

MISSIONARY OUTLOOK OF THE WAR.

The present war is part, no doubt, of God's providential plan so rapidly maturing in these last days to prepare the world for the coming of the Lord Jesus, and especially to open it for the last message of the Gospel. Among the closed doors of the world the Spanish islands of the West Indies and the Philippines Islands of the East are among the most important. Under Spanish domination the entrance of the Gospel is almost precluded. The priesthood acquires the controlling influence in all the colonial possessions, which effectually closes the door for any Protestant voice. The issue of the present war will, inevitably, be the expulsion of Spain from the West India Islands and the establishment of a free Government in these islands. This will open a population of nearly two million to the Gospel, and we hope that within the next six months or a year the Lord will prepare a band of, at least, a score to go forth and occupy the open doors of Cuba and Porto Rico. Still more important is the great field covering the Philippine and Caroline Islands. The attitude of Spain toward Protestant missions in the Caroline Islands has been sufficiently indicated by the destruction by the Spanish authorities of the American mission on the Island of Ponape. The Carolines lie several hundred miles to the east of the Philippines, and are a comparatively smaller group compared with this greater archipelago. The Philippine Islands stretch along a tract of the Pacific Ocean as long as from the north of England to the south of Italy. This will give a vivid conception of their immense extent. There are a thousand islands altogether. They lie in the most delightful region of the globe. The climate is as perfect as anything in the tropics can be. The islands are mostly mountainous, reaching in many cases over eight thousand feet. Their natural wealth is boundless. Their commerce has been sufficient to build up the city of Manila with a population of three hundred thousand. The population of the islands is about six million. There is not a single Protestant missionary in any one of them.—*Selected.*

WOMAN'S PLACE IN A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH.

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In the history of the Christian Church we find that the place accorded to woman varies as much as do the different church systems, which exist in what we call Christendom. For example, we have here in Canada, at the head of the Salvation Army, whose power for good no one questions, and whose ranks include both men and women, a woman, and a very young woman at that. On the other hand, in some more conservative denomi-

nations, it is considered a shame to allow women to speak or pray in church meetings.

It is not very many years ago (and I can vouch for the truth of the story) that a minister, wishing to attend a meeting of a Woman's Missionary Society (a meeting, by the way, very much like the present one), asked permission of the President, and was refused, so firmly was she convinced of the wrong of women speaking in mixed assemblies. When the minister, pleading that he and others were ignorant of the mission work, and wished to become enlightened, she replied, thinking her argument unanswerable, "Let them ask their wives at home."

We might multiply instances of custom and prejudice in the matter, but if we really wish to ascertain woman's rightful place in a church organized on the New Testament plan, we must throw aside all preconceived notions, and turn to the Book as our guide. Nor must we confine our study to single portions of the New Testament. We must consider whether what is laid down as rules is fully borne out by the practice of the Church in Apostolic times. We must avoid hanging the whole case on a single text. Were we to take the texts singly, we should find rather an astonishing array of seeming contradictions. Each text must be taken with its context, and its meaning in the original must be considered.

In the first place, then, we shall find that women were disciples of Christ. All other religions had but degraded woman. Many of them had denied to her even the possession of a soul. In heathen countries she was, and is to-day, treated much worse than an animal. Even the Jewish religion assigned to her in the temple worship an outer court. It remained for Christianity to place her, whether as sinner, suppliant, or saint, on the same footing as man, before God. It is impossible to separate the teachings of Jesus, and say, "This is for man, and that for woman." That would mutilate the whole Testament. The Gospel of Redemption from sin knows no divisions of sex. Hence we find Jesus preaching a wonderful sermon to a sinful woman at Jacob's well, and using that woman as a missionary to the people of Samaria. And so all through the public life of Christ, we find women amongst His followers. They listened to His teaching, they received bodily healing, and also spiritual cleansing from Him. We cannot here begin even to enumerate the cases recorded. It is enough to know that there were women among His disciples.

As His disciples, Christ demanded of them two things—faith and confession—precisely the same things which He demanded of men. His blessings were given in answer to their faith. Witness the case of the Syro-Phœnician woman whose faith He first tested, and then exhibited to those who were with Him. But heart-belief was not the only thing He asked of them. He