

## CHAPTER V

### What Is the Apostolic Gospel?

“THE indifference of great masses of men today to dogma,” writes Mr. Edwin Bevan in the *International Review of Missions*, “while they still reverence Christian ethical ideals, is something which confronts the friends of missions with a problematic situation.” He then goes on to show, in his article entitled *The Apostolic Gospel*, that any attempt to get away from apostolic dogma and go back to Jesus simply as the revealer of moral value is an impossibility.

We must either accept the apostolic interpretation of Christianity or give up any attempt to set Jesus on an eminence above all other good men. The old cry “Back to Christ” often means “away from Paul and his teaching.” The Sermon on the Mount, however, is not the earliest Christian document. If we consider the chronology of the New Testament books, it is a striking fact that the doctrinal epistles,—Galatians, Corinthians, Romans,—were written and circulated among the churches before the Good News was recorded by Mark or Luke. The first letter of Paul to the Corinthians was written 56 A. D.; the common date assigned to Matthew’s Gospel is between 70 and 90 A. D.