

## BORDER LINE RELIGION.

On a recent Sunday evening the Rev. W. D. Reid preached a searching sermon in Taylor Church, Montreal, to a large audience, on, "Border-line religion not sufficient." His text was, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God." He emphasized: 1. Things in a man's life which may be said to bring him to the border line of the Kingdom of God. The speaker said "That this young man was brought right in touch with the kingdom, by virtue of the fact that he was listening to the Son of God speaking. The man who enjoys the privilege of an open Bible, of hearing the word of God preached every Sunday, who is daily brought in touch with noble Christian life was in a sense "Not far from the Kingdom."

Again, this young man was not far from the kingdom, because he perceived that religion was a spiritual matter, rather than mere outward form. He said plainly "to love God, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." When a man has grasped this point he is not far from the Kingdom of God. When a man understands that outward paraphernalia, ceremony, ritual, are nothing in the eyes of God as compared with a clean heart, and honest purpose, and a living faith, he is not far from the kingdom. It is a sure sign of decaying religion, when men pay great attention to dress, posture, gesture, etc. When a man begins to think that God can be more acceptably worshipped because he is attired in a certain way, or because he takes a certain attitude; or when he thinks that partaking of the Lord's supper after a long fast, or when he has uttered so many Pater Nosters, or a large number of Ave Marias' then religion, true religion is departing from that man's soul. I firmly believe that as outward form increases, inward religion dies. The two are in the inverse ratio. When a man grasps this idea that religion is a purely spiritual matter, and not an outward affair, as this lawyer did, then he is not far from the Kingdom of God.

Another reason why I say the young man was not far from the Kingdom of God was that he evinced a general interest in religion. To-day the most damning thing we have to meet is not infidelity, not materialism, but downright indifference to all religion. When I see a young man genuinely concerned about his soul, about his relations to God, I somehow feel he is not far from the Kingdom of God.

2. A few things that keep men who are near the border line of the Kingdom from stepping over. Many a man is near the Kingdom in orthodoxy, but does not step over because of his inconsistent life. Greed is a grand thing, a necessary thing, but a man may be as orthodox as was John Calvin, or the Apostle Paul, at least so far as creed is concerned, but may not be in the Kingdom.

Again a man may be not far from the Kingdom in his moral life, but not in it because of his motives. I believe in a moral life, and I am sick of seeing some reformed blackguard trotted out before the world in order to somehow show how the debauchee is nearer the Kingdom of God than is the moral man. Some people imagine that in order to be a good Christian they must first go down into the gutter. Young man, thank God if you have been a moral life, but remember mere morality cannot save you. It is only the morality based as was Joseph's in Egypt, on a consciousness of God's continual presence, only that kind, brings a man inside the Kingdom.

Again a man may be not far from the Kingdom in intellect and conscience, but not inside it, because he refuses to surrender his will; therefore he remains only of all the dogmas of Christianity, and his conscience tells him that he should live for Christ, but he is not willing to surrender his will therefore he remains only on the border of the Kingdom.

Again a man may be near the Kingdom, but not in it because he is unwilling to confess Christ before the world.

3. Notice again what is necessary to take a man over the border into the Kingdom. There must be a realisation of sin, of the great gulph that exists between what a man is and what he ought to be. There must be a casting of oneself, and a complete surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ. The man who does this at once steps over into the Kingdom of God.

## THE AWAKENING OF CHINA.

The Rev. Andrew Beattie of the American Presbyterian Church Mission, spoke recently in Toronto on the awakening of China.

The old China, he declares, has passed away forever. What the new China will mean to the world is still a matter for speculation; but the new China is already a fact to be reckoned with.

Dr. Beattie places the population of China at nearly 440,000,000, larger than that of Canada, the United States, South America, Britain, France, Germany, Austria, Spain and the other countries of Europe put together. The people are industrious and frugal and quick to learn when the opportunity for learning is offered them. Who is to put a limit to the influences of such a population, alive to the possibilities and animated by the spirit of modern civilization?

As an evidence of the progress already made Dr. Beattie points out that Canton has already a score of newspapers, has electric lights, a telephone service, a street-cleaning department and an imperial post.

For the missionaries the new condition of things offers wonderful possibilities. Revolts against the missionaries may still be expected but Dr. Beattie says they will be merely local. The general spirit is one of friendliness. Missionaries, he declares, have now all the privileges they can ask, and may go where they will.

He pays a fine tribute to the Chinese themselves. Some sneer at the "rice Christians" that is those who accept Christianity from selfish motives. There are "rice Christians" of course, but he declares that this kind of Christianity is no more characteristic of China than it is of the United States or Canada. "The great majority of our Christians," he asserts, "are just as self-sacrificing as people in Canada or the United States. I have seen them willing to suffer the loss of their goods, to suffer even death itself, for the sake of Christianity, and we know that in the Boxer movement thousands did suffer on that account. We have no larger proportion of rice Christians out there than we have at home."

But the results of the awakening of China will not be confined to the mission fields. They will be felt in time throughout the whole commercial world. A nation of over four hundred million people as frugal and as industrious as the Chinese, able to utilize the forces of modern civilization and animated by the spirit of modern progress, is capable of becoming the world's great manufacturing centre. Canada is greatly interested in watching this development, for Canada and China are now almost neighbors.

If we spend our years in folly we have no reason to expect that God will place his seal of approval on what we have done and say to us at the last: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things." The law of all the eternities is: "He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

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## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS WITHIN YOU.

If you do not wish for his kingdom, don't pray for it. But if you do, you must do more than pray for it; you must work for it. And to work for it you must know what it is; we have all prayed for it many a day without thinking. Observe, it is a kingdom that is to come to us; we are not to go to it. Also, it is not to come outside of us; but in the hearts of us. "The Kingdom of God is within you." And, being within us, it is not a thing to be seen, but to be felt; and though it brings all substance of good with it, it does not consist in that: "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost;" joy, that is to say, in the holy, healthful, and helpful Spirit.

JOHN RUSKIN.

## CONDITIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

John R. Mott has just returned from his visit to South Africa after an extended tour through the important towns of Cape Colony, Orange Colony, Transvaal and Natal. Mr. Mott not only visited the mission stations and educational schools and colleges, but he spoke before the Reformed Church Synod and the Wesleyan General Conference, and was able to meet personally nearly all of the principal ministers of the various Christian bodies. At the student centers he held evangelistic meetings, and had private interviews with young men whom he says he found more concerned with sins and temptations than with religious doubts. Mr. Mott gives it as his opinion that South Africa is one of the most difficult fields he has ever visited—a veritable Christian battleground. He says that he has never encountered in the Orient a more baffling political situation, due to the antagonism between Dutch and British; the introduction of large numbers of Indians, Malays and Chinese; the divisions and rivalries between the different colonies and ports; and the lack of unity of interest between the gold and diamond mine owners and the Afrikaners. Nevertheless, Mr. Mott is as might be expected, full of hope for the future of Christianity in South Africa.—Record of Christian Work.

## PROFESSOR ORR ON MISSIONS.

Reviewing an American book on Christian Missions, Professor Orr comes to the following conclusions: "1. The Christianity which, all the world over, as this book shows, has wrought these transforming effects, has been a positive, genuinely Evangelical Christianity. Unbelief or rationalism may be challenged to produce anything proceeding from its energies of a like nature. 2. The Gospel has proved its power to effect these changes in all races and peoples—high and low, savage and civilized. The idea that savage man is not truly man, or is only man in some lower grade of development, and incapable of the higher intellectual and spiritual life, is conclusively refuted. 3. The smallness of the cost and scantiness of the means by which these enormous results have been brought about. The cry is sometimes heard of the waste of money on missions. Let the reader of this volume reflect that all the results described have been produced at the cost, in the last century, of little more than one year's expenditure of our nation on the single article of strong drink! Is there not food for cogitation here? Were the Church to rise as it might and should to its missionary obligations, how much faster would the world move on to the consummation we all desire to see: its kingdoms become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ!"