



CHRIST'S WORLD VISION

by Dr. J. C. Stern
in "Life of Faith"

When our Lord Jesus said, "Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest," his words pass beyond the group of Samaritans making their way across the fields toward Him. Indeed, His vision went out to the world's last horizon of space and time; for He was the Son of God, whose life and love encompassed all and each within the scope of "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Here, then, is his plea. "Lift up your eyes." It is both an urgent and a present-day plea. A Canadian farmer once told me that when a field is white, it is **over-ripe!** Surely this plea of Christ calls us to lift up our eyes—from our social life to a sorrowing world. Isaiah 59:16. "And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." Psalm 142:4, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." The undertone of the world's sorrow is ever in His heart, while our social life often blinds our eyes to a world's urgent need. Hunger, homelessness, superstition, fear, hopelessness, death without ray of light or hope, in Africa, India, China, and on all the continents, find small response from a Church which too often "feasts and plays" and is powerless. Unlike the first Church which "fasted and prayed" and in power spread the Gospel through the known world of its day.

Christ's plea calls us to "lift up our eyes" from our service, to a sin-sick world. Revelation 2:19, "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first." We are busy, we are energetic and active at home. Yet "untold millions are still untold!"

In a religious cartoon there is the picture of a minister at his desk. Across his chest is written, "The Church." At a large window is a motley crowd of people of all races calling. "Come over and help us." At the desk, which is strewn with building plans and programmes of projects, stands the figure of his Lord, holding toward him a loaf on which is printed, "The Bread of Life." The Lord is saying to His servant, holding a cup of tea marked "Social Life" in one hand, and the book **How to Make Friends** in the other, answers, "But Lord, can't you see I'm busy!"

Again, Christ's plea calls us to lift up our eyes from our self-life, to the Saviour of the world. "But we see Jesus..." (Heb. 2:9). Looking at Him, we shall see in His eyes the reflection of the world's need which took Him to the undiscovered depths of the Cross. We shall hear Him say, "I gave my life for the life of the world—what are you doing for it?"

Here too is discovered a place. "Look on the fields." You notice it is the fields—not the servants. Too often the only interest in the mission field which a church or individual has, is some missionary sent forth by them or related in some way to them. Of course, we should have such personal interest. But in the light of His command, "All

nations..." (Matt. 28:19) and "...the uttermost part..." (Acts 1:8), surely we are called to the vision of the lost, the helpless, the needs of all fields.

The fields—not the service. "I am debtor..." cries Paul (Rom. 1:14). So are we. And our eyes must be lifted beyond an interest in what missionaries are doing, to the cause and claims of their going. Urgency is only localised if limited to a hospital, leprosarium, or local station; important as such interest is.

The fields—not a section. "God so loved the world." Now, of course, it is important not to generalise in such a way that we become vague. Yet, may it not be that we tend to become selfish if our eyes only look upon one sphere without noting its relation to the whole need. Someone has said that, if our heart is less than 25,000 miles in circumference, it is too small!

What is The Prospect here disclosed? "They are white already to harvest." Ah! yes! Over-ripe, and hastening to a lost eternity at the rate of at least eighty-three per minute. They are awaiting sacrificial lives. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14). Are we living in the light of "we never had it so good," or "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring..." (John 10:16), and "whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, shall save it" (Mark 8:34)?

They are awaiting sacrificial prayer and giving. "But when He saw the multitudes. He was moved with compassion... Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest..." (Matt 9:36, 38). "Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee" (Luke 10:35). Are we praying with the urgency and the burden that He had and desires in us? What more have we spent beyond what we have in our known reserves for Him and His lost ones?

Surely, too, they are awaiting sacrificial vision. It costs to lift up our eyes... Or, are we of those who "cannot see afar off" (2 Pet. 1:9), since it would cost too much to look through God's telescope? Is our vision the limited vision of bi-focals instead of binoculars?

"Lift up your eyes—look on the fields—white already to harvest."

DARE WE ASK AGAIN?

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imperative of the Greek verb: "Ever be filled with the Spirit."

To seek a fresh infilling of the Spirit is a sign of spiritual normalcy. The "hunger and thirst" may indeed be brought on by the proddings of the Spirit over some failure or disobedience. Then a confession is necessary before one prays for the new infilling, for "God has given (the Holy Spirit) to those who practice obedience to Him" (Acts 5:32, Williams).

Suffer a word of exhortation. Pastors and fellow believers, let us pray for and expect a fresh infilling of the Spirit. Not for the excitement or satisfaction of it. Never. We need that fulness for life and service, of course, but God means that the proper longings of the heart for Himself be satisfied. Power in service is dependent on peace and satisfaction in heart.

Let us proclaim this truth: "Ever be filled with the Spirit." Some churches offer communion of the Lord's Supper every Sunday. Perhaps once a month we could open the altar for Christians to come and be filled with the Spirit. This is the communion of the Holy Spirit spoken of in the New Testament. A Christian might receive this fulness alone in prayer, of course, but have

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