

Editorial and Contributed

Abstract of the Annual Report

OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH
FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30TH, 1895.

"IF our religion is not true," said Archbishop Whately, "we are bound to change it; if it is true, we are bound to propagate it." Truer words were never spoken, and in the last half of the sentence we have the justification of all missionary effort. Christianity is true, divinely true, and its very truth puts an imperative obligation upon all its professors to propagate it. There is no obligation, legal or moral, to propagate falsehood, but there is an obligation which cannot be gainsaid to propagate the truth. It is vain to talk of Christianity as one religion among many. There is but one religion properly so called,—the religion of Jesus the Christ; and the efforts we make to extend its sway will be the exact measure of our own faith in it. He who is destitute of the missionary spirit does not believe his own religion.

We have reached in these closing years of the nineteenth century an epoch in the progress of the world's evangelization. Motives that have stimulated Christian endeavor in the past—the propagation of a creed, the establishing of a church, the civilization of a tribe, pity for the heathen, or the like—are all giving place, or rather they are being dominated, by one grand imperial idea, "The World for Christ." This is now the battle cry of a true evangelism, and as it sounds forth with ever-increasing power, it blends with the words of the Divine idea, "Christ for the World." Christianity is no longer blind devotion to a creed, or slavish submission to a hierarchy; it is loving loyalty to the King eternal, immortal, invisible." But loyalty means obedience, and obedience means that we preach his Gospel "to every creature." A consuming passion for the glory of Christ, for His exaltation and kingship, is becoming more and more the hope and inspiration of those who pray, "Thy kingdom come!"

To some extent, we believe, this spirit pervades the Methodism of to-day, but there is urgent need that it be deepened and extended. We have elaborate machinery, but "the Spirit of the Living Creatures" must be "in the wheels." We have able and devoted missionaries, but they need to be "endued with power from on high." We have a loyal people, but they have yet to learn the deepest meaning of that truth, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are his." The need of the hour is not to plead with men for money, nor for laborers to go to the mission field, but rather to plead with God for the coming of another Pentecost, flooding the hearts of ministers and people alike with light, and love, and power. Then shall the consecration of our substance be a willing service, and those who go forth with the Gospel message will be baptized with tongues of flame.

The field of our foreign work has presented during the past year some marked and even startling features.

In view of the armed struggle between Japan and China, and the effect of the war-spirit upon all classes in Japan, it was feared that our work in the Sunrise Land would suffer, and that it would not be surprising should the year be marked by a serious decline in the membership. It will be a cause of gratitude to all friends of the mission that, instead of a loss, there is a net gain of eighty-nine, and that most of the missionaries write in a hopeful, confident spirit with regard to the future. The reactionary tide that set in so strongly three or four years ago has passed the flood and is now receding; the favorable attention of not a few who were hitherto indifferent or openly hostile, has been won; and in many places there are inquirers and candidates for baptism, showing that the leaven of the Gospel is silently working, and inspiring the hope that at no very distant day the whole mass will be leavened. It is sincerely hoped

that the friction which has occurred among some of our own workers will speedily be allayed, and that hereafter the work will proceed without let or hindrance.

But it is in our West China Mission that the most startling events have occurred. Letters and newspaper despatches have made the Church familiar with the terrible experiences through which our missionaries in China have recently passed. By the mercy of an over-ruling Providence they all escaped with their lives, but with the loss of their personal belongings, and the entire destruction of the mission property in Chen-tu and Kiating.

The circumstances under which our China mission began seemed to be so strikingly providential, and the reports of the missionaries from time to time were so full of hope and cheer, that we all were looking for a most successful work in Sz-Chuen. By many, perhaps, the tidings of destruction to mission property and the expulsion of the missionaries, will be regarded as a calamity of no ordinary magnitude, and some may even regard it as proof that in entering China we ran before we were sent. Such a thought would be most unwise. God makes no mistakes. When we entered China we followed His beckoning hand; and if it is part of His plan that we should suffer apparent defeat for a time, it is only that a more glorious triumph may crown the work in the end. God not only rules, He over-rules, and in these as in other seemingly adverse circumstances, He can make the wrath of man to praise Him, and turn defeat into victory. Let no one for one moment lose faith in our China mission. It will rise from the ashes of this fiery persecution brighter and stronger than before, and the untoward circumstances of the present will be found to be among the "all things" that "work together for good." Meanwhile let us give unstinted sympathy and encouragement to our noble missionaries who stood at their post, until to stay longer would have been sheer madness. Even now they are waiting and watching for an opportunity to return to the very city from which they were driven out. Such faith must be rewarded. "In due season" they "shall reap if they faint not."

Among the Chinese on the Pacific Coast the work has been steadily carried on with encouraging results. During the early summer a number of our missionaries concentrate their energies among the thousands of Indians and Chinamen who flock to the Salmon canneries on the Fraser, and seed is sown that will doubtless spring up in days to come. A most interesting feature of the work on the Coast, is the conversion of a number of Japanese, chiefly through the labors of one of their own countrymen, who, without fee or reward has been preaching the Gospel "in demonstration of the Spirit and with power." This work should be taken more directly under the fostering care of the Church.

In connection with the Indian work on the Port Simpson District, a new problem presents itself by the coming in of the Salvation Army, not, it would seem, to preach to heathen for whom no man cared, but to "build upon another man's foundation," with the result of dividing the Indians, many of whom are too ready to fall into religious extravagances, and to count themselves wiser than their teachers. Much good to the Indians both in British Columbia and the North-West has resulted from the operation of Industrial Institutes. The Institute at Chilliwack is full, and promises well; the orphanage at Morley is successful, but needs increased accommodation; Red Deer Institute should also be enlarged to accommodate one hundred pupils. After years of vexatious delay the Brandon Institute building has been completed and opened, and good results are anticipated. While at Muncey, our oldest training school, a much needed new building is approaching completion, and this will enable the principal and his assistants to do still better work.

In the department of Home Missions there is nothing of special interest to report, beyond the fact that the work is being steadily prosecuted, and many souls have been converted. The French evangelistic work presents no new developments, but the Institute at Montreal is rendering useful service, the best results of which may not be seen just at once. The Board mourns the loss of the esteemed Principal, the Rev. Wm. Hall, M.A., who labored so faithfully to make the Institute a success; but they rejoice in the fact that they have been able to retain Mrs. Hall as