toward Bantu educated radicals likely to incite them too much or moderate them too much?

Is he making headway against the above-mentioned social forces or being slowly swallowed by them?

Has this book raised, lowered, or left unchanged your esteem for Christian missions?

THE STORY OF AGRICULTURAL MISSIONS

Consider the latter sections of chapters II-VII and all of chapter VIII as a case book in Christian rural economics. Note the varying experiments being carried on in each country, and evaluate them by two criteria:

- I. How valuable is it for Christian missionaries to do this kind of work at all?
 1. Decide for yourself its relation to "the gospel." Is such work a "wedge for the gospel"? a by-product of it? an inherent part of it?
 2. Should missionaries "leave this sort of thing to the government"?
 3. What is the relation of this development to the industrialization of these countries? Will it check or accelerate industrialization? Will that be good or bad? Will the sudden and rapid introduction of farm machinery dislocate the present rural economy and create new ills? (Cf. *The Bantu Are Coming* and *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*.)
- II. What is an adequate rural program of missions?

Note that the experiments here described fall under one or more of three types:

Agricultural development more or less specialized and technical.

Educational plans for raising the general level of rural intelligence.

The "rural reconstruction unit" for raising all aspects of rural life concertedly.

After all, the experiments here recorded are few and far between. How extensive and numerous do you think they should be in the missions of tomorrow?

JUNGLES PREFERRED

The Journal of a Christian Doctor

Do you regard Dr. Miller as a successful missionary? as an ideal one? Why or why not?

Judging from her experiences what importance in a missionary's personality would you assign to a sense of humor? a sense of beauty? matter-of-factness? objectivity of outlook on life? sheer human kindness? religious beliefs? loneliness?

Evaluate the culture of this African tribe in terms of pain, happiness, self-expression and social cohesion. If you became autocratic chieftain of it, what would you do to exterminate its evil and yet preserve its good?

Is the tribal life here pictured typical of most mission fields today?

What changes are rapidly overtaking this kind of life? (Compare this picture with that of *The Bantu Are Coming.*)

A SUPPLEMENTARY LIST

of

BOOKS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

A Son of China, by Sheng-Cheng. \$3.00.

A charmingly written autobiography showing incidentally the swift influx of modern social forces into the life of a middle class Chinese family.

Behind Mud Walls, by C. V. and W. H. Wisner. \$1.50.

A sympathetic view of an Indian village by sociologically trained missionaries who found that they could serve the village only by living inwoven with its corporate life.

Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas, by C. F. Andrews. \$3.00.

An intimate interpretation of the Hindu saint through whom the world of today is being publicly brought to judgment before the mind of Christ.

Mimosa, by Amy Wilson Carmichael. \$1.00.

The spiritual biography of an Indian woman who, with only a glimpse in childhood of the Christian faith, found God increasingly real through a simple and bitter life.

On the Edge of the Primeval Forest, by Albert Schweitzer. \$2.00.

The daily journal of the unique doctor of music, doctor of divinity and doctor of medicine. More practical and technical than *Jungles Preferred*.

Trailing the Conquistadores, by S. G. Inman. (Paper.) 60 cents.

The romantic and realistic story of white imperialism—political, commercial and religious—in Latin America.

World Revolution and Religion, by Paul Hutchinson. \$2.00.

A picture of the contemporary break-up of traditional thought and conduct for those who are ready to see it under a ruthless microscope.

NOTE: Any book in the course or on the supplementary list may be secured before December 31, 1931, at 10% below the list price, from

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