

to-day. During the twenty odd years I have lived among them I have never met a heathen man or woman who professed to have

ANY HOPE BEYOND THE GRAVE;

nor have I seen a word of hope on the tombstones of the dead. When a heathen Chinaman lies down to die he believes he is going down to hell to expiate his sins, and, having completed that expiation, he expects to be reborn into this or some other world as an insect, a reptile, a bird, a beast, or a man.

Woman in every heathen land is degraded. She is degraded in China. The "three obediences" summarise her duty. "When young, let her obey her parents; when married, her husband; and should she become a widow, her sons." To obey is the whole duty of woman. Her feet are crippled to compel her to keep at home—a prisoner and a drudge. She is seldom taught even to read. Boys' schools exist everywhere; girls' schools are almost unknown. It is a common saying in the land of Confucius that "the absence of ability is a virtue in woman." Buddhism tells woman that there can be no immediate salvation for her. When she dies she falls at once into the dread "Lake of Blood," not for any sin of hers, but simply because she is a woman. And, when she has passed through this fearful ordeal, the highest she can expect is to be reborn into the world as a man!

How sorely the heathen need Christ! Their darkness, degradation, and hopelessness cry aloud for help.

And these needy ones are our neighbours now. The application of steam to navigation has bridged the ocean and made the whole world near. It was when Paul was at Troas, with only the narrow neck of the *Ægean* between, that he heard the Macedonian cry: "Come over and help us." Nearness emphasizes most things; it brought home to Paul Europe's need. We come into close contact with all the heathen nations. Thousands of Englishmen live in India, China and Africa; our ships are found in every harbor, and our manufactures in every market. Those that need our help are both near and known, and their cry should be very audible. These heathen lands are also open to us. A century ago the great heathen nations were mostly closed; now the world is an open door. China, with her eighteen great rich provinces, and teeming population, is accessible to us. India is part of our own Empire, and we are free to preach Christ to her 250,000,000 souls. Madagascar waits to be evangelized, and Africa is stretching out her hands unto God.

But the church is deaf. Few hear the cry of the perishing, Christless, multitudes.

There is "A Beautiful Story" told of Buddha, how, while quite a young man, he was so distressed by the world's misery that it haunted him in his dreams, and he would start at night in his dreams and cry out, as if answering somebody: "My world! Oh, world! I hear. I know, I come!"

Would that all God's children heard that same cry of woe! I wonder how many do hear it? How many of us so pity earth's sinning dying multitudes that they haunt us in our dreams? Not many, if I may judge from the feebleness of the response.

LOOK AT CHINA.

There are only 786 Protestant missionaries, male and female, in the whole of that great empire. There are parts of China where you may travel for a month without passing a single Protestant station. As you journey day after day you will pass great walled cities, populous towns, almost numberless villages, and all without a man or woman to tell them of Christ. As I pass along the streets of our English towns and villages I see churches and chapels on every hand, and the sight is pleasant to my eye. None here need perish for lack of knowledge; and all may hear of Christ and get saved. But I think of China with her masses of ten, fifteen and twenty thousand millions of souls without a single missionary among them.

In the whole heathen world to-day there are only about 7,000 or 8,000 missionaries, male and female. That is the church's response to the world's bitter cry. Is it adequate? Does it express our love of Christ, or meet the need of perishing men? Volunteers for missionary work are comparatively few. China's and India's and Africa's cry for help does not touch many hearts. There is no great constraining missionary enthusiasm even among the young. Our missionary societies are not overburdened with offers of service. Parents send their sons as emigrants, soldiers, sailors and traders to many lands, but are slow to send them as missionaries of the cross. Few men and women of independent means consecrate themselves and their substance to the Lord for work among the heathen. How few such we have among the agents of this Society! The contributions of our churches, too, are terribly small. A few give liberally, but the great bulk of our people give almost nothing. The cry of the heathen world is unheard and unheeded, and the help begged is not given; Great Britain and Ireland spend \$725,000,000 annually on alcoholic drinks; London spends 7s. per head every year on its theaters; our churches spend only a few pence per member on missions to the heathen.

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