

Missionary World.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.
OPEN DOORS.

BY REV. NORMAN H. RUSSELL

"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed, him, saying come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."

Two thousand years have made a change in time and circumstances. Macedonia has multiplied and broadened until its boundaries know no horizon. The depths of its heathen ignorance and superstition have been more deeply sounded, and all its human substitutes for the worship of the true God have been weighed and found wanting. But its cry remains the same, only louder and more earnest. It is no longer the voice of one man but the chorus of a multitude. As one has well said: "It is a man of Japan, a man of China, a man of India, a man of Syria, and Persia and Africa; his face is a composite photograph of every race under heaven."

Writing as I do from the very centre of Central India with the strains of this chorus rising all around me, every note breaking upon the ear with entreating distinctness, it has become to me a tremendous reality. I have often been tempted to exercise my imagination with the thought of what the effect would be could we tow this great dark land across the seas and anchor it on the shores of North America as an object lesson to the Church of Christ. But this is not God's plan; the Holy Ghost is subject to no laws but that of grace, nor in His hands should the message lose anything of distinctness because it travels across a hemisphere.

To the Presbyterian Church of Canada no appeal can be more urgent, no cry more distinct, than that which arises from the cities and plains of Central India. From Neemuch to the Nurbudda, from Bhopal to the Ghats, our broad field with its thousands of towns and villages and its millions of inhabitants far outnumbering the whole population of Canada, offers a great array of strategic points which must eventually be occupied by our own missionaries as centres of work; and of these many to-day are actually inviting our entrance.

Jalrapatan, 90 miles from Neemuch, is a town of about 40,000 inhabitants, the seat of a Rajah, whose officials, over four years ago, showed to our Missionary, Mr. Wilson, a disposition to receive us into their midst. The decision of the Rajputana brethren to leave this city to our mission, throws its responsibility and that of the surrounding area in the rich valley of the Chumbul on the Church in Canada.

Passing over such places as Jawad, nearer to Neemuch, where we already have a Christian school of over 100 boys, we come to Mondasaur on the railway about half way between Neemuch and Rutlam. In this city of about 20,000 inhabitants we have already established a Christian school, whose head master with the members of his family have gained a considerable foothold in spite of opposition. Farther on, and nearer Rutlam, is the city of Jowrah with a population of 20,000, the capital of Jowrah state. Of this place Mr. Wilson says: "In our late visit the Nawab of Jowrah together with his Dewan offered us a grant of land for a bungalow if we would send in a missionary. They seemed to feel it as somewhat of a slight that we had not taken up Jowrah earlier." A few days after this promise was given the Nawab died. Whether his death will make any difference in their disposition toward us we have had no opportunity of testing, but it should be a lesson to us to be ready to enter when the way is clear.

Sailana, the capital of a state of the same name bordering on that of Rutlam, I can remember as friendly to us the first year I was in the country when I had the pleasure of a visit to the Christian Thasildar there.

Concerning Khuchraod and Barougur, both large cities of about 10,000, I am not personally acquainted, but both are strategic points, especially the latter, being the centre of a group of large and influential villages.

Dewas brings us into an entirely unoccupied portion of our field to the East of Ujjain and Indore. As the centre of two states it at once enters into the list of points to be occupied. Being situated on the new Ujjain Bhopal railway it will be within easy reach when this line is opened.

Coming to that part of the field with which I am more nearly acquainted, the most objective point in the Mhow district is the city of Dhar. This is no unfamiliar name to the Church at home. For years the hearts of our missionaries have gone out to Dhar and its people. By unanimous consent it is the first of the many remaining fields to be opened. Its Maharajah has always been most friendly to our mission. Mr. Campbell, Mr. Builder and Mr. Wilson have all been before me in pleasant and memorable visits to this interesting city. When, on the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee, Mr. Builder was visiting there he was asked by the Maharaja to lead in prayer at the ceremony which took place. A year ago we received Rs. 400 from His Highness for the Indore College. This year, however, has been a most memorable one for work at Dhar. We spent nearly a month encamped outside its gates daily preaching the gospel in its mobullas and the surrounding villages. Twice were we called by the Maharaja to appear before him and he expressed himself as most pleased with our Christian hymns. The people also have proved most friendly to us; we held daily meetings in our large tent which were attended by crowds of eager listeners varying from 200 to over 500 people; the official classes also attended one evening in a body. Many marks of respect were shown us; among others we were invited to a dinner by one of the Brahmin teachers in the school. These and many other signs make clear to us that the time has come when we should seek an entrance into this interesting city. The Maharajah is old and frail and his death might make a change in the disposition towards us. What is to be done should be done quickly.

Twenty-five miles beyond Dhar is Sirdarpore, a small station with several English people and a native regiment. It is right in the heart of the Mountainous region inhabited by the Bheels or hill tribes who are the aborigines of Central India. No part of our territory offers a more interesting or profitable field of labor than the Bheels. Though living in the midst of Hinduism they are not Hinduised, clinging still to the old Devil Worship of their forefathers. Some progress has been made in their civilization by the establishment of this agency in their midst, and the enlisting of a large number of them as soldiers. They are practically a people waiting to be harvested. The Irish mission have done a great deal among them on the Gujart side, but the large proportion of them live without our field. Some little has been done among them both at Manpur (near Mhow) and at Rutlam, but no effectual work can be accomplished till a man is set apart for it. A splendid beginning can be made at once in Sirdarpore where land will be readily granted for a bungalow and mission houses, and where the officials are very friendly. When we visited this station a short time ago the Major in charge called the whole regiment of Bheels to meet us and be present at our service.

Maheshwar, on the Nurbudda, is a city of about 10,000 or more inhabitants. Being a Devstian, or "place of the Gods," it is also an object of pilgrimage. We held meetings here for ten days in the cold season, and crowds, numbering on one occasion over 700, came to hear us. The Amin, or chief man of the city, was very friendly and promised ground if we would send a missionary. This city, being on the Nurbudda, would command a large circle of villages both on the river-side by boat and inland by road. It is

the chief place below the Ghats, and is in the centre of a richly cultivated district with many wealthy towns which have never known a famine.

Barwai, 36 miles from Mhow, has already been occupied by us as an out-station, and a Christian community is beginning to grow up around it. It is the centre of a large number of villages which have been much stirred lately by the Word. Land has been obtained and a good beginning made. It is a field ready for entrance when the man has been found.

Not to add to this already long list of strange names, let these suffice to assure the Church at home that doors more than at the present rate of supply can be filled for many years are open wide and calling to us with no uncertain sound: "Come over and help us." To occupy these fields we want men earnest and consecrated, ready for any service—sacrifice, if need be—that Central India may be won for Christ.

That the people in these places as a whole are actually longing for the entrance of the Gospel we must not suppose, though I believe of many individual cases even this is true, but just as the spirit called Paul into Macedonia so is He calling our Church to enter these open door of Central India and we have much more than a vision to substantiate the call.

Nor must we expect that our entrance will be entirely unopposed; at every vantage point the Devil will make a stand. Paul was not only opposed but put in jail when in obedience to the voice he entered Philippi. But in every field will we find the Lydia's households and souls wearying to hear the "Good News" of salvation.

Open doors are God's finger posts, open doors are the voice of the Holy Spirit. When a large band of God's people can sit day after day on the borders of Tibet watching and waiting for the door to open if only wide enough to admit of entrance, surely a band can be raised to enter the open and inviting doors of Central India.

As to ways and means I have nothing to say. I leave this to the Lord of the Harvest, only do not be like the Queen of Sheba; do not wait behind to make much preparation. The early Church had no mission Committees and no mission funds, those separated by the Holy Spirit were sent out and sent in faith. So let it be with us. Let the Church send forth all who have been called to the field, nothing doubting. God will not dishonor such faith. For years the people of God have been praying for these door to open; the prayers have been heard; the walls are broken down, the gates unhinged, the roadways open. The finger of God points forward, the clarion voice of the Holy Spirit rallies to the assault: Fear not evil reports as to the sons of Anak in the land, but "let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

The Gospel story is now spoken and read in about 300 languages. All the great languages of the world are now vehicles for the message of God's redeeming love. Everywhere the number of converts is increasing. Christianity in some of its forms is represented in all quarters of the globe. Of the earth's population of 1,450 millions, about 450 millions are nominal Christians. Not in the first century or the first three centuries of our era was growth as rapid as it is now.

It is in the island of Formosa, says the *Hamilton Spectator*, that Dr. McKay, one of the most successful of Canadian missionaries, has been carrying on a great work. The probability is that if the island is annexed by Japan Dr. McKay's missionary enterprise will be extended rather than curtailed, for the Japanese government is far more liberal in its treatment of Christian missionaries than the Chinese government has been.

Buddhists have formed an association for the purpose of sending missionaries to Hawaii.

English doctors in India give medical assistance to 14,000,000 natives in one year.

Teacher and Scholar.

BY REV. W. A. J. MARTIN, TORONTO

May 5th, } THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE. { Mark xiv.
13, 5. } 32-42.
GOLDEN TEXT—John xviii, 11.
CATECHISM.—Q. 19

Home Readings.—M, Mark xiv. 32-42. T, Mat xxvi. 36-46. W, Luke xxii. 39-46. Th, Heb. ii. 9-18. F, Heb. v. 1-14. S, Is. liii. 1-12. Sab, Ps. xl. 1-17.

The supper has been instituted, the farewell words of comfort spoken, the prayer of intercession offered, the parting hymn sung, and now our Lord and the eleven have come to their favorite resorting place, the garden of the oil press. Words of tender warning have been on His lips during the short walk, words which, instead of producing the self-distrust they ought to have produced, have led Peter to declare: "Though I should die with Thee I will not deny Thee;" and all the others to join in the declaration. And now eight are left as an outer guard at the entrance of the garden, while the three who witnessed the Master's glory on the mount, are called a little closer to the scene of His final conflict and triumph.

I. The Conflict.—There can be no doubt that Satan, who, at the outset of his career, had sought with pleasant allurements to entice the Saviour to turn aside from God's way of redeeming men, has now come with all the painful, soul-harrassing things he can muster, hoping thus, either to terrify Jesus from His purpose, or to disqualify Him to be the "Lamb without blemish, or perhaps to crush out His physical life through agony of soul, before He can come to the cross. The fierceness of the onslaught is seen in Mark's graphic words "He began to be sore amazed." All that He had endured already seemed as nothing compared with this. Also from His recorded words, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," the thought is that He was surrounded with sorrow on every side, breaking in upon Him and ready to separate His soul from His body. But what were the things which combined to produce such agony? That is a question none can fully answer. There were all the horrors of His coming passion, its cruelty, its shame, its spiritual torture. There were thoughts of the anguish of others, His mother, His disciples. There was the knowledge of Judas' treachery, Peter's denial of all forsaking Him. There was the consciousness that though innocent Himself, He must endure all that those in whose room He stood, should have borne for sin, the sorrow, the shame, the awful darkness, when the Father's face must be hidden from Him. Can we wonder if He feared that this trial might either call forth some evil thought of vengeance against the adversary, or crush Him in premature death? Can we wonder that He craved for the watchful sympathy of His disciples, and, alas! even this failed Him; and the discovery of its failure seemed to precipitate anew the conflict. The words of chiding with which the Master aroused His sleeping disciples are doubly suggestive. He was in spirit willing to do the Father's will, but what He feared was the weakness of the flesh to endure. The disciples had all boasted of their willingness even to die with Him, and yet through physical weariness and grief, "their eyes were heavy," they cannot watch even one hour.

The Victory.—To compress what was involved in the conflict into a few sentences has not been easy—but the victory is more easily understood—"Tarry ye here . . . while I go and pray." Let us ponder upon the prayer, which was offered again and again, while our Saviour lay prostrated on His knees, with forehead upon the ground. There is in it just the one desire, namely to do the Father's will—"Take this cup from me; . . . nevertheless . . . what thou wilt." No matter whether we understand by "this cup" the cross, or the disqualification and death which Satan aimed to bring about there in Gethsemane, the one thing clear is that Jesus desired to do the Father's will, and victory came through faith, victory complete and perfect. Heavenly messengers strengthen Him and the prince of this world is foiled. When He comes again to where the disciples sit dozing in sleep again, He has no chiding for them but tells them to sleep on and take their rest, and calmly the Master watches by the sleepers' side, until the lights of the approaching traitor's band appear. Then He arouses them that they may not be at a disadvantage and calmly goes to meet His enemies. There is scarcely room for a single practical thought, only let us remember that while every life has its Gethsemanes of conflict, "this is the victory that overcometh, even our faith."