



DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

VOLUME XXIII. No. 20.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, OCTOBER 5, 1888.

30 CTS. per An. Post-Paid.

REV. GRIFFITH JOHN.

For more than thirty years Rev. Griffith John has labored in China under the auspices of the London Missionary Society, and by his speeches and writings has excited a deep and widespread interest among the English speaking nations in the great work of opening Central China to Christian missions. Others have had more tragic tales to tell, but no missionary of recent times has enkindled deeper emotions in the breasts of old and young than he, when he has related, in words on fire of God, the simple tale of what God has done for him and his beloved Chinese converts.

The first impression of everyone who meets Mr. John is that he was born to be a missionary. The conviction deepens as you converse with him. One more gifted with the human qualities which are so advantageous in "winning souls," or endowed with more of the tact and power needful to "become all things to all men," could not be imagined. A charming frankness, both in speech and manner; the power to put a question which would entail a confession, in such a way as to extract that admission without giving offence; a voice which conveys sympathy through the medium of the simplest words; and an easy self-possession which wins confidence yet ensures respect. These are combined with a strong and attractive physique, great intelligence and energy; whilst, beyond all, is a power which makes you feel that you are with one in whom dwells the "fulness of the Spirit," and who is "furnished completely unto every good work." The involuntary eulogium, recently passed by one of the heathen, whose claims he had been opposing, was, "That foreign teacher was a good man."

In Mr. John's preaching there is great power of expression. He has equal control over his thoughts and his feelings, and maintains a fair balance, being free from the coldness of the philosopher and the ravings of the enthusiast. The simple language, and apt illustrations adopted, always suffice to convey the thought or emotion. In this he shows some of the chief requirements of the orator. There is also a clear and well-modulated voice, the persuasive earnestness of which has a peculiar power over a heathen people unaccustomed to such addresses.

That he has great linguistic aptitude is evident from the fact that in sixteen months after his arrival in China, he was able to preach in Chinese so as to command the unqualified admiration of those who were well acquainted with the language. Besides these qualifications, our brother has strong faith that it has "pleased God to reveal his Son in him, that he might preach him among the heathen."

It may interest our readers to know something of his early life. He was born at Swansea, in 1831, of parents who were remarkable for their Christian zeal and piety.

Mr. John's mother died of cholera in 1834. When about eight years of age, he was received as a member of Ebenezer Chapel, Swansea, and even then he frequently took part in the public prayer meetings. Shortly after this, he entered the employ of Mr. Williams of Onllwyn, who was a godly man, and soon perceived the promising character of the lad. He in-

therefore, occasioned when he suddenly withdrew from all public efforts, justifying his conduct by modest references to his youth, and consequent inexperience. For a time he exercised his gifts in more private forms of Christian work. At length, yielding to the solicitations of his minister, and the more prudent counsels of his friends, in his sixteenth year he recommenced his pulpit efforts in different parts of the principality, and with similar results. Everywhere he went it was soon manifest that in Griffith John God was preparing a mighty

lege. In 1849, his father died of the same complaint as his mother. The bitter grief which he manifested at the grave so kindled the compassion of Mr. Jacob that he said he should never know the lack of an earthly father so long as he lived. The relationship thus formed has been maintained with touching ardor on both sides to this day.

From his own statement to a personal friend, we learn that he applied himself earnestly to study, with much success, and entertained the hope of becoming a popular preacher. Whilst indulging in this prospect, God met him and cast out the earthly ambition, and in its place inspired a desire to be a missionary to the heathen. Friends remonstrated and argued in vain about home claims—the Macedonian cry was being iterated by the Spirit in his heart. At first his thoughts turned towards Madagascar. Perhaps the fact of his fiancee being the daughter of one of the first missionaries in that land had prompted this feeling, but after a further course of study at Bedford, he left himself in the hands of the Directors of the London Missionary Society, who appointed him to China, a decision which has been fraught with blessing to thousands. Before leaving England, in 1855, he married Miss M. J. Griffiths, daughter of Rev. David Griffiths, who labored for many years in Madagascar. Mrs. John was a very effective worker, and did much good in a quiet way.

He first entered upon foreign service at Shanghai, where much useful information was gained. Beside the ordinary work of the station he co-operated in pioneer efforts by accompanying Rev. Dr. Edkins in 1857 to Soochow. In 1858 he established stations at Sung Kiang, and other places. In July, 1861, in company with Rev. R. Wilson, B.A., he removed to Hankow and laid the foundation of a permanent station in that city, which is the principal place for commerce in Central China, and then contained about 800,000 people, whilst the city adjoining had about 400,000 more. With characteristic promptness Mr. John preached the first day of his entry into Hankow. It has always been so with our brother—work first, personal matters afterwards. And only this enthusiasm and capability for arduous toil could have made the history of this Mission such a long series of successes. No one can read through his annual reports and letters without seeing that underneath all the facts narrated there runs an indomitable spirit of perseverance and of hard effort.

Between April and September, 1868, he travelled over 3,008 miles, visited Chengtu, capital of Sichuan, and Han-chung, in



THE REV. GRIFFITH JOHN.

vited him to become an inmate of his house, and treated him with great kindness. Here, at the early age of fourteen, he began to preach in Welsh.

From the first he gave evidence of possessing oratorical gifts of the highest order. The people were delighted to hear him, and invitations flowed in from various churches in the neighborhood. Among the crowded audiences many were heard to say, "What manner of child is this?" and the strongest hopes were entertained that a brilliant future awaited him in the ministry of the Gospel. Much surprise was,

witness for himself, and predictions were not wanting of a fame and career of usefulness as great as that of the venerated Christmas Evans, the Apostle of Wales.

It was represented that a course of study would be of great benefit, and his father asked the Rev. E. Jacob, who was then minister of Ebenezer Chapel, Swansea, if "he would teach Griffith a little." The kind-hearted pastor had given help to other young men who were preparing for the ministry, so, in November, 1848, he went to reside with Mr. Jacob and remained until 1850, when he married Brecon Col-

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W. M. P. OZIER
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