

• LITTLE FOLKS •

How the Heathen Worship.

(By Mrs. Herbert J. Humphrey,
in 'Mission Dayspring'.)

When we think of the people across the waters who have not yet received the light which comes with the gospel of Christ, a great wave of pity sweeps over us.

Perhaps we think there is not anything good in these heathen religions, but we are mistaken. Eminent students say that if a man could be true to all the teachings of Confucius he might lead a moral life. But man is human and cannot in his own strength live perfectly. Confucius offers no supreme God in whom to trust for help; man attempts to build a tower of strength for himself and—fails.

The religion of China is Confucianism. The people usually worship at the temples twice during each month. Let us enter one of these temples. We find it dark and gloomy, but we walk on and finally come to the great idol in whose honor the temple was erected. Temples are built for many gods; gods of war, mercy, peace, wealth, fire, sailors, thunder, etc. The goddess mother is the children's god and is supposed to watch over small folk and guard them from disease.

The children are first taught to worship her. See—here is a mother leading a sweet-faced little girl up before the great goddess; the mother bows and kneels before the idol, clasping her hands and thumping her head on the ground. The child has been told to follow her mother's movements, but she is afraid, and finally the mother has to talk with her and promise her a nice present when they reach home, before she too will worship the idol. The people also worship images of people who died hundreds of years ago as well as their own ancestors. They believe that after death they assume the shape of some animal and must be tortured before they can regain their own form. We can learn one thing at least from their religion, and that is to have greater respect for the aged.

Japan has four religions: Shinto-

ism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Tenrikyo.

Shinto teaches ancestral worship. Its followers also believe that the whole duty of man is to give implicit obedience to the Mikado. Shinto writers claim that the Japanese were free from sin before the invasion of the foreigner.

When Buddhism was introduced many of the Shinto gods were appropriated for its followers. All their gods are secondary to the hotoke men who have reached perfection. Buddhism does not allow its believers to eat meat, and they are vegetarians in diet.

Tenrikyo is of recent origin. Its followers worship the sun and

throws a child into the Ganges river to atone for some sin. They have twelve great feasts during the year.

The Turks are Mohammedans. They believe in one God and Mohammed his prophet. All the teachings of this prophet are contained in the Koran, though certain parts of the Bible are regarded as sacred. The Moslems are noted for their many prayers. You may come upon them in the attitude of prayer in the home, on the street, at their places of business. They have a certain devotion in which they recite the ninety-nine attributes of God, keeping count with balls on a coral string. A person



A HINDU CHILD TAUGHT TO WORSHIP.

moon; they also believe in prayer and render praise and thanksgiving by dancing. Its teachers borrow material from Christian literature. The common people associate Tenrikyo with Christianity, and it is really far superior to all of their other religions.

India like China has many gods, and everywhere in this country you see the sadu or sacred man, who receives alms the same as the gods. He looks neither good nor kind when you meet him; his body is hideously painted, and this is done to frighten you, and make you feel that if you don't put something into his outstretched hand he may call the wrath of some god down upon your head. The people make very long and tedious journeys to bathe in sacred streams and worship at various shrines. A mother often

who is not poor must give the fortieth part of his property to charity. We have all heard of the yearly pilgrimages to Mecca.

The races in the different parts of Africa differ widely in their forms of worship. The people are, for the most part, superstitious; they are greatly afraid of unseen goblins and of wizards, believing the latter will bewitch them. They wear charms to keep off harm and make presents to keep the spirits friendly.

The people of the Micronesian Islands while they do not worship idols, have religious feasts and dancing which are very degrading.

Let us thank God for the gift of the Lord Jesus and rejoice that we may all have a part in the carrying of the gospel to those who are sitting in darkness.