

## Correspondence.

## WEST GORE LETTER.

Early in the month of September, Li Hung Chang, the great Chinese statesman, received a delegation of clergyman and others interested in foreign missions. The reception took place in New York city. Dr. Ellinwood said in his address, that "in no nation of the world have American missionaries received more just and even generous treatment than that accorded by the imperial government of China. In his reply, which had been prepared beforehand, Li Hung Chang made the following statement: "In a philosophical point of view, as far as I have been able to appreciate, Christianity does not differ much from Confucianism, as the golden rule is expressed in a positive form in the one, while it is expressed in the negative form in the other. Logically speaking, whether these two forms of expressing the same truth cover the same ground or not, I leave to the investigation of those who have more philosophical tastes. It is, at the present, enough to conclude that there exists not much difference between the wise sayings of the two greatest teachers, on the foundation of which the whole structure of the two systems of morality is built."

There are other statements in the reply of Li Hung Chang that I would like to notice, but what do you suppose would be the feelings of this delegation, as they heard the blessed Redeemer, so pure and holy, put on a parallel with the voluptuous Confucius?

One of the most noted authors of the day is a Presbyterian minister, by the name of Watson. He writes under the *non de plume* of "Ian Maclaren." His new book, "The Mind of the Master," contains some good things—notice the following:

"Imagine a body of Christians who should take this stand on the sermon of Jesus, and conceive their creed on his lines. Imagine how it would read: "I believe in the Fatherhood of God; I believe in the words of Jesus; I believe in the clean heart; I believe in the service of love; I believe in the unworldly life; I believe in the beatitudes; I promise to trust God and follow Christ, to forgive my enemies and to seek after the righteousness of God." Could any form of words be more elevating, more persuasive, more alluring? Do they not thrill the heart and strengthen the conscience? Liberty of thought is allowed; liberty of sin is alone denied. Who would refuse to sign this creed? They would come from the east and the west, and the north and the south to its call."

As I read the above I wondered if the writer had ever heard tell of such a people as the Disciples of Christ; then I wondered again if he adopted such a platform as he suggests, would his ardent expectancy be fulfilled? I doubt it very much. Men who are wrapped up in creed and party, are not to be satisfied with the simple gospel of Christ, as many know from experience.

We are talking about the close of the nineteenth century. It may be nearer than a great many think. The following from an

editorial in the *Homiletic Review*, for September, will be interesting:

"The nineteenth century of the Christian era will close and the twentieth century begin somewhere between Christmas of this year (1896) and February to April of next year (1897). This has been established by the investigations and calculations of the best scholarship; so that it may be said to be acknowledged universally that Christ was not born on Christmas in the year 754, after the founding of Rome—as Dionysius mistakingly put it in making up our common chronology, and as the Roman Church endorsed it—but in the year 750 or 749, the latter years being far more probable, and toward springtime, the more probable date. This conclusion rests especially upon the indisputable fact, that Herod the Great in whose reign the birth of Christ took place, died in the fourth year before the commencement of our era or in the year 4, B. C. according to the proper reckoning."

There have been six additions at West Gore since I last wrote.

W. H. HARDING.

## ON THE WING.

We are now in Port Williams, at the home of Bro. and Sister Ford. We left our home in Milton at four o'clock in the morning, the 19th of August. On the previous evening, a number of our friends met at our home to say "good bye." Sister Carrie Ford presented a substantial token of respect, and read an address which contained very nice and good things concerning the preacher who had been with them twenty-two years. We would reproduce the address here were we sure it would appear to other hearts as "free from clouds, design or flattery" as it does to ours. Our heart was too near our eyes to admit of a reply. As Bro. McLean says, "Out of the super-abundance of the heart the tongue stammers."

To leave the home of our childhood and the sacred spot where rests the mortal remains of our sires, to say good bye to a people with whom we have been so closely associated in Christian fellowship and mutual labors of love so many years, unfits the heart for any suitable response. Although our separating may leave a void on earth, yet our future life will be the brighter for the soul- uplifting association of our spiritual kin, and will ever be a help to us in the work of the Lord.

We owe very much to the kindness of this dear people—far more than we shall be able to repay. A fellowship and union have been established of no hasty growth, but rooted in the deep soil of esteem and kindly intercourse that time nor distance can ever destroy.

We had the pleasure of preaching for Bro. Ford three times yesterday, to very interesting congregations. Once at Church Street, once at Sheffield's Mills, and once at Port Williams. Bro. Ford has a very extensive field of labor. He has five preaching stations which necessitates a great amount of travel and labor, too much altogether for one man. The labor that these localities demand and that is due them is more than any one man can supply. If the churches were alive to the importance of a co-operative effort a splendid work could be accomplished here. We sincerely hope the obligations of the church may be realized, and that the good work may prosper in their hands. H. M.

## Original Contributions.

## THE FIRST SERMON.

BY NEIL MACLEOD.

This is a most interesting study. Here is a good place to learn how to preach and what to preach. This is a school for apostolic preachers. It is a supreme occasion. The preachers are clothed with divine power, and speak with divine inspiration. Their message is from heaven. The congregation is a most representative one, made up of Jews and proselytes out of every nation under heaven. The time and the audience, as well as the message, are all arranged of God.

But it is with the great theme of the sermon that we are to deal with in this paper. This is none other than Jesus of Nazareth. This is the theme of all true preaching. Now Peter and the eleven had missed their opportunity if they had turned aside to discuss the "questions of the day." This was the question of the day for them, there and then, and there is an important sense in which this is the question of the day for us, here and now, everywhere and always. There is no other question. Jesus Christ is the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end of preaching. Neither is their salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved. A greater than Moses is here. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. So Christ is the end of science and sociology, of theology and criticism. Christ is all and in all.

In these days of "higher education" it is well for us to remember, that while "a little learning is a dangerous thing," much learning has made not a few preachers mad. I have no word to say against the value of the most wide and liberal culture, but some, running after those things have left off speaking the words of truth and soberness, and strive about words to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear. There is need that we give new emphasis to the apostolic preaching, of which we have a fine example in the report of this first sermon.

This report contains but a brief summary of the sermon. I can only call attention to its outline:

1. *The Life of Jesus.*—Acts ii. 22. The apostle lifts up before them the life and works of Jesus as he went about doing good, and teaching and healing the people. This life was a wonderful demonstration of the presence and power of God with him. We can do nothing better to-day for the world about us, than to lift up the life of Jesus of Nazareth. This we must do both in preaching and practice. Against this there is no argument. This is to preach Jesus fully and effectively.

2. *His Death.*—Acts ii. 23. This is the preaching of the cross, which to them that are perishing is foolishness, but to us who are saved is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

That Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, is a cardinal doctrine of the gospel. He died not as a martyr to