

reside in the interior, and may purchase property in the name of the Church. The very heroism and persistency of the Roman Catholic missions in China should check our inherent sectarian prejudice, and induce us to applaud the good wherever found.

Great favors have already been bestowed on the cause of Christianity by the toleration and protection from the Imperial Government. That much of this is directly due to the mediation of foreign powers is not to be denied; and yet the Central Government, while resenting much of the past treatment of the stronger nations, is in no way inclined to reverse its attitude toward either foreign missionaries or Christianity. Coming down to the lower officials, who have control of the many districts and departments of the eighteen provinces, there is oftentimes a glaring disregard of imperial orders in regard to Christianity, and this spirit is largely intensified by the antagonism of local residents. As Christian converts increase in number, we may expect frequent persecutions in certain sections. The need in China is truly great, but we must count the cost before accepting the call.

The way for preaching the simple gospel, for the practice of medicine, for the curing of the opium habit, is open in many places throughout China; and it is for the Church to seize the opportunity when it comes and in the way it comes. We may not realize all that our preconceptions would feign mark out, but the best plan is to commit all our ways unto the Lord, and He will direct our paths. Possessing our souls in patience and running with patience, we cannot, as servants of the kingdom, fear defeat or in reality be overcome.

SUNDAY-SCHOOLS AND LAY WORK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

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PERHAPS there is no more encouraging feature of the century in which we live, for guaranteeing a hopeful and progressive future, than the numerous forms of Christian organization which now invite, if we may not say engross, the attention of men and women, especially in so-called Protestant countries. We propose here and now to show that our much cherished Sunday-school system has not only borne an important part in developing these organizations, but has really been the parent of them, and united them more or less intimately with the growing principle of lay labor, thus reviving the fundamental principles of the New Testament.

The aspirations that have incited good men in all ages to be the prompters of lay activity, and the many who claim to have formed the first Sunday-school, furnish good evidence of the value of the Sunday-school system itself; and the fact that so many of these claimants arose about the end of the last century marks that period to be the time of the inauguration of the movement which the World's Sunday-school Convention, in London, in 1880, decided it to be.* Accepting this, shall we not also be obliged to accept as the outcome of the Robert Raikes system, the definition of the Sunday-school system to be primarily the teaching of the Bible by laymen in classes of six or seven, more or less.

The flowing and ebbing of the oceanic tides are scarcely more apparent than the rising and falling of spiritual reforms by influences and instruments wielded by the divine hand in accomplishing His momentous purposes in the moral elevation of our race. We will claim the Sunday-school as one of these instrumentalities, and the closing of the eighteenth century as the

* See "Centenary Memorial of the Establishment of Sunday-schools,"