

A STORY OF THE MARVELS OF MISSIONS—REV. JOSEPH  
HARDY NEESIMA, LL.D.

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Among the miracles of this nineteenth century the Divine leading and the life and work of Dr. Neesima should be recorded as one.

Mr. Neesima was born of Samurai parents in Tokyo, February 12th, 1843. He was ten years old when Commodore Perry first entered the Bay of Yedo. He was early taught to read and write Chinese, and later the sword exercise. He was also taught to worship the family gods which stood upon a shelf in the house. From the time he was about fifteen years old, however, he refused to worship these idols. He could see for himself that they were only "whittled ones," and that they never touched the food and drink which he offered them.

When he was fourteen years old he began the study of the Dutch language and continued it for a year with a native teacher. When he was sixteen he borrowed a geography of the United States, written in Chinese by Dr. Bridgman of China, and also an abridged Bible history in the Chinese language. The opening sentence in the history was, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In a brief description of this experience written in broken English, Mr. Neesima says: "I put down the book and look around me, saying, Who made me, my parents? No, my God. God make my parents, and let them make me. Who made my table, a carpenter? No, my God. God let trees grow upon the earth; although a carpenter made up this table, it indeed came from trees; then I must be thankful to God, I must believe Him, and I must be upright against Him." He at once recognized his Maker's claim to his love and obedience, and began to yield to it; he prayed, "Oh, if you have eyes, look upon me; if you have ears, listen for me."

Again he says: "I found out that the world we live upon was created by His unseen hand, and not by a mere chance. I discovered in the same history that His other name was the 'Heavenly Father,' which created in me more reverence toward Him, because I thought He was more to me than a mere Creator of the world. All these books helped me to behold a being somewhat dimly yet in my mental eye, who was so blindly concealed from me during the first two decades of my life.

"Not being able to see any foreign missionaries then, I could not obtain any explanations on many points, and I wished at once to visit a land where the Gospel is freely taught, and from whence teachers of God's words were sent out. Having recognized God as my Heavenly Father, I felt I was no longer inseparably bound to my parents. I discovered for the first time that the doctrines of Confucius on the filial relation were too narrow and fallacious. I said then, 'I am no more my parents', but my God's.' A strong cord which had held me strongly to