

Missionary World.

THE CHINESE MISSIONARY PROBLEM.

BY REV. JOHN ROSS, MOOKDEN, NORTH CHINA.

[At the suggestion of a lady deeply interested in the mission work of our church, a most competent judge of what is timely in our church's present circumstances as to its missions, and holding a high position in the W.F.M.S. of our church, we gladly, not only reprint the subjoined article from the *Missionary Review of the World* for December, 1890, but we earnestly commend the views it sets forth to the earnest attention of the church.—ED.]

In the confusion arising from the conflicting opinions bandied about as to the value of mission work and the wisdom of missionary methods, men's minds have been diverted from the aspect of that mission-problem which appears to me, as a practical missionary, to be, beyond all others, important. The materialistic spirit of the age is the only apology I can conceive for the extraordinary attitude assumed by many of the representatives of the wealthy Christian churches on the questions of the income, housing, clothing and food of the missionary, while they ignore, or treat as a matter of indifference, the qualifications of the man, and show a lamentable ignorance of the work he has to carry on.

In order to satisfactorily undertake any work, and to wisely select the best workers, we must understand the nature of the work and the conditions under which it is to be conducted. What then, is the work the Church of Christ has to accomplish in China? It is the introduction of Christianity to a people which was an ancient nation when Nebuchadnezzar was building the walls of his proud Babylon, which was highly cultivated when the Romans found our forefathers savages, and which, even as recently as three centuries ago, was more civilized than their contemporaneous European nations. The Chinese are a proud, conservative, self-sufficing, intellectual and learned race. They have the religious system of Buddhism—not the attenuated ghost believed in by some eccentric London folks—but this religion exercises no real authority over them, and the system of Taoism possesses a still more shadowy power. But the ethical and political system called Confucianism wields an unchallengable influence over the whole land, and among all classes—an influence comparable only to that of Moses over Jewry. The authority of Confucianism is so universally paramount because of its high-toned system of morals, the excellence of its maxims on the relations between governor and governed, and the remarkable purity and unapproachable terseness of its literary style.

It may be taken for granted that before a non-Christian people is likely to pay any regard to the preaching of a stranger, he must gain their confidence and command their respect. It is also evident that what is adequate to secure the respect of one nationality may appear despicable in the estimation of another. From what I have been able to learn of the world's nations—excepting the Jews and Mohammedans, whose knowledge of religious truth is more extensive and accurate than that of any other non-Christian people, no nationality is so difficult to gain over to Christianity as the Chinese. Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and other surrounding peoples, borrowed from the Chinese their literature, their manners, their arts, laws, customs, and whatever other factors went to compose their present civilization. All borrowed from China, none lent to her. Hence, if we consider the self-complacent pride of the Chinese—a somewhat unpleasant and repellant characteristic—we can scarcely deny it a basis of justification.

Knowledge of literature and literary ability is the most highly prized acquisition in China. Civil service competitive examinations have for twelve centuries been the means of filtering out candidates for official

employment. To this proud, conservative people, who so highly esteem knowledge and attach such importance to literature, what sort of man will you send to gain them over to Christianity? What must that man be who will command their attention, and compel from a contemptuous people a respectful hearing for the doctrines of the Cross?

The number of those who have gone forth to combat the evil inherent in heathenism, is so insignificant compared to those who minister to congregations in Christian lands, that some good people are in despair of overtaking, by ordinary methods, the needs of the world. But the argument based upon the comparative number of missionaries and ministers is fallacious. The missionary is not a pastor and should never sink into one. The work which he goes to perform is very different from the work of the pastorate. The missionary is the modern representative of the Apostles. He is the only real successor of the Apostles. If the name "apostle" is Greek, and the name "missionary" Latin, there is no difference in the signification of the terms. The "apostle" was the "sent" of the Church and Holy Spirit—sent from a Christian community to gather in converts, plant churches and raise up pastors among non-Christian peoples. So is now the "missionary" the "sent" of the Church and of the Holy Spirit, to accomplish exactly the same purpose. Though the work of gathering in a few converts is his first, and though the duty of ministering to them is one the neglect of which would be criminal, yet these do not constitute the most important parts of his missionary life. His great work is, like that of the Apostles, to found churches, and to train pastors; not to plant a tree which is to stand alone, but to s. w seed which will become self-propagating. The proportion, therefore, of missionaries to the numbers of the people to whom they are sent, is a matter of very subordinate consequence. The one outstanding subject which should demand the most serious attention of all interested in mission work, which should indeed hold so largely in their esteem that every other consideration should be relegated to a position of comparative unimportance, is the qualifications of the man sent. The question which should, like Moses' rod, swallow up every other, is whether you send the men who are in all respects the best fitted for the end in view: that of gaining the confidence and respect of the people, of planting churches and raising and training pastors.

All the more important will this subject appear when it is stated that the Chinese people must be brought within the Christian fold by Chinese converts. It may be taken as axiomatic that every successful mission in China has been successful in proportion to the earnestness, knowledge and zeal of its first converts. In our own Manchurian mission, out of a hostile population, over a thousand converts have been baptized. Many thousands know and respect the doctrines of Christianity. The work of preaching the Gospel is widely spread and rapidly extending in all directions over this large district of country. The literary classes are many of them our best friends, and officials have, in most cases, ceased opposition. Within the past eight years, a couple of hundred of the inhabitants of Korea have been baptized. A congregation has been formed in the Korea capital. Thousands of Koreans are reported to be believers and applicants for baptism. How have these results been attained within little more than a dozen years? Of all these converts not more than a couple of dozen can be traced to the immediate agency of the foreign missionary. The others are the converts of converts. The only claim to credit—if it be one—which the European can make, is that of careful and constant instruction of the converts. And it may be noted, by the way, that here is the only satisfactory method of attaining to really cheap missions.

(To be continued.)

CHARACTERISTIC SAYINGS OF D. L. MOODY.

Rest: You may, probe down into the human heart, and there you will find a want—the desire for rest. The cry of the world is, where can rest be found? He would reply that the world cannot give it. Rest could be found at the cross. He liked that word "all" in the text. "Come unto Me *all* ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Ashamed of their Religion: There is no religion except that of Jesus Christ, that men are ashamed of—Mormons, Chinese, Mohammedans, all were proud of their religions. But of the religion of Jesus, the only one that gives men power over their lives, over their passions, over themselves, many were ashamed. The cross of Christ must be taken up by all who wished to enter heaven. If men wanted blessing they must confess the Son of God. The moment men were ashamed to confess their God they became backsliders. Peter fell when he was ashamed to confess his God.

Mr. Moody's Style of Speaking: The characteristic of his speaking is its conversational tone and style, and the plain, everyday way in which he applies the Scriptures to the present occasion.

God's Work and the Christian's Work: There was a class of people who said that whatever was accomplished was because of divine direction, that it was God's work, the power of the Holy Ghost, but Christians should act as if everything depended upon themselves.

The Necessity for Faith: "We must have faith; we cannot do anything for God that will be acceptable without faith. The men and women that have left the deepest impression during the six thousand years that man has been upon the earth have been men, and women of faith. Not only must we have faith to be able to know that God can use us to build up His kingdom, but we want to take a step in advance of that kind of faith, and believe that God will use us."

Enthusiasm: Enthusiasm is what we want in Christian work. We want to carry the fire right up into the pulpit, and if we have not got the fire and enthusiasm into the pulpit we won't have it in the pew.

Love: An indispensable qualification for success in Christian work, is love. A lawyer might have no love for his client, a doctor for his patient, or a merchant for his customer, but a successful Christian worker must have love for his fellow-men. Preaching professionally without love would accomplish little good. He did not believe so many men would break down if the love of Christ were stronger in their hearts. There was not a man on the face of the earth but that love would reach, even if he were an infidel.

Types of Christians. There are three types of Christians mentioned in the Bible. In the third chapter of St. John Nicodemus comes to Jesus for spiritual life, and he obtained it. In the fourth chapter of St. John a higher type of Christian was found—the woman of Samaria, who came for a pot of water and got a whole well full. In the seventh chapter of St. John the highest type of the Christian is found—the type of whom Christ spoke when He said: "He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly (viz., his heart) shall flow rivers of living water."

Going to Church and Being a Christian: Many people thought that because they went regularly to church they were saved. They forgot that Satan went regularly, too. He was always the first one there. He got there even before it was dedicated. It was not by going out to his or her church meetings, having their feelings wrought upon, shedding a few tears, and making good resolutions—this was not being a Christian.

Teacher and Scholar.

Dec. 9th 1894. } CHRIST TEACHING BY PARABLES { Luke viii. 4-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Luke viii. 11.

A parable means a form of instruction in which by the side of the truth is placed the image or figure which represents it. This whole group of parables is found in Matthew xiii. 1-53; iv. 1-34; Luke viii. 4-25. They treat of the kingdom of heaven in various aspects and should be read and studied together.

The Time.—Autumn of A.D. 28, a few weeks after last lesson, and on the afternoon of same day as lesson viii., November 25th, Mark. iii. 22-35, or Matthew xiii. 1.

Place.—On the shore of the sea of Galilee, near Capernaum.

A new epoch in the teaching of Jesus begins with this teaching by parables of which this is the first recorded. It is a change of method on account of a change of circumstances.

The Audience.—It was very large; Mark, "A very great multitude, and gathered from all quarters." He was by the sea and taught out of a boat while the people stood before him on a gently rising shore. For clearness we put the parable, then the explanation.

"A sower went out to sow his seed." The subject was probably suggested by Jesus seeing a sower at work not far off. Sowers are Jesus, the apostles, all Christian ministers, teachers and parents who seek to impart instruction in divine things, and all others whose holy lives illustrate and impress the truth. Young people may be sowers as well as old.

The sower sows only good seed; he sows it abundantly, and, though mostly in spring time, yet whenever there is opportunity. The seed is the word of God. This is that from which Christian character and life must grow.

I. The Wayside Hearers.—The wayside: the narrow paths beaten by the tread of many feet through the unfenced fields upon which some of the seed falls. Hearers whose hearts are like the beaten wayside do not take the word into their heart and life. Sin has so hardened their heart, worldliness has so deadened the feelings, sinful pleasures and desires have so dulled the conscience that God's truth makes no impression, more than a passing dream, or a pleasant song to be heard and forgotten. Evil habits, profanity, unclean thoughts tramp the heart and make it hard. Then cometh the devil and taketh away the Word out of their hearts. He does this in many ways, by evil thoughts, indifference, triviality, selfish interests, doubts, criticism more than reverent attention, and such like, are the means by which he taketh away the Word out of the heart. The devil's object is lest they should believe and be saved. Anyone conscious of these occupying his attention and filling his heart may know that the devil is at work with him, lest he should believe and be saved. It is a dangerous state to be in.

II. The Rocky-ground Hearer.—As soon as the seed sprang up, in this case, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. The soil in many places in Palestine is but a thin coating over the limestone rock, so that it is like a forcing-house, but it has no deepness of earth; when the sun is risen it is scorched, and because it has no root it withers away. These are they, who when they hear receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. They are in a state of great emotional excitement, in great and rapturous delight, have much to say of their feelings, but they have no root. Perhaps they have no depth of nature to take root in, or if they have the Word, has not taken any real hold in it. And in time of temptation, of affliction, or persecution, or trial from the sneers of scoffers, or apparent loss of worldly good, or sacrifice of some kind, they fall away, they turn back to their old life. Religion is going to cost too much.

III. The Thorny Ground Hearers.—Some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with the word and choked it. These are they which, when they have heard the word, go forth, and are choked with cares of this life, business, household duties, children, anxieties about this life, getting on in the world, riches, pursuit of them, desire or determination to possess them, absorbing the whole attention: and pleasures of this life, they are very many, appeal to every side of our nature, are very seductive, and bind us down to this world, ensnare and enslave us, pre-occupy and divide our thoughts, so that we bring no fruit to perfection. The life if Christian at all is poor, weak, graces are few and feeble, and work is fitful and unproductive.

IV. The Good Ground Hearers.—In this case the seed springs up, and bears fruit a hundred fold. In Matt. and Mk., some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold. These are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. The honest and good heart takes the word seriously, feels the importance of it, and gives it an abiding place. In the good ground there are different degrees of fruitfulness, but the seed is neither choked, nor is its growth a temporary outburst. They bring forth fruit with patience, persevere, earnest, steadfast care in cherishing the good seed, opposing, overcoming, all the enemies that would destroy the good seed of the Word and spoil the harvest of good, upright, earnest Christian living and holy, fruitful activity.

NOTE. What different results come from the same seed, according to the soil. The wonderful productiveness of the good seed of the Word. The conditions of a good harvest, are good seed, good soil, good care. The harvest of good or evil amounts to much more than the seed sown. How full of instruction God's word is to those who try to understand it.