

## MISSIONS IN FORMOSA.

(By Rev. J. B. Fraser, M.D.)

Formosa is an island about 250 miles long from north to south, by 60 or 70 wide, lying some 80 or 90 miles off the south-east coast of China, and divided almost equally between the temperate and torrid zones by the Tropic of Cancer. It was called Formosa ("beautiful") by the Portuguese, and this is no misnomer. The western side of the island is composed of plains and plateaus rising in terraces from the coast to the foothills of the mountains range near the eastern side, between which and the sea there are in a few places narrow but fertile valleys; but for the most part the east coast is singularly steep and precipitous.

The island was originally peopled by Malays, who during the last 200 years have been gradually dispossessed of their lands and driven back to the mountains by colonists from the mainland of China, opposite. The process still continues, resulting in raids by the Chinese, in which the aborigines are shot like wild beasts, and in "head-hunting" by the natives, no young man being considered of any account among them, till he has one or more Chinese heads to his credit, as trophies.

It was to this part of China that Rev. G. L. MacKay, the first foreign missionary of the Western Division of the Presbyterian Church, in Canada, was providentially led in 1872. He selected the northern portion of the island as his field (the English Presbyterian church occupies the southern portion), and chose as his headquarters Tamsui, where, on the north bank of a fine river about half a mile wide and a mile from the open sea, stand the fine premises of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission.

The island, with its tropical climate, is rich in resources, agricultural and mineral, and still exports considerable timber from the densely wooded mountains, as well as large quantities of sugar rice, tea, indigo, and camphor, extracted from the branches and waste of the camphor tree. There is on this account better ground for the expectation that the native church will the sooner be self-sustaining and in its turn undertake foreign mission work in some other field.

The progress of the gospel has been somewhat hindered by the diversity of the population. Of the total 3,000,000 perhaps 2,500,000 are Chinese, about 100,000 "whan," or barbarians, as the Chinese call them; perhaps 200,000 "Sek-whans," ripe or cultured barbarians; and the remainder Japanese, who have been since 1894 the rulers of the island and are rapidly on the increase. The work has been further hindered by the climate, which, with its long continued and excessive heat and dampness, undermines all but the strongest constitutions, and has necessitated the early retirement of several earnest workers. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, however, the Formosa Mission has been one of the most successful of our church, largely because of the singular intensity and persistency of its first missionary, who for nearly thirty years scarcely halted or rested in his efforts to win North Formosa for Christ. Despite the opposition of the first years, the bitter contempt of the proud literati, the difficulty of securing comfortable shelter, the weakening and depressing effects of malarial fever, in singularly malignant form, the isolation of the initial years, when he laid the foundations single-handed, the difficulties of the spoken language with its different dialects, and of the written and printed language, which have baffled many an able man—before Dr. MacKay was two years in Formosa he had gathered a band of native Christians, and had made a good beginning in the training of native helpers.

His work began in 1872, and ended with his lamented death in 1901. His death was a great blow to the native church, for, though there had been a succession of colleagues and helpers, to hundreds of the native Christians there was but one MacKay—Kai-Bok-su: Kai—Pastor as they lovingly called him, who was their spiritual father, their confidant and counsellor, their ideal and inspiration.

In giving so large a place to the pioneer, those who were his helpers should not be left out of account, especially the Rev. Wm. Gauld, B.A., and Mrs. Gauld, who have been thirteen years in the field, with one furlough. Mr. Gauld has sought to continue and develop the mission along the lines laid down by Dr. MacKay, and has won for himself in large measure the confidence of the heathen, as well as of the native church. Others who were of some help were the Rev. J. B. Fraser, M.D., who, with his wife and three young children, reached Tamsui in 1874. While learning the language, Dr. Fraser superintended the building of the mission houses, and had charge of the mission hospital, but was compelled through the loss of his wife to return to Canada at the end of 1877. Early in 1878 he was succeeded by Rev. K. F. Junor, who gave early promise of successful work, but succumbed to the climate in his fourth year, and returned to Canada in broken health which he was long in recovering. In 1883 Rev. John Jamieson and his wife were sent to Dr. MacKay's assistance, at his own request. Mr. Jamieson found great difficulty with the language, fell into ill health and died after some years. In 1902, the year after Dr. MacKay's death, Rev. Thurlow Fraser, B.D., and Mrs. Fraser went to Mr. Gauld's help. Mr. Fraser who entered on his work with great health completely failed, and he in turn was compelled to retire and return. Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Ferguson, Rev. Milton Jack, Miss Kinney, B.A., and Miss Connell, sent in response to Mr. Gauld's urgent and repeated appeals for reinforcements, sailed for Tamsui on Oct. 2nd last, Dr. Ferguson to have charge of the Hospital at Tamsui, and Misses Kinney and Connell of the Girls' School, in connection with which Mrs. Dr. MacKay and Mrs. Gauld have rendered valuable service.

In addition to nearly 60 native churches with nearly 2,000 communicants, for which, however, there is not yet an adequate supply of well-qualified preachers, there are at Tamsui commodious and sanitary mission houses, a hospital a Girls' School, and the Memorial Oxford College, all substantial and suitable buildings, so that it may be questioned whether any of our other missions are in this respect more fully furnished.

Daily Readings.—The wilderness made glad, Isa. 35: 1-10. T.—Exalted among the heathen, Ps. 46: 1-11. W.—Reigning over the heathen, Ps. 2: 1-12. T.—The isles afar, Isa. 66: 19-24. F.—Debtor to all, Room. 1. 1-17. S.—The missionary spirit, Acts 20: 17-27. Sun Topic—Missions in Formosa. Acts 8: 5-13.

## THE PRAYER FOR PARDON.

The best remedy for a prayerless spirit is prayer. He who takes no pleasure in communion with God needs, most of all, to commune with him. He needs to realize the sinfulness which hinders such communion. Feelings of pride and self-sufficiency vanish when one feels the presence of God. Job said: "Now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The first prayer as one realizes his true relation to God is that of the publican, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

"The devil never takes a vacation." Of course not. If he did the world would be better off.

## HUMAN OPINIONS..

By C. H. Wetherbe.

God has said that His thoughts concerning the affairs of His Kingdom and His dealings with mankind are vastly different from those of men. He never allows any human being to dictate to Him the way of managing His own affairs. He is the supreme Governor of all things in heaven and on earth. But many people assume to know what God ought to say and do. A Presbyterian minister of Milwaukee, in a recent article in *The Interior*, says: "What is the truth in regard to the end of those who reject the gospel? Is it eternal torments? Does Christ teach that? It is inconceivable that Christ should teach eternal torments and yet his apostle Paul in his many epistles and addresses never use any expression like it. Paul says of the enemies of the cross of Christ, 'Whose end is destruction,' but he never says eternal torments or uses any like expression. Paul says of God that he will render 'tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil,' but he does not say that anguish is eternal nor that it is after the destruction of the wicked. And so with the teachings of the apostle Peter." This is a sample of human opinions with respect to God's dealings with ungodly ones who die unsaved. That man puts his own construction upon God's words, and gives them such meanings as accord with his own opinions of what ought to be done with continually unrepentant sinners. He makes the word "destruction" to mean total cessation of existence, just as all annihilationists do, whereas God has not used the word in such a sense. Christ did not, so far as the record shows, use the phrase, "eternal torments," but He certainly conveyed that meaning in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus. He also meant the same thing in the words, "eternal punishment." And God, in speaking of the finally lost ones, says: "The smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night." These are the thoughts of a God who is above all human opinions.

## PRAYER.

Grant me, I beseech Thee, Almighty and most Merciful God, fervently to desire, wisely to search out, and perfectly to fulfil, all that is well-pleasing unto Thee. Order Thou my worldly condition to the glory of Thy name; and, of all that Thou requirest me to do, grant me the knowledge, the desire, and the ability, that I may so fulfil it as I ought, and may my path to Thee, I pray, be safe, straightforward, and perfect to the end. Give me, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no unworthy affection may drag downwards; give me an unconquered heart, which no tribulation can wear out; give me an upright heart, which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside. Bestow upon me also, O Lord my God, understanding to know Thee, diligence to seek Thee, wisdom to find Thee, and a faithfulness that may finally embrace Thee. Amen.—St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).

Dr. John Watson, in reviewing his thirty years in the active ministry, says, in his papers on "What Might Have Been," that, if he had it all to do over again, he would preach shorter sermons, he would pay more attention to his language, he would be more comforting, and he would preach Christ more earnestly. Most ministers would say the same thing essentially.

The preacher who has the most success in his ministry is the one who, like Moses, goes up into the mountains of meditation with God and talks with him face to face and comes back to his people with his face aglow with the memory of the conference.