

## Pastor and People.

Y. U. F.

There lies a little city in the hills,  
White are its roofs, dim is each dwelling's door,  
And peace with perfect rest its bosom fills.

There the pure mist, the pity of the sea,  
Comes as a white, soft hand, and reaches o'er  
And touches its still face most tenderly.

Unfettered and calm, amid our shifting years  
Lo! where it lies, far from the clash and roar  
With quiet distance blurred, as if thro' tears

O heart, that prayest so for God to send  
Some loving messenger to go before  
And lead the way to where thy longings end,

Be sure, be very sure, that soon will come  
His kindest angel, and through that still door  
Into infinite love will lead thee home.

—E. R. Sill.

## MODERN MISSIONS CONSIDERED AS CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE

BY REV. PROFESSOR HAIRD, D.D.

Christianity is a missionary religion. The precepts and practice of its founder alike bear testimony to this; a testimony corroborated by such vision as the Church has enjoyed of her own highest ideal. Whenever the Christian attempts to realize in his life the principles to which he is pledged, he finds that a condition of his own full enjoyment of the blessing is that he share it with others and so by the necessities of his own spiritual life as well as by the command of his Lord, he becomes a witness holding forth the Word of Life. Slow as the Church has been to realize in her corporate capacity the behest that is so plainly laid upon her members, Christianity still stands conspicuous among the religions of the earth by its missionary character. Other systems have spread by conquest, by colonization, in the train of communication opened up by commercial or political alliance; but it is one of the distinctive features of the Christian faith that it has made its most remarkable progress not by these means, but by the peaceful efforts of its followers who have deliberately addressed themselves to this conquest of the world and have given not only time and thought but life itself to spreading the knowledge of Him who brought them from death to life.

Christianity moreover is the only missionary religion. As it stands unique on the one hand in the motive that prompts missionary effort, so it is without a rival on the other in the continuity of its evangelizing energies. Buddhism which may claim a larger following than Christianity displayed at one time considerable aggressive energy of a missionary character—but it was for a comparatively brief period only and the time is now long past. Mohammedanism, the only other system that can be mentioned in this connection, has always depended for the success of its aggressive efforts on considerations other than those which appeal to the moral or spiritual nature. The conquering armies which fought under the crescent have made famous the triple choice of the Koran, the tribute or the sword.

There have been three periods in the history of the Christian Church conspicuously marked by missionary zeal. The first is that of the apostolic and post-apostolic times when the early Christians in the joy of their new found faith went everywhere preaching the Word; when Paul, prince among missionaries, carried the good news to the Gentiles; and when by the blessing of God upon these men and their successors, the whole Roman world accepted Christianity within 300 years. And all this in spite of the fact that the men who advocated the new doctrine were poor, for the most part without learning and altogether without prestige. They made their way amid the clear light of the Augustan age against Roman strength, against Greek cleverness and against Jewish bigotry, and established a new doctrine which offered no compromise to their vices but demanded a degree of purity of which they had hitherto had no conception and for which their past history showed that they had no natural liking. The very success which commanded the recognition of Christianity as a national religion and gave it an aspect of attractiveness for those who had never felt its spiritual power, wrought a reversal in its onward course. Missions which have always flourished in proportion as the Church sought nearness to its Head and conformity to His Law, and which have languished when conformity to the world has taken the place of transformation into the image of Jesus Christ, were in the background from the beginning of the third century till the fifth. From the beginning of the fifth till the middle of the sixth century new life prevailed and missions revived. Men like Ulphilas among the Goths, Patrick in Ireland, Columba in Scotland, the Abbot Augustine in England and Boniface in Germany mark a new era and weave a web of romance about the history of mediæval missions. This was still the age of individual missionary effort. The period when societies were formed for Christian work of this kind had not yet come.

The period of the Reformation, which one would naturally expect to be characterized by an outpouring of vigorous missionary effort, was painfully lacking in anything of the kind. The Reformers were so occupied with troubles and disputes mainly of a doctrinal character among themselves,

so engaged in determining their own position and establishing political connections for the better securing of their rights, that they had no thought to spare for the heathen either within or beyond seas. Yet it must not be left unnoted that many of the English mariners of Queen Elizabeth's reign were marked by a true sense of missionary duty. Sir Humphrey Gilbert's chronicler says that "the sowing of Christianity must be the chief intent of such as shall make any attempt at foreign discovery, or else whatever is builded upon other foundations shall never obtain happy success or continuance." Sir Walter Raleigh gave £100 for the propagation of the Christian religion in the newly formed colony of Virginia, and the charter of the East India Company, surprising as it may seem to those who are only familiar with the subsequent history of that corporation, expressly regarded the promotion of the kingdom of God as an obligation on a higher plane than the advancement of interests of commerce. But hopeful as were these signs, it was only with the close of the last and the opening of the present century that Christian people in any general and organized way began to address themselves to the evangelization of the world. Two influences were at work—one was the evangelical revival in Britain and America towards the close of the last century. The preaching of the Wesleys in England, Jonathan Edwards in America and George Whitefield in both, had a tremendous influence in awaking the people from their spiritual lethargy. The other influence was the enthusiasm for humanity, the spirit of philanthropy, of the good Samaritan which at this time was deeply stirred. Howard was spending his life in alleviating the suffering of prisoners in noisome dungeons; Wilberforce was thrilling England with his pleas for the negro slaves in the West Indies, and Robert Raikes, the pioneer in another direction, was opening the first ragged school. The conflux of these two streams of tendency, each of which already possessed in itself the spirit of missions, soon directed attention to the duty which the Christian Church owes to those who are without her pale. The pity and compassion evoked on behalf of the suffering and down-trodden in British domains naturally led those who saw that this was the spirit of the Gospel, the spirit which had led on to its early successes, to enquire why they might not unite to send the good news to those who were still in total darkness. The beginnings were scattered and feeble—yet within twenty years following 1790 most of what are now the larger missionary societies were formed. Carey went to India in 1793, Morrison to China in 1807, Judson to Burmah in 1813, Williams to the South Seas and Moffat to South Africa in 1816, Wilson to Bombay in 1828 and Duff to Calcutta in 1829. These were the pioneers of a movement which has grown to such proportions that it may now be said with a greater truth than ever before that the Lord's work is going up and possessing the earth for Christ. The story of this world conquest finds no parallel except in the apostolic days. Indeed one is scarcely surprised at finding the Bishop of Ripon say as he did a few days ago that "the story of modern missions is a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles with all its essential supernaturalism."

Although the narrative of this missionary activity furnishes the facts on which the following argument is based, it is impossible here to go over the history of the evangelization of even a single country. All that can be done is to indicate in a few sentences the results in three specimen countries as widely dissimilar as the Hawaiian Islands, Japan and British Columbia.

The first missionaries visited the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands in 1819 and found a people ripe for the Gospel. Five years afterwards the principal chiefs agreed to recognize the Sabbath and to adopt the ten commandments as the basis of Government. Twelve years later in 1835 the great revival came. It lasted six years and 27,000 persons were received into the Church. In 1863 a greater proportion of the people could read and write than in New England. The islands had been Christianized. Eighteen foreign missionaries under the auspices of a native organization had been sent to the Marquesas and the parent society—the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, practically withdrew to bestow its energies on more needy fields.

Japan opened its first port to foreign residence in 1859—thirty-two years ago. Before that year closed six missionaries had entered the partially opened door and for ten years they laboured with but little increase in numbers. In 1872 and the years following a revolution came. The Japanese set out to look for a new religion. It is too soon yet to say that they have adopted Christianity, but the progress that Christian ministers have made has been almost without a parallel. The country has adopted a new constitution with a considerable measure of responsible government; the Sabbath has been proclaimed a public holiday; immoralities formerly practised in public have been suppressed by edict; radical changes in the direction of Christian living have been made in many social customs, Christian education is everywhere sought after; self-supporting churches manned by native pastors are multiplying on every hand and the number of church members is eight times as large as that in the Presbyterian Synod of Manitoba and the North-West Territories.

(To be continued.)

MR. LAURENCE HUTTON has produced a little book on the "Literary Landmarks of Edinburgh," which will interest all who know "Auld Reekie" well, and who have any literary instincts.

## Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS

Dec. 6, 1891

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

John 19

GOLDEN TEXT. For Christ also hath once suffered for our sins. —1 Peter iii 18

INTRODUCTORY

After being formally condemned by Pilate, Jesus was delivered into the custody of the Roman soldiers, who led Him forth to the place selected for crucifixion.

I. The Crucifixion. When a criminal was led forth to be crucified it was a part of his punishment to carry his cross. Christ bore His cross on the way to Calvary, but so worn was He with fatigue and sorrow of spirit that He fainted under the burden, and as the procession met a man named Simon, of Cyrene, he was pressed in to the service of relieving Jesus from the burden of carrying the cross. The scene of the crucifixion was Calvary, but the Hebrew name of the place was Golgotha, both names signifying a skull. The exact spot is not now definitely known. It was, however, a well-known place at the time. Though near the city it was without the walls, and near a well-travelled road leading into the city. Learned men, familiar with Jerusalem and its environs, are of opinion that Calvary was on the north side of the city, upon a slight eminence containing the cave known as the grotto of Jeremiah. "In its form," says Sir William Dawson, "and certain old tombs which simulate sockets of eyes, it has a remarkable resemblance, from some points of view, to a skull partly buried in the ground." From the resemblance to a skull it is supposed that the place got its name, Golgotha. When the place was reached Jesus was fastened to the cross in a manner that would entail severe bodily suffering. His arms were extended along the transverse beam and His hands pierced by the nails by which they were affixed. Through His feet also nails were driven, binding Him so that He could not in His agony change His position. The cross was then raised upright and its foot placed in the hole that had been dug for its reception. There were two malefactors condemned to death at the same time. The cross of Jesus was in the centre and the two others on each side. There He was placed to endure the agony that would end only in death. It may have been the design of the enemies of Jesus to create the impression in the popular mind that He too was a criminal, but unconsciously they were fulfilling the prophecy spoken by Isaiah centuries before. "He was numbered with transgressors." It was a Roman custom to inscribe on the cross the designation of the crime for which the victim suffered. In the case of Jesus, Pilate had caused to be written: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." True to his belief that Jesus was innocent, the Roman procurator wrote an inscription that in no way indicated guilt of any crime. It was written in the three leading languages of the time, unconsciously indicating that Jesus would receive the homage of all nations. It was written in Greek for the benefit of the strangers that were in Jerusalem at the time, the language of the educated; in Latin, the language of the people that at that time were masters of the civilized world; and in Hebrew, the language of the nation to which He belonged. Each of the evangelists gives a slightly different form of the inscription, but substantially it is the same. The explanation is that there is no contradiction, but each gives it in one of the languages in which it originally appeared. John gives it in its Hebrew form, Mark in the Greek and Luke in the Latin. The inscription however did not please the Jewish leaders. They went to Pilate and expressed a wish that it might be altered. In this they were unsuccessful. He refused to change the writing. In a small matter he was firm while in the greater matter of acting justly or unjustly he temporized and failed utterly. The clothes worn by Jesus were divided among the four soldiers who had charge of the crucifixion. The apparel of criminals was their perquisite and in this case the usual custom was followed. But the principal garment, the coat, or tunic, was of one piece, woven throughout, without seam. They agreed that it should not be divided, but that lots should be cast for it. This incident, in itself apparently unimportant, was nevertheless predicted many centuries before, for in the twenty-second Psalm, one that is universally recognized as Messianic, it is said "they parted My raiment among them and for My vesture they did cast lots." "These things, therefore, the soldiers did," not that they knew about the prophecy or were desirous of fulfilling it, but the divine purposes are often accomplished by unconscious agents.

II. Watching By the Cross.—Near by the cross there stood a group of sorrowing women, who showed the depth of their sympathy for the august sufferer by their presence. They could do but little beyond the expression of their deep concern, but they were there amid the mixed crowd that looked on, different parties manifesting their feelings in different ways. The enemies of Jesus exhibited the keenness of their hatred by their bitter taunts and sneers, the thoughtless and unconcerned by their stupid jests, while these devout women stood near, their hearts wrung with anguish. The women mentioned were Mary, the mother of Jesus, His mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. Christ's considerate care for His mother is seen in what He said. John, the beloved disciple, was also present near the cross. To Mary He said: "Woman, behold thy Son," and then like words were addressed to John, indicating the affectionate relationship that should henceforth exist between them. John, as long as Mary lived, had a place in his heart and home for her who bore so intimate a relationship to the Lord.

III. It Is Finished.—The dread agony was now nearing its close. Nature manifested a mysterious sympathy with the sufferings of the Lord of nature. At noon, when the sun shone at its brightest, a strange darkness overspread the scene, and it continued until the sufferings of Jesus ended in death. At the time of the evening sacrifice the veil of the temple was rent in twain. The Mosaic dispensation was ended and the Gospel age begun. The one true sacrifice for sin, which all previous offerings prefigured, was offered up once for all. The human and the divine nature of Christ so intimately blended all through His life on earth, is also apparent in His death. Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: "I thirst," a reference to Psalm sixty-nine. This is the only reference that Jesus on the cross made to His bodily suffering. Those who heard this saying were not insensible to the ordinary feelings of humanity. They dipped a sponge in the sour wine or vinegar provided for the soldiers to drink. It was placed on a reed and held up to His mouth. Then followed the final word, the word that proclaimed a completed atonement for sin, and that intimated that those unparalleled sufferings were over, "It is finished." He bowed His head and gave up His spirit to the Father.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

The divine glory of the Saviour was not obscured by the attempts of His foes to humiliate Him. He was numbered with transgressors, but one of these was saved by Him on the cross.

In the death of Christ the greatest and the most minute prophecies concerning Him were fulfilled.

Amid the deepest agonies of the crucifixion Jesus was mindful of His mother's comfort and well-being.

Christ in dying completed a perfect salvation. The atonement is sufficient for all who accept it by faith as the ground of their justification.