

Native Agencies in Mission Work.

By PHILOS.

Self preparation of the Gospel is the desideratum for any people. This will then depend upon native agencies, after once the Word of Life has been placed in their hands. Such agencies are chiefly three, educational, medical and humanitarian, and evangelistic. The educational comes first in order, and the earlier in life it is begun the better. There is a saying that the best preparatory work in the child is done in the preceding generation, and it is well known that the great reliance for the firm establishment of Christianity in heathen lands is the Christian household, and particularly dependent is it upon the wife and mother who yields the more potent influence in the early and therefore most effective training of the infant mind.

Along with the Christian home comes the primary school, and here it is where the Roman Catholics have stolen such a march upon Protestants. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," whereas the likelihood of the heathen giving up his bad habits, renouncing his early faith if he have any is proportionately smaller as age advances. Therefore the providential advantage of having numbers of needy children thrown upon our Christian care through flood and famine and such like causes. At present in heathen lands the educational ascends to the highest means of development; and let it never be thought that anything but Christian education will serve missionary ends—education without the leaven of the Gospel, but makes them "clever devils," and unfortunately we are not without illustrative instances of such things.

The highest form of educational institution is of course the training school for native assistants of various kinds, and more and more as Christianity becomes self propagative does the effort of the missionary expend itself upon this attempt to provide more and better native agencies, until in time even this duty shall have passed into native hands.

The great advantage of medical and such like ameliorative agencies has too great an example and insisted upon by too many Bible exhortations for us to be sceptical concerning it.

The first step to the winning of the heart is that it be first "warmed and fed." Confidence and love are won ere our words are believed—indeed our conduct rather than our words may be the convincing argument—not so much we say as what we do. The heathen is first attracted by our good Samaritanism—"Heal the sick and preach the gospel" go together; and of those humanitarian means the willingness of the missionary to stretch out his hands to the foulest of bodies and particularly the outcast leper who abhors himself is that which even the most bigoted heathen cannot controvert; so the heathen official wrote upon a scroll in honor of the late martyred Dr Taylor—"He loved others as himself." Again relief from flood and famine and the self-sacrificing efforts in behalf of life greatly impress outsiders and open wide the hearts of the rescued.

The chief and last agency is the evangelistic—"How beautiful the feet of the messengers that reach us the Gospel of Peace." The consummate privilege of man worthy an angel's ambition, and by whatever agency, the simple-minded chapel-keeper with his dollar or so a month, the gospel and tract colporteur, the Bible woman, the itinerant preacher, the ordained pastor all one message, ambassadors of God with offer of pardon to a lost and ruined world.

Our Young People

Christ's Unsullied Purity.

By REV. JOSEPH HAMILTON.

As the moon shines pure and clear in a muddy pool, so Christ shone here in this muddy, filthy world, without the serene lustre of his purity being even dimmed or soiled.

Where a Change is Needed.

The question is often asked by those who have just begun to be Christians, whether they need to make any change in the outward form and course of their lives; that is, whether they may continue in the same business as before. We should say: That depends on what you have been doing. Unless your occupation has been wrong in itself, you need not alter it. You need to engage in it with a new spirit, and to correct anything evil in your methods. For instance, if you are a gambler you must change your business. You cannot be a Christian and continue it. But if you are a grocer you need to make no change, except whatever may be needed to make you a Christian grocer. There must be no more tricks in your trade, no more petty dishonesties or misrepresentations, if there have been such, but you must picture to yourself Christ behind your counter, and behave there as he would. So, whatever your line of life may be, if it be not wrong in itself, you need not alter it, but you must consecrate it.—Selected.

Nearer My God To Thee.

In the solitude of our chambers, when we are perplexed and burdened with the cares of this life, how sweet and comforting it is to draw near to Him, and rolling a load of burdens upon Him, find solace to the weary soul and peace and rest. These are His own gracious words: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," and no living soul can lay it to His charge that He has ever failed in the fulfilment of this promise if they came to Him aright. Forsaking Christ and wandering off into the by-paths of this world, which are so full of snares and pitfalls, we but dishonor God and imperil our own souls. And so our importunate prayer should be: 'Nearer my God to thee, nearer to thee.'

Oh, the loneliness of the soul that has been forsaken of God and earthly friends, and blackened with crime, and polluted with guilt, standing friendless and alone in his sin and shame. Could there be anything more awful this side of perdition itself? But that such an one has become hardened in sin, conscience having been stifled to death and remorse having preyed in vain upon the heart, methinks that life would be unendurable. But with the Savior in whom we trust for our friend, though all the world for sake us, we may draw near to Him and find in Him that peace and comfort which He has so graciously promised His faithful followers. Although at times we may be footsore and weary, and the pathway of life which stretches away before us may be rough and rugged, yet if the Saviour walks by our side we will tread it with joy and gladness, fearing no evil, and with hearts full of beautiful thoughts and bright anticipations of future glory with Christ in our home beyond the river.

Zambesi Industrial Mission

The chief object of the mission is to evangelize the natives of British Central Africa; all else is a means to this end. During the past 18 months about 200 natives have been baptized on profession of their faith in Christ. There are at present associated with the mission 34 schools with an average attendance of more than 2,400 children. In many villages the people are willing to build schools themselves, and only ask the mission to supply teachers and books. The superintendent, Mr W. W. Miller writes: "One encouraging feature of the school work is that the women now seem to have more desire to be educated and are not so satisfied to remain in the background as they were. There are sewing classes held by several of the ladies, which are very well attended by the women. Scriptural teaching is imparted at every opportunity in the schools, at the dispensaries, in the sewing-classes and workshops, and on the plantation. Last year we had a good coffee crop and this year we expect 80 tons. I feel sure that the existing work can be comfortably supported by the coffee, except perhaps in very bad years. However, we do not intend to depend entirely upon coffee, but intend to grow wheat, etc."

Show me your paper, and I will tell you where your heart and influence is. If you are a farmer, you read the agricultural papers and stock journals; if a politician, you read the daily political papers; and you think strange of a farmer who will not take a farm journal, and of a politician who will not read a political paper. So do I think strange of a Christian who will not read a religious journal.

Faith is the greatest constructing and reconstructing agent in the world. It inspires ambition, it builds character, it energizes enterprises, it guides to the most practical and lasting results. The doubter is a public enemy. The cynic should be outlawed. The true friend of society is the man who believes.

The Queen and Lord Roberts.

When Lord Roberts was going out to South Africa the Queen, with her usual considerateness, asked if he thought his health would resist the cares and labours of the task before him, to which the veteran replied that ever since his return from India he had been living a life of abstinence in preparation for such an opportunity. And now he has returned—none the worse let us hope—to find a few detracting voices raised to ask why he did not remain until the war was over. If he says that this is just what he has done, they answer by pointing to the troubles and the losses, of which reports continued to reach us after his departure. The student of history knows better. A great conquest is always followed by the futile but wearisome resistance of desperate men and irreconcilable leaders. Take the conquest of Hindustan under Sir Arthur Wellesley. When Lake broke the Mahrattas at Laswari he might justly say that the war was over, but it was on'y then that his troubles began. First Bourtoune then Hulkar—the De Wet of his time—who was only partially subdued after an arduous chase that lasted two years. It was not until fourteen years after Laswari that the last fort fell.