

sense is dull. They have no true conception of sin. Their belief that they are in the hands of fate tends to deaden the feeling of personal responsibility. How great the task to get such people to feel any concern about their sins, and to desire Christ, the Saviour.

2. There are the difficulties within the Church on the mission field. (a) There is the poverty of the native Christians leading them to enter Christian service from purely mercenary motives. There is lack of spirituality, want of readiness for service, a weakness in testimony and little zeal for the conversion of others. It is hard to get a sufficient number of native leaders, and it is a necessity to the successful prosecution of the work.

(b) The missionaries have difficulties. In some countries they must face deadly climates and unhealthy sanitary conditions. They find it hard at times to come into close touch with the life of the native Christians. There is a gulf between the habits and customs of the people of the East and those of the West. The mastering of the native language is a very difficult task, but absolutely necessary for effective work. To preserve a triumphant and ever-expanding spiritual life amid heathen surroundings is the chief battle-ground and the fight is hard. 3. There are the difficulties within the Church in Christian lands. The number who believe that the world ought to be evangelized is yet comparatively small. Many fail to regard Christ's command as imperative and consider the enterprise as optional. Some think that Christianity is not the absolute religion—that other religions have saving power—that the nations can get along without Christ. The invasion of the Church by the world is a menace to the extension of Christ's Kingdom. A secularized church can never evangelize the world.

A RAY OF HOPE.

These difficulties mentioned above must be reckoned with. They are real, not imaginary. They should be looked at with clear eye, and their strength estimated. Yet not one of these difficulties is insuperable. Similar obstacles have already been overcome. God has opened up within the past fifty years the most populous regions of the globe. There are now no restrictions in Japan to the preaching of the Gospel. A little over a generation ago China was closed to outsiders save five part cities. Now evangelists can proclaim Christ in every corner of the land. Within a half century 700,000,000 people have been made accessible to the missionary. In the light of these facts, can we be discouraged at difficulties? Says Dr. Goodrich, who has labored in China for thirty-five years: "I count the difficulties of the Chinese language and Chinese customs, of race prejudice, and dense ignorance, of political exclusion and bigoted pride, all as nothing before a church filled with the spirit of the Great Commission." Let us not magnify difficulties and minimize the Providential opportunities, the promises of God and the resources of the Holy Spirit. Difficulties were made to overcome. They are to call forth the best that is in us. Above all they are to create profound distrust in human plans, and to drive us to God. "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too hard for me?" We must always take into the count God himself and the omnipotent, irresistible forces which he has placed at our disposal. "The things which are impossible with me are possible with God."

SEED THOUGHTS.

How have I won the right to join in missionary rejoicings?

Do I count the triumph of missions anywhere a personal triumph?

The glory of the Lord will rise upon

us (v. 1) only as we send it abroad among the sons of men, send it abroad.

It is part of the business of the Christian to be certain that light will drive away all darkness (v. 2); that is, it is the Christian's business to be an optimist.

Nothing so enlarges the heart (v. 5) as the study and practice of missions. We learn to find room in our interest and affections for all men, for the whole world.

Our remedies frequently fail, but Christ as the remedy for sin never fails.—Mackenzie.

As for self, let it be forgotten forever; henceforth let Christ live, let Christ reign.—Henry Martyn.

God himself for our portion.—James Gilmour.

The thought of failure ought never to enter our minds.—Selwyn.

POINTS FOR THE PRESIDENT.

There are three classes of difficulties in the way of evangelizing the world given in the foregoing. In number one, there are seven sub-divisions. Appoint seven persons, in advance, of course, to give them at the meeting. Then appoint another person for number two, and still another for number three. Have these difficulties fully considered. Then bring on yourself the "Ray of Hope" given above, showing the encouragements towards success. Make this a ringing missionary meeting, with missionary hymns and Scriptures. Can it be possible that any present are helping to send the Gospel to the heathen and have not accepted it themselves!

APRIL 5.—"WHAT THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN TEACHES US."

Luke 10, 30-37.

HOME READINGS.

Mon., Mar. 30. Samaritans that got good. John 4, 39-42
Tues., Mar. 31. Jews and Samaritans. Luke 9, 51-55
Wed., Apr. 1. What we owe neighbors. Ex. 20, 15-17
Thurs., Apr. 2. Practical love for neighbors.

Fri., Apr. 3. Helping our neighbor. Lev. 19, 13-18
Sat., Apr. 4. Love fulfilling the law. Rom. 13, 27-29

This parable of the Good Samaritan looks as if it might have been written for the twentieth century. To say the least, its truths are just as timely now as they were in the first century. The relation we ought to sustain to those about us, and to the larger world beyond our immediate contact, may well engage our most thoughtful attention. Indeed, the practical ills in family, industrial, commercial, and national life are the result either of the ignorance of that altruism, or of the violation of that law when known. The news of recent "strikes" in various parts of Canada and the United States indicates a disregard for the fundamental Christian precept of love for one's neighbor. Let the authoritative voice of Christ be heard. "Sir, ye are brethren," and great peace would fall on our disturbed industrial conditions. This topic parable should be studied in its application to modern times.

A DASTARDLY CRIME.

Somewhere along the dangerous road between Jerusalem and Jericho, a distance of about twenty miles, an awful crime was committed. A solitary man appears, going to Jericho. Issuing from one of the caves, or springing from behind some rock, a band of ruffians fall upon him. Very likely he stands on his defence. Swords are drawn, blows are struck, numbers are killed by surprise ground. With all haste, they plunder his person. They deprive him of his clothing, and parting with a blow or two to

finish their work, on the rule that dead men tell no tales, they hurry off, leaving him by the wayside, insensible, helpless, dying in a pool of blood.

VISITORS TO THE SROT.

There were at least three persons who saw this unfortunate man after the tragedy—a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan. Stand near, and watch each visitor as he passes, and note his mode of procedure.

1. The Priest. "By chance there came down a certain priest." This is a most likely occurrence, as Jericho was one of the headquarters for the priests of that day. About twelve thousand priests and Levites who used to attend the temple at Jerusalem in courses, resided in Jericho. Who would be more inclined to render help to the wounded man than this fellow-countryman of his? But, no, he passed by on the other side of the ravine. He did not even stop to look at the sufferer, much less to inquire what he could do for him. And he was either going to or returning from the sacred duties of his office. Ah, yes, how true it is, one may occupy a very sacred position, and yet have a very cold heart. Such action is not true religion; it is only its counterfeit. Doubtless he had excused enough to satisfy his own mind. He was tired, or was in a hurry, or it was a hopeless case, or he could not bear to look on suffering, or he was afraid of the return of the robbers. Do these were excuses, not reasons. There is a wide difference between the two. But let us be plain with ourselves—do we ever pass by human want that we ought to relieve? Do we ever keep out of the way of those who need our help? Do we not conjure up excuses to quiet our consciences, and make our Christian service easy?

2. The Levite. The Levites performed the humbler services of the temple, such as cleaning, carrying fuel, and acting as chorists. They were also writers, preachers, and teachers. The Scribes and lawyers were frequently of this tribe, which, in fact, was set apart by Moses as the intellectual body of the nation. This Levite, with his knowledge of the law and versed in the precepts of religion, "came and looked on him"—a man in distress, he must see him. He did a little more than the priest, but resisted the good impulses which probably stirred within him. His intellectual training did not make him compassionate; nor did his relation to sacred things move his sympathies. He was a standing example of spurious holiness—sanctity divorced from good works. How easy it is to know, and not to do! How easy to sing hymns, and then live as we have always lived! How easy to attend Bible and listen to sermons, and attend religious meetings—and then jog along at the same old rate, making no alteration either in style or speed. Increased knowledge should result in more perfect service.

3. The Samaritan. The Samaritans were half heathen, a mixed race of Jews and Gentiles, accepting the Pentateuch only as their Bible, erroneous in some points, and heretical in others. Our Lord by the priests and Levites who selected this case, but he does not mean to teach by that the Jews as a people were worse than the Samaritans, nor that the religious people are less compassionate than worldly people. Yet it is a fair inference that those men are better in practice than their wrong creed would lead us to expect; while others, who are theoretically right, may be practically all wrong.

THE QUESTION ANSWERED.

The lawyer had asked Jesus the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Whom am I to love as myself? And this is the answer. The great Teacher, after describing this vivid scene, said, with searching force—"Which now of these three proved neighbor unto him that fell