

Foreign Missions.

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A Circuit of the Globe.

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No. x1—*Missionary Methods in Japan.*

The work of a missionary is clearly defined. He is to make disciples and teach them to observe all things that Christ commanded. This task is not so simple and so easy of accomplishment as many suppose. The people are not standing on the shore waiting for the evangelist, and eager to hear and obey his message. They are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Our Lord said, "No man having drunk old wine desireth new; for he saith, The old is good." Myriads are satisfied with what they have, and do not wish any change. In other minds there is an inveterate prejudice against a foreign faith. To secure a favorable hearing for the message requires wisdom, tact, patience and love. The work of a missionary is a many-sided work, and it needs a many-sided soul. I wish to give an account of some of the methods in Japan.

1. *Preaching the Gospel*—A missionary is to go and preach. It is God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Our Lord was a preacher. He went about all Galilee and Judea teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. His apostles were preachers. They filled the empire with their doctrine. There is no substitute for the living voice of the living man. The presence of an evangelist challenges attention and calls out inquiries. At once the people become curious as to his appearance and business and motives. It is for him to take advantage of this natural curiosity and supply the information desired. A missionary is not long on the ground before he begins to preach. He begins with an interpreter. As soon as he is able he begins to speak without this aid. Dr. McAll began with two sentences: "God loves you: I love you." The work may be begun in his own hired house, or in a hotel, or on the street, or in a chapel, or in a temple. Wherever people are found who wish to learn something about the faith of Christ, he is ready to speak. Paul made several long missionary tours. He said that from Jerusalem and round about, even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. The world was his parish. His example is followed to-day in Japan. No mis-

sionary remains in one spot like an oyster. His labors are not confined to one neighborhood. Confucius said: "A philosopher need not go abroad to proclaim his doctrine: if he has the truth, the people will come to him." A missionary must go out on preaching tours. He may be gone a month or two at a time. It is not difficult to get a hearing. By announcing that he is going to speak in some temple or in the theatre, he can call from five hundred to a thousand people together. The audience is in no hurry to go home. He can preach for an hour, or for five hours, as he prefers. In this way he advertises Christianity. Many will call upon him at his hotel to hear more. They will come before he is awake in the morning, and they will remain till long after he ought to be asleep. Some may be drawn by the idlest curiosity. They may be like the Athenians, eager to hear some new thing. Some may come to oppose. A few may come to inquire what they must do in order to be saved. In any event, he has a chance to apply the truth to the heart and the conscience, and to make clear what in his address was not understood. An audience at home has a thousand years of Christian history behind it. The hearers understood allusions to Biblical history, geography and social customs. Not so here in Japan. One man inquired of a speaker if John the Baptist was a place or a person. Such misconceptions are not uncommon. On these tours the evangelist is brought face to face with multitudes who otherwise would never care to enquire concerning Christianity. He has thus unrivalled opportunities of disarming prejudice, of explaining difficulties, and of publishing far and wide the message of salvation.

2. *The Sunday schools and Women's Meetings*.—The children are gathered on Sunday in the chapels or in the buildings used by the charity schools. Some of the workers have two, and others three schools a week. The exercises are conducted as at home. The same lessons are studied and the same songs sung. The results cannot fail to do good. On the seats are small children with babies strapped to their backs. The parents are busy and cannot come; the children are glad to attend. Once a week each of the ladies of the mission has a meeting for women. This meeting is held either in their homes or in the chapels. In the two that I attended the women were studying the Life of Christ. Songs were sung, prayers were offered, the Scriptures were read and explained. There is more need of such meetings here

than in America. The reason is this: The women do not use the same language as the men. A woman may go to church and hear the sermon and understand very little of it. If the preacher wishes to display his learning and uses Chinese words freely, the women will not be edified. In the meetings for women the leaders use Japanese words and phrases and their explanations are clear to all.

Charity Schools.—In Japan there are public schools in all parts of the Empire. The intention of the government, as stated in an imperial edict, is that education shall be so diffused that there may not be a village with an ignorant family, nor a family with an ignorant member. But the schools in Japan are not free. It is true that the tuition fee is small, but a fee of fifteen or twenty cents a month is more than many families can pay. Hence the need of charity schools. In these no fees are charged, as a rule. Sometimes a small fee is charged: this is done only when the families are able to pay it. In these the course is substantially the same as in the Government schools. The difference is that the Bible and Christian songs are taught. By this means distrust and dislike are broken down, and hearts and homes are opened to the gospel. For centuries the people of Japan were taught that foreigners were no better than the beast of the field. It was said that missionaries were sent out to teach the people to disobey the laws. This care for the children of the poor attracts attention. Persons that engage in such a work, with no promise or prospect of reward, cannot be so very bad at heart. The strongest evidence our Lord could give that he was the Messiah was this: "To the poor the gospel is preached." This evidence is as cogent and convincing now as it was then. Acquaintance with the teachers dispels many foolish notions about them. They are seen to be possessed of ability, culture, refinement; they are kind and gentle and patient. It is impossible to hate and despise such workers. By their consistent lives and unselfish conduct they commend the gospel to all who know them. The good seed is sown in the hearts of the pupils. Bishop Hughes said: "Give me the children till they are eight years of age, and I don't care who has them after that." Some of the children are won to the faith. All are more favorably disposed towards Christianity and Christian people than otherwise they naturally would be. Whole communities have been changed by a charity school. The pupils were brought into a new

atmosphere. The boys were taught to serve their country and to grow up into good men. They were prepared to be heads of households. The girls were better daughters, wives and mothers because of the instruction and inspiration received. These schools build up the nation; they contribute to the advancement of the Lord's work in this land. One boy taught by one of our workers sends his mother to the meeting for women. He keeps the baby in her absence. Once his mother was going to a temple to pray that her sore eyes might be healed. The lesson that day was, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." He urged her not to go. She did not. Afterwards she wanted to unite with the church, but her husband opposed.

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