

Chinese are rather gardeners than farmers), hills are terraced to their summits, and in the Central and Southern Provinces the soil will produce three crops a year. In many parts of the Empire one acre of land is sufficient to support a family, and the happy possessor of five acres is in affluent circumstances. Judged by her resources, China is pre-eminently a great country.

3. *Population*.—The population of China is, beyond all question, enormous, “constituting by far the greatest assemblage of human beings, using one speech, ever congregated under one monarch.” According to the lowest estimate the population of China is one fourth of the human race, six times as many people as there are in the entire United States—350,000,000 souls, men with moral accountability, intellectual activity, and immortal destiny. It is a number inconceivable in its vastness, so great that it staggers the imagination. Think of it Christian men and women !

4. *Antiquity*.—China is unique in her antiquity. Her authentic history dates back more than 4000 years—303 years subsequent to the deluge, 47 years before the death of Noah. If you were to undertake to write the history of China you would have to take the tenth chapter of Genesis for the first chapter of your history of the wonderful sons of Ham. It is a nation hoary with antiquity and marvellous in its preservation. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, all the great nations of antiquity, arose, flourished, entered the charnel-house of departed empires and there mouldered into almost utter forgetfulness, and China alone remains of them all ; and from present indications she is destined to go on down through the centuries. Why this marvellous preservation ?

II. The greatest problem before the Church of Christ to-day is the conversion of China.

It is an extremely difficult task. No one who has lived and worked among the Chinese would minimize it ; and yet there are some people who would have us believe that the evangelization of the Chinese is an unnecessary and presumptuous task. They say : “The Chinese are good enough ;” “They are vastly superior in civilization and morality to many other heathen nations ;” “Let them alone. Keep your meddlesome and fanatical missionaries at home and give them work among the slums of New York ;” “They are perhaps better off in their beliefs than we are in ours.” Let us see.

1. *Moral condition*.—What is the moral condition of the Chinese people ? It is most accurately described by St. Paul in that wonderful first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. That terrible description of human depravity is so libel upon human nature. The black picture is not overdrawn. It is true to the life. Heathen character is no better to-day than it was in the time of St. Paul. It is worse, for there is no such things as stand-still in vice. In the mission with which I am connected, it was necessary a few years ago to tear down one of the mission houses,