

any other quarter. Yet after two years of this work carefully followed up by all known means, it was ascertained that not a single one of the fifteen held out in his quest for truth. Some were too busy, some were too poor, and all were bound by the invisible fetters of ancient customs diametrically opposed to the spirit and to the practice of Christianity. Not one of these persons would not cheerfully admit that Christianity is a good thing—much better, indeed, than anything which China has or can have to occupy its place; but it is too costly, too exacting—"We cannot afford it," and that is the end of the matter.

We could name a mission station within a few miles of which are fifteen different villages, in each of which there was at one time a regular religious service, and in each of which this service had eventually to be given up, from causes which are as various as the situation of the hamlets, but all alike having their root in the fact that the introduction of Christianity is a more difficult task than some of its missionaries supposed. Every missionary is able from his own experience to duplicate these instances, and he will often tell you that in specific cases the failure was directly traceable to some fatal mistake of his own, the possible consequences of which he had not duly considered.

What are we to say to such occurrences as these? Has the Gospel lost its power? Is there some new and unforeseen combination of circumstances which renders impossible in one place that which is quite feasible in another?

On the contrary, there is nothing whatever about it either new or surprising. "Some fell by the wayside." "Some fell among thorns." "Some fell on stony ground, and because it had no depth of earth, it withered away." The only question is that of the *relative number* of the seeds which may be expected to fall by the wayside, among thorns, or upon the rocks, and *in regard to that point Christ gives us no information*. We only know that some brings forth thirty, sixty, or an hundred-fold.

The plain truth is that *as yet the Christian Church at home has no adequate conception of what is meant by the evangelization of a heathen nation or tribe*, and this despite the experience of an hundred years of modern missions. The nature of the work to be done is indeed understood, for it is clearly pointed out in the New Testament, but the true character of the obstructions can only be known by those who meet them face to face. Whatever the field, it is to be premised that the whole intellectual and moral energies of those addressed by Christianity will rise up against it. In the strong language of Professor Phelps—albeit none too strong for the facts—"The most severe and intricate labor ever undertaken by the mind of man is that of projecting a Divine revelation into the mental and moral history of a race of beings who are filled with moral antipathies to its spirit, and doing this mainly by the art of oral speech."

(To be concluded.)