

Missionary World.

THE CHINESE MISSIONARY PROBLEM.

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(CONCLUDED.)

We must not lose sight of another fact bearing on the subject. The Chinese convert who is the most useful in defending the truth against opponents, in instructing enquirers in the tenets of Christianity and in rousing interest among the indifferent and the careless, is he who has the most accurate knowledge of Christian and cognate truth. He is the best qualified to "exhort by sound doctrine" the attentive listener, and to "convince the gainsayer" who "holds fast the faithful word" which he has been carefully taught, and who is ready to give an intelligent answer to him who asks for a reason of the hope that is in him. Now, this implies diligent, thoughtful, and long-continued education in holy things. Such education was insisted on and practised by our Saviour and by His apostles. And, among a people like the Chinese, who are in intellect equal to, and in civilization more advanced than, the ancient Greeks and Romans, is a mere slipshod fashion of planting Christianity desirable? Will it be successful even if desirable? History emphatically proclaims against the possibility of such success.

More important, more difficult, and demanding more varied talents than the work of any minister in the church or the duties of any professorial chair in Christian countries, is the work of establishing Christianity in China. Who, then, is sufficient for these things? Who is the man best fitted for this work? Were the conversion of the world a task now initiated, it might be perhaps more difficult to return a definite reply to this question. But the war against the kingdom of darkness is as old as the Church of God. We must, therefore, listen to the teachings of the past experience of that Church to guide us in our action for the future.

When the Lord's people were brought out of Egypt, the chosen leader was Moses, a man accomplished in all the learning of the Egyptians, a man whose courage was as unshaken as his intellect was powerful, whose knowledge was as great as his faith was free from doubt. If we examine the character of the men who were moved by the Holy Ghost to rebuke, and to undertake the reclamation of, the back-sliding Jews—rulers, priest and people—we find that each is pre-eminent in courage, eminent for knowledge of the truth, of outstanding ability combined with that humility which is the twin-brother of real greatness. Our lesson from Old Testament history is that God, to accomplish His great work, chooses men few in number, but this number the choicest of their race and generation.

It is stated that the New Testament lays down a different standard. The Lord Jesus is said to have sent forth a band of illiterate fishermen to establish His Kingdom upon earth. Is this an accurate representation of the case? Of the apostles first selected some were certainly educated men. Two men attained to special eminence. Peter and John were originally men who did not lack force of character, and the writers of the Gospel of John, and the Epistles of Peter and John, cannot be called illiterate. Compared to the Rabbi who knew the jots and tittles of every word in every book of the Old Testament and who could learnedly discuss the structure of sentences, and extract wonderful meanings from the form of letters, the apostles may have been ignorant of literature. But true learning does not consist in the knowledge of roots and words, or the syntax and grammar of languages. These are but the instruments for acquiring or imparting some truth or truths. Real learning consists in the knowledge of that truth itself. And did the public appearances of the apostles not prove them possessed of more real learning than the Rabbinical book-

worms ever knew or could comprehend? During a lengthened period did not the disciples pass through a system of close, daily and hourly education such as no other men ever had, and under the greatest teacher the world ever saw, before they were commissioned to be "apostles" or "sent" ones? Can such men be said to have been unlearned or untrained when they were sent forth to their work? They were, on the contrary, men thoroughly trained and carefully selected.

The apostle Paul still further emphasizes my contention that in the history of the Church of Old and New Testament times God employed a select few to initiate the work of training men to be preachers of righteousness to their fellow-countrymen. And does not the history of the church, subsequent to the Apostolic Period, spell out the same lesson? A strong Luther appears in Germany, and the country escapes entirely from the broken shackles of Rome. An equally robust Knox preaches in Scotland, and the Reformation is completed. Men not less learned, but of weaker character, led the movement in England, and the Reformation is still unfinished. Behind every great movement in the church, since that time, and behind all important progress in the mission world, you will invariably find a man of decided force of character, of sound common sense, of good natural abilities, frequently of learning, and of a warmly sympathizing disposition; and by devoted earnestness these qualities are all consecrated to the service of God. These are all select men, chosen by God because of the necessary qualifications given to them by Himself, to adapt them for the work to which they have been called.

To briefly recapitulate. Because of their ancient civilization and their excellent system of education, the Chinese regard Westerners with contempt. Therefore, to gain their respect, you must have men of prominent mental endowments, sharpened and refined by educational advantages. From political considerations and social customs, there exist serious obstacles to friendly intercourse with Christian people. Irrespective, therefore, of the argument from their enormous numbers, it is indispensable that native converts be employed to preach the Gospel to the Chinese. In order to be the best possible laborers in this work the converts must be well instructed, to enable them to exhort the believer and to convince the gainsayer. And to properly instruct these converts, to make them fit instruments for the establishment of a strong, healthy, aggressive form of Christianity, we learn from the history of God's dealings with man in ancient and modern times, that the church must send forth to this work in China her ablest and noblest sons, the most talented and earnest of her members. Thus history declares the church to be spiking her most sacred duty when she is satisfied with ordinary or inferior representatives to do a work which demands the greatest skill, the greatest wisdom, the greatest piety at her disposal. "Quality, not quantity," was the conclusion of the late Norman McLeod from his Indian experience. This conclusion is justified by Scripture, by history, and by common sense.

Critics of missionary methods, who apparently believe themselves freed from all responsibility in connection with the propagation of the Gospel, shout out in pompous tones or in hysterical screams, "Revert to apostolic methods." This is exactly what is required, and these critics would have deserved commendation had they defined "apostolic methods." What were the methods of apostolic times? Those methods did not hinge on the question of money, more or less. They ignored discussions on dress. They laid no special emphasis on the kinds of food and drink to be used. Unavoidable hardships were faced with calmness and without boasting, asceticism was scornfully repudiated with the heathenism out of whose ignorance it sprang. The essential features of the "apostolic method" are clearly unfolded in the brief

account we possess of the first foreign missionary meeting held in the primitive church.

A few fugitive Christians had successfully preached the doctrines of the Cross in Antioch. The church in Jerusalem found it difficult to believe the good news, and sent the experienced Barnabas to examine the facts. His soul was overjoyed. He preached, and the cause grew. He bethought him of his friend, Saul, then in Tarsus, whom he believed specially fitted to reason with the numerous types of humanity congregated in Antioch. The eloquence of the older Barnabas, and the keen logical reasoning of the young Saul overcame all opposition. Other preachers and teachers, eminent men there were, but these two, the oldest and the youngest, stood out conspicuous for ability, for earnestness, and for success. In the congregational prayer meeting the needs of those who were destitute of the Gospel were not forgotten. And as the believers were practical men, their prayers were followed by steps taken to proclaim the Gospel where it was unknown. The claims of Antioch, one of the three largest and most influential cities, wealthy and active, of which only a fraction had as yet heard the Gospel, were not overlooked. It was decided that the work of preaching there should be left to private members and the less powerful of the preachers. But their two ablest preachers—the one the most experienced and eloquent, the other the most learned and logical—they resolved to solemnly set apart to go forth to preach the Gospel where its voice had not been heard. These two men, therefore, who would probably not have presumed to offer themselves for that work, were called by the Church and the Spirit to become "Apostles" or "Sent" ones. That was the Apostolic method.

Need it be pointed out how very far all churches and all societies have departed from that method? Instead of solemnly calling tried men to this most difficult work of the church, the Societies wait for offers of service from young men, who are perhaps all the more ready to undertake the task because they are unaware of the conditions under which it is to be carried out. The Church now makes its Pauls professors of theology, or some cognate study, and calls its Barnabases to be the pastors of fashionable congregations. One Paul did greater service to the Church of Christ than a hundred of the young, inexperienced, and partially educated Christians of Antioch could have effected had they offered themselves or gone of their own accord. Revert, then, to the Apostolic method if you desire the Gospel to spread as it should and as it can.

Mere intellectual ability is proud, and leans upon the "wisdom of words." Mere sentimental spirituality is weak, despising the wisdom of which it possesses so little. "Zeal without knowledge" is equally dangerous with ability without spirituality. Your missionaries, to be useful, must be of the Paul type, well educated, well trained, of conspicuous talent, of unquestioning faith; men whose spirituality of mind is as pronounced as their intellectual abilities are prominent.

Rev. James Hastie: Followers of Jesus, remember you cannot make mud pies, and yet have clean hands. You cannot put up stovepipes and blacken stoves with your Sunday suit on, and not get your clothes soiled. You cannot go to church and Sunday School on Sabbath, and to the dancing assembly, or to the obscene play, or the rollicking club during the week, and still retain a relish for the prayer meeting, and the Bible, and the communion table. You cannot serve God and mammon. You may make the attempt, but Satan, not Christ, will get your service, and purchase your soul.

Sunday School Times. Self adaptation is not self-annihilation. The wise adapting of ourselves to circumstances, is an exercise of original power, not a servile imitating or paralysis of self. Says Phillips Brooks. "Only he who lives a life of his own can help the lives of other men."

Teacher and Scholar.

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GOLDEN TEXT.—Matthew x. 7.

Events since last lesson: 1. The stilling of the tempest; 2, the restoring of the demoniac of Gadara; 3, Matthew's feast; 4, the raising of the daughter of Jairus from the dead; 5, two blind men receive their sight.

Time.—Autumn of A.D. 28, towards the close of the second year of Christ's ministry. This preaching tour lasted through the year.

Place.—Some village or town in Galilee. The Third Circuit, or preaching tour, in Galilee was begun after this with His disciples, the directions for which are given in to day's lesson. The second rejection at Nazareth was during the first part of this tour.

The twelve whom Jesus chose had now been with Him under special instruction for some months, and another new and important step was taken in sending forth for the first time the disciples by themselves (Mark), two by two, to preach and to work miracles. This was a part of their training.

Home Mission Work, a Model.—These twelve Jesus sent forth. They had not been long under instruction, yet Jesus sends them forth. The presence, sympathy, knowledge and qualifications of the one would be a source of help, strength and courage to the other. This plan has been found desirable in modern missionary work. It is not necessary always to wait long before converts may be sent out to tell the ignorant of Jesus and the way of salvation. They were still to be under training by Christ, and sending them out thus was one important part of it. This for the present was to be Home Mission Work; they were not to go into the way of the Gentiles, nor any city of the Samaritans, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. There are times and circumstances when it is right to do Home Mission Work only. Men without the knowledge of Christ and His salvation are lost.

I. Their Work.—Go preach, saying, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." Preaching is still to be the great work of the missionary. As time goes on it will branch off into many kinds of work, but this is first and chief always, pointing the ignorant and lost to Jesus who alone can save from sin, and give peace and eternal life.

II To Heal the Sick, Cleanse the Lepers, etc.—Luke tells us, "He gave them power and authority to do these things." When the church sends forth men whom Christ also sends forth, He qualifies them for their work; for instance, Paul and Barnabas, and many noted and humble, unnoticed missionaries, in former and later times, whose work God has honoured and blessed. We have here, the first medical missions, so to speak, in which healing of men's diseases is to accompany and make a way for the preaching. Freely ye have received, etc. Only as we have received God's salvation, freely, as a free gift, shall we be able to give freely, and preach a large, free, unearned pardon and new life. As you have received your commission and power freely, gratuitously, so exercise it unselfishly for the good of others; make neither your preaching, nor your power of working miracles, a means of gain.

III. Their Outfit.—Provide neither gold nor silver, etc. They were going among their fellow countrymen, in their own land, and were to go as they were, without elaborate and expensive outfit; it was not needed. In substance Jesus said: "Make no preparations such as are usually made on the eve of a journey; set out just as you are. God will provide for all your wants." The open hospitality of the East, so often used as a basis for the dissemination of new thoughts, would be ample for their maintenance. Missionaries of the cross must adapt themselves to circumstances, adhering always to the same great principles of simplicity, of trust, absence of all self-seeking and pride, of complete devotion to Jesus and the gospel.

Directions as to Their Stay in Any Place.—Into what city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, Act xvi. 15. Lydia's conduct in inviting Paul to abide with her, is an illustration in point. They were not to lodge with any whose character was unbefitting their profession. And their abide; they were not to waste their working time in seeking accommodation for themselves.

Worthy and Unworthy Homes.—A worthy household was one devout, well-disposed to them and their message. In Christian lands some houses are worthy, some are not. The usual salutation was "Peace be unto you." Like some people their presence in a house would be a benediction. If the house was not worthy, their peace was to return to them, that is, be as if the words had not been spoken.

Consequence of Rejecting Christ's Messengers. They were but plain men, and some would reject them as they did Christ. It will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for wicked Sodom or Gomorrah than for this city. These cities had sinned against much less light. The greater the light and privilege of anyone, the severer the judgment for refusing or abusing them. They were as sheep, as harmless and defenceless, in the midst of wolves cruel, bloodthirsty men, they were, therefore, to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves. They were to be prudent in the recognition of danger, and in the choice of means for opposing or escaping it. They were to be wise, guileless and sincere in all their conduct, qualities which should always mark the servants of Christ.