

them the proper tone, and even after you have the tones it is hard to imitate the Chinese and speak Chinese. Speaking so as to be understood is the great difficulty. A man may have thoughts enough and words enough to express them, yet fail for a time in getting the most simple ideas conveyed to the minds of the people. Words convey to them an entirely different meaning from that which the missionary intended to give. They are not a religious people, and, consequently, have very few words to express spiritual ideas. A missionary of eighteen years standing in China has said that to get Chinese words to express Christian thoughts, you would first have to split them open, clean them carefully, and refit them with spiritual truth. Then another difficulty presents itself. After one does get a sufficient knowledge of the language to carry him through fairly well, he is disheartened to find that the people have not the slightest interest in the gospel message. Even servants at times despise it by word and act to the missionary's face; and unless a man lives near to God and has a large measure of the Holy Spirit, he will, in a short time, be apt to become sadly discouraged.

The people are naturally curious, and ply foreigners with many trivial questions, yet, strange to say, the gospel message has little interest for them. Even as a story it fails to arouse their curiosity. Their pride and conceit, too, is a serious impediment to the religion of Christ. They have a contempt for everything foreign. Even the dunderhead who cannot read a word, and who could scarcely direct you on your way in tolerable Chinese, regards the foreigner as a crude barbarian. Hence that proverbial conservatism which makes them such bitter opponents of Christianity. Everything goes in the ruts and grooves which the centuries have marked out. Men think as their ancestors thought, and act as they acted; consequently, China is to-day one of the most unprogressive nations in the world. Another impediment is the mercenary spirit of the people. They are a cash-loving people. Cash is their thoughts by day and their dreams by night. Were there more money in the gospel service there would soon be multitudes of Chinese in the Church. Notwithstanding these great difficulties, the situation in China at present is encouraging. Missionaries who have been there for twenty or thirty years speak hopefully. Christianity is making progress. Its influence is already felt in many quarters. Churches are to be met with in different places. Christian schools are to be found too. A Christian literature is accumulating, and western science will gradually come in as well.