

Missionary World.

A LETTER FROM FORMOSA.

This letter from Mr. Gauld, although long, is so very interesting an account of the condition of the work amongst the Pepohoans in the East Coast of Formosa, that we give it in full:

DEAR MR. MCKAY: I do not know how frequently I am expected to write the Committee. If I am too dilatory you will have to bring me to time. We feel very grateful to the Committee for their clear, and, to us, most satisfactory ruling as to the tenure of mission property in North Formosa.

The San-Kiat-a-koe chapel case is not settled yet, but H.B.M. Acting Consul is pushing it as fast as he can. The last offer from the Gi-lan magistrate was more satisfactory than the one previous, but we think he still offers much too little in compensation for the chapel materials destroyed by a mob. We asked \$135.50, he offers \$15.80. Still he offers in exchange for the disputed chapel site, one which pastor Giam says is more desirable, and which would have been purchased in the first place, had it not been for the greater cost. I shall not burden this letter with his arguments and our reply. He has trumped up a number of objections peculiarly Chinese. We hope for a settlement by and by. In the meantime that the work in this the largest and capital city of the East Coast may not be further delayed, and that the magistrate may see more clearly the futility of trying to keep us out, we have rented a house to serve as a chapel for one year. In the Master's kind directing providence we have had to trouble H.B.M. consul very seldom. I have heard indirectly that our present consul has been speaking with others to this effect. Since Dr. MacKay's departure, the only two cases we have asked him to take charge of were:

(1) That he endeavor to secure the release of the former owner of the chapel property in San-Kiat-a-koe. This man is detained in prison for daring to sell us the property. The consul refused to interfere on the ground that he has no right to interfere between Chinese rulers and their subjects. While admitting the general principle urged, we thought that circumstances made this case an exception. However, the consul decided he could not undertake to help this prisoner; and we accepted the situation, though reluctantly.

(2) Shortly after our failure to obtain the assistance asked for, as stated above, we were informed that in the Southern part of our field a certain small official, together with a number of the district magistrate's constables, were making frequent threats against the Christians, so that many were afraid to attend chapel service. Having good evidence that such was the case, we requested H.B.M. Acting Consul to bring this misconduct to the attention of the district magistrate, and ask him to take measures to prevent recurrence of the same. The consul at once graciously complied, and I believe his assistance has had effect.

In so many respects our Heavenly Father has blessed the feeble efforts of His children here, including native and foreign, all one in Him. Also in so much has He made our lot comfortable and happy, permitting us only a minimum of trouble.

In company with pastor Giam, I started, May 31st, on a trip to the East Coast of the Island. We went round to Kelung by steam launch, there we remained till early next morning. In the evening we had worship, which was attended by between fifty and sixty. Then on the morning of June 1st we left Kelung for our overland trip. Including Kelung we visited twenty-eight chapels, two of which are not yet fully established. I need not follow the trip throughout. It will be better to give a few particulars, together with a few general features, that impressed one visiting this district for the first time.

The Christians on the East Coast are mostly Pepohoans, savages of the plain. These have submitted to Chinese rule, have adopted Chinese customs; but in some re-

spects they are very unlike their conquerors. They are more indolent and improvident than the Chinese. They are also passionately fond of alcoholic drink, while the Chinese are not (the immoderate use of alcohol not being a national vice in China, the use of opium decidedly is). The indolence and improvidence of the Pepohoans, united with their love for strong drink, have made them easy victims of their avaricious, unscrupulous and shrewd neighbors, the Chinese, to whom they have bartered their farms for a glass of wine. As described to me, this was the mode of procedure:—A Chinaman would, pretending friendship, give a company of Pepohoans strong drink in sufficient quantity to make them all drunk and hilarious. When everybody was in high spirits and praising the good heart of the one who stood treat, he seized the opportunity to offer those who had farms an additional quantity of wine, far short of the value of the coveted farm, if they would only hand these farms over to him. The inflamed appetites and stupefied brains invariably acquiesced, a transfer deed was drawn up by the Chinaman, the then unlettered Pepohoans made their marks, received, as told to me, a dollar's worth of "samshoo" for a hundred dollar's worth of land, and thus in the clutches of strong drink lapsed into poverty.

From the beginning of his work among them, Dr. MacKay vigorously preached and enforced temperance, his aim being chiefly to protect the young and rising generation. The result has been very encouraging; while the use of strong drink has not been entirely stamped out, it has been greatly diminished. The Pepohoan, though poor, fishermen and coolies are much more diligent and sober. Christ has also been preached; whole villages have renounced idolatry; and a substantial number have been formally received as members of the church of Christ. The foreigner, going among them for the first time, is delighted with the large number of women to be found in the chapels on occasions of public worship. When the mission and audiences are Chinese, the women are generally few; as the women, I suppose, with the idea of protecting their virtue, are not encouraged to move in public. But in Pepohoan audiences male and female are both well represented. Then again the stranger is impressed with the open countenances and erect figures of the women. But before he is among them long he is both amused and slightly repelled to see them, young and old, smoking cigars, amused at the old ladies, who seem thoroughly to enjoy their smoke. Formerly all smoked, now a number of the girls and young ladies do not. Their cigars are home-made from home-grown and home-dried tobacco, so that the expense is no consideration. I was frequently pressed to take a smoke, good old matrons offering me the cigars from their own mouths, but as it was too much like "taking the bite out of the mouth" of the aged, I invariably declined, with thanks, often adding that it would be better and cheaper if their daughters did not learn to smoke. My argument did not always go unquestioned. Some of these good-natured dames thought the indulgence so harmless that it would be best to allow everyone to please herself. One Sabbath afternoon a kind-hearted old lady (we'll agree that she wasn't among the wisest) offered me a drink of "samshoo." I declined, stating that I did not drink alcoholic liquors and thought it better not. Then, in the evening, I added a short, hastily-prepared temperance address. Pastor Giam followed with another. The people freely admit that strong drink has been their curse.

The Pepohoans live in hamlets; the land on which these are built belongs to themselves, and fortunately for them a decree has been issued prohibiting the Chinese from purchasing these small properties, or in any way taking them from the Pepohoans. However, most of these hamlets are now much weaker numerically than when our missionary first went among them. Many of the people have moved to new districts to open up new country, hoping to gain own farms of their own. The mission has endeavored to follow

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PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

Rev. J. R. Millar: Let young men make themselves ready for positions of trust, and they will be called to the positions at the right time. God's clock is never too slow.

Young Men's Era: The dark things of life are helpful or hurtful according to the use we make of them. A bottle of ink does not brighten the complexion, but it has furnished sunshine to many a soul.

The Outlook: The English-speaking race has the law-abiding instinct in its blood and bone. It will go far under pressure of excitement, but the English-speaking men are few who are ready to become anarchists.

Presbyterian Witness: To be content without God when He is near and may be found is the worst state into which we can fall. It is practical atheism. We ought to dread it as a foretaste of perdition. The soul loses itself that loses God. Seek ye the Lord while He may be found!

The United Presbyterian: The sermon of Jesus in the synagogue of Nazareth was a model. It was so scriptural, and practical, and pointed in its application and illustrations that it produced immediate effects; it moved His hearers to anger. No preaching or teaching is in vain if it arouses men from their indifference.

Philadelphia Presbyterian: Christian feeling should find expression. It should not remain a pent-up force. God has provided for its suitable manifestation in "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs," in prayer, in testimony and in service. Religious sentiment, rightly and truly expressed, has power. It adds greatly to the richness, variety and life of a meeting, but it should be free, spontaneous, sincere and responsive.

Tennessee Methodist: A sudden return to primitive honesty and cleanness and uprightness by the professing Christians of this country would create a shock far more terrific than that of wars or panics or earthquakes, and a commotion or revolution in the social and economic and commercial and financial world would ensue such as the world never witnessed. But what a reign of gospel power and triumph would ensue! Would God the revolution might come!

N.Y. Evangelist: Very many of our churches suffer from the indifferent way those appointed to lead the prayers of the congregation perform this most important office. There can be no question of this, and we suggest to vacant churches to apply a new and closer test to all candidates. Let them secure a faithful report of their prayers during an entire morning service. As a test of fitness to go in and out before a congregation, nothing could be truer and better. And when a people are first helped by the prayers of their pastor, they are sure to be edified by his preaching. No extemporary devotional gift can possibly take the place of due arrangement and devout meditation in advance.

Dr. A. J. Gordon: Is there a God possessed of infinite resources, and are these resources as immediately available for His church as is the invisible electricity for our modern mechanics? One certainly has an ocular demonstration of the reality of the latter force when the street car, by touching the trolley wire with its long iron finger, is seen instantly to move [as though caught in the grip of an unseen giant. God is invisible; how can His power be made distinctly visible? God is a spirit; how can His presence be translated into material form? Man, who conduct great religious enterprises, costing large sums and demanding vast resources, prove His presence by pointing to the strong, steady and unhindered movement of their missionary and philanthropic work; avowing that they have sought aid of no man, but from God alone, and touching Him only with the finger of faith.

Teacher and Scholar.

Nov. 4th] JESUS, LORD OF THE SABBATH. { Mark ii. 1894. 23-28; III 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Mark ii. 28.

Time. Early summer of A.D. 28; about the middle of the second year of Christ's ministry.

Place.—Capernaum, and the fields near by

I. V. 23, 4. A Charge of Sabbath Breaking.—Jesus and His disciples were going to or returning from the synagogue on a Sabbath day, and along with them were some Pharisees who were ever on the watch to find fault if possible. His disciples, Matthew says, were "an hungred." Corn here means grain, so corn-fields means grain-fields. No fences enclosed these fields in Palestine. The disciples began to pluck the ears of corn, (Luke vi. 1) to rub them and to eat. It was allowable (Deut. xxiii. 25) to pluck the ears of grain by hand, but not to use a sickle. It was doing it on the Sabbath which was found fault with. This, according to their interpretation of the Sabbath law, was Sabbath-breaking. On the Sabbath were forbidden reaping; plucking the ears was, they said, a kind of reaping; threshing, rubbing the ears was a kind of threshing; carrying burdens, wearing shoes with nails, was bearing a burden; this should not be done, nor for the same reason should a tailor carry his needle on his person on Sabbath. Such was the spirit and law of the Pharisees' Sabbath-keeping.

II. V. 23-28. Christ's Answer.—1. From the Old Testament. Have ye never read what David did, etc. David's example was one they all respected and would think it right to follow. When he and his men were suffering from hunger, and could get no other supply, they went unto the temple on a Sabbath and got from the priest, to satisfy their hunger, the shew-bread, which it was only lawful for the priests to eat (Lev. xxiv. 9), and, therefore, wrong for David and those with him. If this in the circumstances was right, much more was the conduct of His disciples; or more generally, "if David, to satisfy his intense hunger in a manner contrary to the ceremonial law, ate the shew-bread, and was guiltless, it must be right for us to do so much work on the Sabbath as is necessary to supply our bodily wants."

In Matthew xii. 5, it is added: "Have ye not read in the law, how that on the Sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath and are blameless." The Pharisees made the most minute, arbitrary and oppressive rules as to what might or might not be done on Sabbath, under the name of work. The Saviour shows by this instance, which they admitted to be right, that the Sabbath was subordinate to man's good in a spiritual sense, in the worship of God. Ordinary work is forbidden, but when work on the Sabbath is necessary for man's higher good, then it is lawful, and men have no right to forbid it.

The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was given for the good and blessing of all men, therefore, no class of men has a right to deprive any other of its benefits, and it is for the whole nature of man—physical, mental, moral, spiritual. Man is more important than the Sabbath, and it is only to be kept in such a way as to be subordinate to his good. "Man is not to be injured, and his true interests sacrificed for the sake of any law or any duty."

The Son of Man is the Lord also of the Sabbath. He Himself had the right to say what constituted right Sabbath-keeping, and to what uses it should be put; to interpret and illustrate by his conduct the true law of the Sabbath, and in this case it allowed that it was lawful to use on the Sabbath such means as were necessary to relieve hunger, to preserve life.

2. Christ's answer, second, by His own example. Healing on the Sabbath, chap. iii. 1-5. It is again Sabbath, again He is in the synagogue, and there also is a man with a withered hand. This case has the appearance of being planned by the Pharisees to entrap Jesus, and so establish against Him the charge of being a Sabbath-breaker. V. 2. They watched Him, whether He would heal him, that they might accuse Him. Jesus boldly meets their attack, and saith to the man with the withered hand, Stand forth. It is a moment of great interest, a bold defiance on Jesus' part of the Pharisees and their doctrine. V. 4. He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath days or to do evil? to save life or to kill? But they held their peace. Only one answer was possible and that would condemn their own teaching. So they held their peace. Compare Matt. xii. 11, 12. He looked round about on them with anger, that is, with a righteous indignation, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, which made them sullen, cowardly, morally perverse, slaves of a blind literalism in teaching the Scriptures, enslaving and degrading man for whose use and good God made the Sabbath and all things. He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other. "The cure is wrought by a word, hence the Pharisees have no ground of accusation, for there has been no infraction of the letter, even of their own regulations." The first case regards what we may rightly do for ourselves on the Sabbath; the second what we may rightly do for the good of others.

The Pharisees by harsh, arbitrary rules, founded upon a complete misunderstanding and misinterpretation of Scripture, made man on the Sabbath the victim of cruel oppressive restrictions. Christ by His teaching swept all this away, and set in a strong clear light, the spirit and intention of the Sabbath, of the Scriptures, and all Divine arrangements, which is, the good of man. This is first, the others must be subordinate. We should respect the Sabbath for our own good, and for the good of others by observing it as a day of rest from bodily toil, from worldly cares, duties and pleasure-seeking; as a day of worship after the example of Christ, of doing good, of spiritual culture and growth.