

Missionary World.

A LETTER FROM CHINA.

[Through the kindness of Mrs. John Gowan, of Gloucester Street, in this city, we are enabled to give our readers the pleasure of reading the accompanying most interesting letter from Rev. James A. Slimmon, of our Honan mission.—ED.]

DEAR FRIEND,—I now redeem the promise I made to write a letter to be read at your meeting, and expect you to remember the conditions which were made, that is that I will only write one letter in return for one letter received. Objections have been made to societies wishing to correspond personally with foreign missionaries on the ground that the extra labour involved would be burdensome to the missionary; but I waive that objection, because I feel that the results which I expect to flow from such correspondence, namely, increased interest in our work, and prayers on our behalf, will more than compensate for the time taken in writing these letters. If our work on the field is to be successful we must have increased prayer by those who are God's remembrancers. All will admit that only the power of the Holy Spirit is sufficient to bring a soul to God, and this power will be with the missionary just in proportion as it is sought from God in believing prayer. When I think of the thousands of Bibles and tracts that have been scattered broadcast in China, and the numberless sermons that are preached every week, and consider how small the visible results have been hitherto, I feel that the explanation is that there has not been sufficient prayer; there has been plenty speaking to men on God's behalf, but not enough speaking to God on men's behalf. Now, this is perhaps the most important part of the work, and a part that can be engaged in by all alike; the youngest child who has been taught to pray in the Spirit can here accomplish as great results as the most advanced Christian, indeed, there seems to be special reason to think that the prayers of the little ones whose "angels do always behold the face of God" "avail much."

So now to proceed, let me tell you of a visit I recently made to one of our sub-stations, a place called Hsiao Chai, that translated is "Little Fort."

Rev. W. H. Grant and I were appointed to go there on Sabbath, June 30th, to baptize some converts, but as Mr. Grant was at Ch'u Wang on that date, and could not come down because the roads were flooded with water, I had therefore to go alone, though, if I had wanted an excuse for not going, the state of the roads would have furnished one although they were not so bad between Little Fort and here, as they were on the Ch'u Wang road, still, as they were flooded with from two to three feet of water they might have been considered impassable, but I thought it would be a pity to disappoint those who were waiting to be baptized. There is a chapter in "The Sticket Minister" that tells of a Scotch minister from Galloway that had a service to hold, and his text was, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," and describes how he went through storm and flood to hold the service. I come from very nearly that part of Scotland myself, and thought I would do as my countryman had done, so I hired a man with a wheelbarrow to carry my bedding, etc., and off we started.

I had to walk barefoot nearly all the way wading through the water; I don't think I would have minded that much, although it is not quite as comfortable as travelling in a Pullman, but when I found that the water was infested with horse-leeches it took all the courage I possessed to go on, for all my life long I have had a perfect horror of leeches; one of my most ordinary forms of nightmare is to dream of leeches eating their way into the souls of my feet. The natives told me that there was no danger if I kept moving, which I did in quite a lively style, but the nervous strain was pretty severe.

In spite of all our endeavors I don't think we would have reached our destination that week (we started on Friday morning) if God had not gone before and prepared the way. It was so evidently arranged by Him that I will tell you about it, that you may see how He looks after His servants. At sundown we reached Hwa Hsien a city about six miles from our destination. When we had passed through the busy part of the city and were approaching the further gate, I proposed that we have a rest and drink some of China's national beverage. So we stopped at a tea shop. Soon a crowd gathered around to stare at the foreigner. Amongst the crowd was a very intelligent looking man who politely entered into conversation. He asked where we were going, and having informed him, he then asked whom we were going to see. I did not want to go into particulars with him, so replied that we were going to put up at one of the inns and preach. Then he asked, "Are you not going to see Mr. Wang (this is one of the brightest of the inquirers in Little Fort)?" and being answered in the affirmative, he asked if we knew that there was one of Mr. Wang's friends in the city, and if we would like to see him. We replied that we would like very much to see the friend, but did not know where to look for him, on which he at once volunteered to go and look for him, and off he went, and soon returned with one of the men that I was to baptize. Now, if it had not been for this man, who guided us through the dark to the village, and helped to carry the barrow bodily over the deeper pools, we would not have got there that night, and as it rained all day on Saturday travelling would have been impossible. It was fair on Sabbath, but we do not travel on the day of rest. On Monday it rained again, so that but for the provision God had made in detaining this man in the city we could not have reached our destination before Wednesday. Even with his help it was long after dark when we arrived, and I was all but exhausted, having travelled at least twenty miles. As we approached the first house inside the gate, my ear caught the sound of voices singing a familiar hymn. In an instant all my fatigue was forgotten. I commenced to sing the hymn and could hardly keep from dancing. When we reached the door I peeped in and saw several people on their knees engaged in prayer; it was Mr. Wang and his friends just closing evening worship. Within an hour the news had spread through the village that I had come, and when the friends had gathered we joined together in having a praise service. Then we sat talking till near midnight, and it was not till I awoke next morning to find myself stiff and sore all over that I remembered how tired I had been. Saturday was spent in getting acquainted with the friends as this was my first visit. On Sabbath forenoon I baptized the six men that had been accepted, and if that ancient king who offered such large rewards to anyone who would invent a new pleasure were living now, I could tell him of a pleasure he never enjoyed, and one worth all his other pleasure put together, and that is to see precious souls delivered from Satan and joined to the Body of Christ. My feelings so overcame me that I could hardly pronounce the words we use in administering the rite of baptism, and when we proceeded to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper I wept outright. Jesus was all but visibly present to me, and it was His joy that I was sharing. Oh the wonderful, wonderful goodness of God in making us feel low-workers with himself, and thus enabling us to enter into His joy. The rest of the day was spent in happy fellowship, and holding open-air meetings. We continued these open-air meetings on Monday, and the natives took part freely. One of the brightest and most straightforward testimonies I ever listened to was that borne by an old man who had been schoolmaster in that village for three generations.

"If you want proof of this doctrine," he cried, "look at me. I am no longer a Confucianist. I now worship the God on whom

Confucius was dependent as all men are. I was once dead in sin, now I am alive. Once my heart was burdened and sorrowful, now I am smiling all the time. Why? Because God has taken away my sins." Then he went on to tell how God had delivered him from opium-smoking, with so complete a deliverance that all desire for it even was taken away. He had submitted himself to be tested by some friends who doubted his deliverance, and as a test asked him to sit by them while they smoked; he did so, and when they saw that he could do that without wanting to smoke, they believed that he was indeed delivered.

There are many more interesting facts that one could relate about the converts in this village, but I must not make my letter too long else I shall weary you, and take up too much of my own time in doing so; but I am sure this is not the last you will hear of Little Fort, for the church there promises to be a strong and healthy one. One sign of this is the desire that some of the children show for being taught. The last night I was there I sat under a tree with several little boys round me teaching them to sing "Jesus loves me," and a little way off a group of girls were singing in their hearts, because it would not have been proper Chinese etiquette for them to have joined the boys, but I knew by the keenly interested expression on their faces and sometimes by a movement of the lips that while seemingly they were only observers they were really as eager to learn as the boys were, and in all probability were learning much more correctly and more quickly than the boys.

Now, goodbye, for the present. Don't forget to pray for Little Fort, and for,

Yours sincerely in Christ,

JAMES A. SLIMMON

Hsin Chen, Honan, July 13, '95.

PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

Rev. Murray McCheyne: Oh! how sweet it is to work all day with God, and then lie down at night beneath His smile.

Young Men's Era: However busy we may be, God will not work a miracle to save us from spiritual degeneration if we neglect our private devotions.

Golden Rule: How are the brawn and brain gained in the summer vacation to be expended? Will they be spent in lifting burdens and solving problems for Christ?

Presbyterian Messenger: Sympathies that are not exercised shrivel into selfishness. The heart that will not aspire loses its aspiration. The soul that will not see God, grows blind.

Ram's Horn: He who neglects a present duty lays a forbidding image on the impressionable negative of omitted opportunity and will find the upbraiding picture brought out into clear outline when the acid of memory touches the plate.

Dean Church: Scripture is more terrible in its mysterious reserve about the "wrath to come" than any picture man could paint. There is more pathetic and awful meaning in the one word, "the lost," than in any attempt of ours to expand the thought.

Wm. Ewart Gladstone: No wave on the great ocean of time, when once it has floated past us, can be recalled. All we can do is to watch the new form and motion of the next, and launch upon it to try, in the manner our best judgment may suggest, our strength and skill.

Canadian Baptist: The true teacher will see that his own best interests and his highest success in the profession lie in exactly parallel lines, and demand of him constant effort to reach the highest standard of intelligence, in the clearness and calmness of his mental and moral judgments and in probity of character and nobleness of aim.

Christian Endeavor.

HOW MAY OUR SOCIETY DO BETTER WORK?

REV. W. S. M. TAVISH, B.D., DESERONTO.

(A meeting to consider the work of each committee, led by the President.)

Oct. 13.—Gal vi 6-10

It is impossible to deal with this topic except in the most general fashion, for the reason that we do not know what is lacking in the individual societies. In one the Look-out Committee may be inactive, and if we were presiding over such a society, we would try to emphasize the importance of looking after those who have become careless, and of keeping an eye open for strangers. If in another, little or no provision were made for the conduct of the prayer meeting, it would be manifestly the duty of the society in conference to see that more attention was paid to that department by the Prayer Meeting Committee. The individual society will therefore have to determine for itself what feature of its work needs special attention and consideration.

But we can all do better work if we pray more. The motto of Luther should be kept in mind by every endeavorer:—"Bene orasse est bene studuisse." "To have prayed well is to have studied well." It is often better to pray for the members of a committee than to give them advice. They perhaps know perfectly well what to do; what they require is unction, stimulus from above, and these are most likely to come in answer to earnest, united prayer.

It might be an improvement to introduce more personal testimonies. We have no great love for a Church gone to tongue, but a certain amount of speaking is necessary, and no form of speech could be more convincing than the relating of personal experience. But the testimony should be not a mere form of words, but a true recital of what we have actually thought and felt. If we desire to procure a model we can find it in the Psalms (Ps. xxxiv. 1; cxvi. 1-4; xvii. 18). What could be more convincing than such a statement as this, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Ps. xxxiv. 6)? It is certainly well to have Scriptural references bearing upon the topic; but this, good as it is, might be varied by a little up-to-date personal experience. Try it.

Perhaps better work might be done if there were more individual effort. There seems to be a danger in these days of placing too much dependence upon the work of organization, and too little upon the work of the individual. Too often when it becomes apparent that a certain evil must be checked, a meeting is called, an organization formed, a committee appointed to report at a later stage, and the result is that individual responsibility is shirked, and little or nothing is accomplished. There appears to be a feeling abroad that no really great work can be done until a certain degree of enthusiasm has been wrought up in a convention. Shammah might have called a convention to devise ways and means of defending a patch of lentils belonging to the Israelites. But he knew better. While he was getting the preliminaries arranged the Midianites would have come down again and looted his crop. So, instead of waiting to have a committee appointed, he went down alone, and, taking his stand there in God's name, he defended his property, and the Lord wrought a great victory. We believe that more and better work might be done if less dependence were placed on committees, organizations, or conventions and more upon individual effort. We may catch a little enthusiasm at conventions, but how would it be to try to catch it where Moses caught it—on the mount of God? How would it be to try to find it where the disciples found it—on the mount with Christ? Where could greater enthusiasm be found than was manifested by Elijah on Mount Carmel? So far as we can learn, this was the first convention he ever attended, but he was inspired with zeal for it in the wilderness before he went. David was sufficiently enthusiastic when on his way to fight Goliath, but the fervid glow was seen then because he had been so much alone with God. We do not despise conventions, but we wish to emphasize the fact that even though we cannot attend a great one we can be loyal to God and do valiant service for Him.