

MISSION FIELD.

LETTER FROM FORMOSA.

Tamsui, Formosa, Oct. 1st, 1890.

REV. R. P. MACKAY, SECRETARY F.M.O.

My Dear Brother:—Koa Kau and I are back from a trip of twenty-days. During that time we made one flying visit here, at the urgent request of Mr. Layard, H. B. M. Consul. The first Lord's day was given to Khu-a', a hamlet situated near the table-land, three miles from Lam-knam. Before going to Canada several believers there desired a station in their midst. Last month they secured a building, and presented it to the mission. I preached to a packed house, and after singing several songs of Zion, left, reflecting on the self-propagating spirit of Christianity. The second Sabbath was spent at Kelung. In the forenoon 100 were present, including a dozen Japanese soldiers. In the evening, service was disturbed by several Japanese civilians, who had indulged too freely in Saki, (liquor). I sent word to an official and Police promptly took the offenders in charge. We renovated the church, and mostly with native contributions. All the "graining" was done by Koa-Kau, and the painting by himself and another young preacher. We worked several nights after worship till 10 p.m. An aged Christian woman died the week before, and now a son, who resigned his position as Evangelist, on account of ill-health, was called home. His remains were carried by mourners to the side of a tea-plantation, and there laid "dust to dust," near his mother's grave. There, standing on a lovely morning, with green clad hills around, all sang with fervor "I to the hills will lift mine eyes."

When at Kelung, I got word of the death of Lim Giet, who was one of the first five baptised in North Formosa, Feb. 9th, 1873. For twenty long years he labored faithfully in the Gospel of Jesus, and is now with his Master. He was a carpenter in Tamsui when I landed here first. He passed away in Kap-tau-lau.

On the third Sabbath we were in Sa-kak-sug, which had been burned by Japanese soldiers. Grass and weeds were growing where eighteen months ago villagers had flourishing business shops. The chapel site was bare ground, for some one dug and carried away earth and refuse. A small table was placed in the centre, and, followers of Christ stood around us whilst the heathen pressed near them. I proclaimed life, eternal life, through a crucified Redeemer. The little company of tried disciples seemed overcome with joy. One held a hymn book in a hand deformed by shot from a Japanese gun. Marvelous the escape! Throughout all the troubles not one man deserted the Christian ranks. One of them is giving his house, in the meantime, to the brethren for Divine service.

At Kam-hng, a hamlet several miles away, a Christian family of many years standing, made exertions and secured a building for mission work. I addressed a crowd, under a spreading Banyan near by, and the hearers looked pleased.

The 27th ult., was our fourth Sabbath away. I preached in Pang-kio and Sin-tang, then proceeded to Bang-kah, to administer the rite of Baptism. Mr. K. Mawai, Japanese Evangelist, brought two converts, one called Akiyama Keishi, officer in the Post Office, and the other a soldier named Shibata Banjiro, and at the close of our religious exercises, I baptised them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. These are the first Japanese ever baptised in North Formosa. May they be the first fruits of a glorious harvest.

I do not state all our travelling and laboring during week days; but notice that we cannot remain long in the country at a time. Converts and letters come from all points of the mission in a continuous train, and can neither be put aside nor delayed. God is with us, and we "Go forward" in His name.

I am, yours sincerely,
G. L. MACKAY.

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" What do you think would be a fitting return? No one will be able to make a full and complete recompense. We shall be debtors to God at the close of the year as we are at the beginning. But we may do those things that are fitting and appropriate from the recipients of so great benefactions. We may love Him with all our hearts. We may extol Him in the presence of our friends. We may do always those things which please Him. We may devote our thought and time and money to the extension of His kingdom on earth. The grateful heart should seek during all this year, not to please itself, for "even Christ pleased not himself," but to serve Him who fills all the years with goodness.

LOOKS INTO BOOKS.

CHRIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. Popular Lectures on Biblical Criticism. By the Rev. Thomas A. Tidball, D.D. 12mo, pp. 337, paper covers, 60 cents. New York, Thomas Whittaker.

It is with great heartiness that we commend this intensely interesting and helpful book to all thoughtful readers. Ministers will find it very useful, also Sunday school teachers. To the general reader, however, it will be the most valuable—the reader who has not devoted much time, if any, to the consideration of the subjects treated, and yet who feels the need of proper instruction.

We feel sure that no one, with any earnestness, can fail to have his faith strengthened, and his interest in the New Testament greatly quickened by the reading of those admirable pages. It is well worth our while to avail ourselves of helps like this, for the very children are asking us questions we find it hard to answer.

THE BREATH OF GOD: A Sketch of the Doctrine of Inspiration. By the Rev. Frank Hallam. 12mo, cloth, 75cts. New York, Thomas Whittaker.

The "Higher Criticism" controversy has already developed an extensive literature, and has opened for fresh investigation the whole question of inspiration. In the volume before us, "The Breath of God," by the Rev. Frank Hallam, we have a scholarly and remarkably eloquent work, giving an historical and critical review of this doctrine. In terse and forcible language, the author sketches the formation of the canon of Scripture, the gradual formulation of the various "theories of inspiration," and the rise of the "higher criticism." These different theories he reduces to two: the traditional and the inductive.

We do not know where a fairer or more intelligible statement of the present attitude of the Christian world toward the vexed problem of inspiration can be found.

The *Homiletic Review* is undoubtedly one of the leading preacher's magazines in the world, and its various departments are conducted with conspicuous ability. The February number is fully up to the high standard it has made for itself. Apart from homiletical material there are articles by such men as Dr. Warfield, Dr. Cunningham Geikie, Dr. Burr, Archdeacon Sinclair of London, and Dr. Payne, all on live subjects. Dr. McCurdy continues his series of papers on the results of recent discoveries as illustrating the Bible. Funk and Wagnalls Co., Toronto, New York, London. \$3.00 per year.

The *Truth* for February expends its main strength in berating the Higher Critics and theological professors generally, including Prin. Grant of Queen's College. These obnoxious parties, no doubt, do sometimes give occasion for criticism, and if criticism were given in the right spirit they might be willing to profit by it; but the manner in which they are here abused rather begets sympathy with them in the minds of unprejudiced people. The ark of God's truth has little need of such defenders as usually contribute to this magazine, and in the end will owe little to their advocacy. Fleming H. Revell Co. \$1.00 per annum.

The *Critical Review* for January begins the seventh year of publication for this valuable periodical, and the editor, Prof. Salmond, announces that hereafter each number will be increased by sixteen pages. This number is full of the usual excellent notices written by the most competent authorities in Britain of all the leading works in theology and philosophy which have appeared during the quarter either in English or in other languages. The moderate price at which this magazine is published enables only one who really cares to do so to keep abreast of the theological literature of the day. T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh. Quarterly price 1/6.

Sunday Hours for February just to hand contains many interesting features, among them the prize texts for illustrating for which the publishers offer prizes in order to encourage the artistic taste among the colonial children. The various departments are well sustained. The story commenced in the January number, "Bob and Bill," the story of two friends in need increased in interest from chapter to chapter.

The *Biblical World* for January gives an illustrated article on the "Ideal Childhood in non-Christian Religions" by Prof. Goodspeed, one on "Theological Training for the Times" by Prof. Foster, "the Zacharias" of Matt. xxiii. 35 by the Rev. John McPherson besides the usual studies in the Bible. But probably most readers will be specially interested in the article on "the Recently Discovered Israel Tablets" with the accompanying cuts of the stone on which it is found. The article however is neither generous to Prof. Sayce nor fair to the Bible. The writer seems to hold a brief against the historical character of the Pentateuch, which makes one distrust his guidance. University of Chicago Press \$2.00 a year.