

century of modern missions is about to dawn, in tones more imperative and more thrilling than ever before, the heavenly call sounds out : Lo, I am with you ! Into all the world ! To every creature !

OBSTACLES TO MISSIONARY SUCCESS IN KOREA.

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It is easy to attribute to Satan any failure of the Gospel message to convert those to whom it is made known. No simpler explanation can be found of the indifference of a whole people than to say that they are the servants of the devil, and that he refuses to give them up. And yet these statements, accurate as they may be, furnish no explanation apart from an analysis of the methods the great tyrant employs to retain his supremacy. Such an investigation, in its general features, I am about to undertake for the Korean field.

Before entering upon an enumeration of obstacles which exist, it may be well to name such as are not encountered by Christian workers here. Thus, it is known to some that there has been no sparing in this conflict of that great spiritual weapon, prayer. I am thinking now not so much of the missionaries here as of those who hold the ropes at home. There are church households and home altars from which unceasingly the prayer of faith goes up that God will save Korea. There is an old blind woman, unlettered, infirm, almost bedridden, who sits lonely day by day at the hearth of her humble home, patiently enduring physical pain, knitting the weary hours away, repeating again and again to herself in the beautiful language of Luther the words of the Book she knows so well, and praying many a prayer for the salvation of Korea. There is a mother and grandmother of missionaries, now past her fourscore years and ten, long herself a noted foreign missionary, the honored friend of missionaries in many lands, whose intercession for Korea is surely not unavailing. There are men of business and of means whose special gifts for Korea are the accompaniment of many prayers on her behalf. There are boys and girls in their early teens and younger who send out the message, "We are praying for you and for Korea." In daily effort, in discouragements, in successes, the missionary is conscious of these prayers and of their answer. Securely, wonderfully they bear him up. Their authors, equally with himself, are accomplishing the evangelization of Korea, and without them a chief obstacle would still lie in his path.

Again, the inhabitants of Korea are not ignorant savages. On the contrary, they share equally with the Chinese the benefits of the oldest in existence of the world's civilizations, and they are quick to acquire many of the arts of our own progressive system. True, the fashion of their clothing has not changed for either sex in centuries ; yet they accuse us,

dent. There is no adequate scheming either on the part of the most gifted and mighty men ; but, above all and in all, though intimately connected and blended with a thousand other things, in spite of many tremendous opposing forces, the irresistible fiat of the Most High, His design so vast and sublime, moves forward down the ages and among the nations. The lost world's redemption from night to day, from sin to holiness, from death to life, has been decreed and is well under way. It is for this that states and empires have been exalted and cast down ; for this, though all unwittingly, have kings ruled, and statesmen plied their craft, and armies joined in bloody strife ; for this have the earth's circumference been explored, and the secrets hidden in the recesses of boundless continents and oceans ; for this, too, have modern science and mechanical skill brought forth their stunning marvels. The world is to be evangelized ! For eighteen centuries the Anglo-Saxon was under Divine tuition, in preparation for the performance of his peerless part in preaching the everlasting Gospel unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people ; and behold, at the end of the nineteenth the call has been heard, the mission has been accepted, and a great army of English-speaking men and women are scattered everywhere abroad, with ardent love and zeal fulfilling their lofty commission !

And, in particular, for every true disciple of Christ in America and Great Britain, what solemnity, what inspiration, are in the thought ! Who are we that we should be thus ordained, and set apart, and inducted into an office of such infinite moment to the uncounted millions of humanity ? If we are unfaithful and derelict, for the vast majority there is no hope. Alas for the frequent shortcomings and transgressions of the past ; indifference or prejudice, instead of passionate, self-sacrificing love ; thronging to distant regions, seeking riches and dominion rather than lost souls ; not to evangelize so much as to enslave and debauch ; carrying less the Gospel of salvation than strong drink and the deadly vices of civilization ; and multitudes of God's people even yet heedless and callous in this stupendous matter, if not also unbelieving and scornful ; giving pennies where much gold and silver are at hand, and most sorely needed ; sending scores into the world-field to sow and gather, when the urgent demand is for toilers by the ten thousand !

Nevertheless, the gates of entrance into the whole wide world stand open most invitingly. "Come over and help us !" is the universal and piteous cry. The outlook is encouraging in the extreme ; for the time that has elapsed and the number of the toilers engaged, the harvest of the century is amazingly large. At no point has defeat befallen the Lord's host, but everywhere victory has crowned the standards of the cross. It is now well established that neither error, nor ignorance, nor superstition, nor the grossest degradation of savagery can stand before the onset of the Gospel of the Son of God, when uttered from anointed lips, when the efflorescence of a loving heart and of a life hid with Christ in God. So, as the second

perhaps not incorrectly, of immodesty in dress; and they are quite as far removed as ourselves from the traditional garb of aborigines. Unacquainted though they are with the intricate devices of foreign trade and banking, they have serviceable equivalents for not a few of them. Their trade guilds are as highly organized as those of Antwerp or London, proportionately as wealthy, as absolute each in its own sphere. Labor here is more highly "organized" than in Europe or America, the strike as potent an evil, the "walking delegate" no less active. Benefit organizations, burial societies, loan and co-operative associations, exist in manifold forms. Korea has no men of science, no sciences; but she adopted many centuries ago the literature of China, and throughout her borders letters are the patent of respectability. In every audience the missionary gathers there are sure to be some to whom both *jinusa* and *emmoun* are familiar. He has no difficulty, therefore, in securing readers for the books he brings forward. Even the coolie is not unlikely to display the accomplishment, and in many households the girls as well as the boys are taught to read. So that our educational work would be unjustified were it not for the need of building up a generation from childhood in the broad training of Christian enlightenment.

We have still another advantage in the fact that there is no State religion. All classes are ardent devotees of ancestral worship, and profess to be ruled by the precepts of Confucius; but these at the utmost constitute a selfish superstition and not a system of religion. The queen and many of her ladies, as well as not a few officials and commoners, contribute large sums to maintain the Buddhist shrines and monasteries that abound. A propaganda of reformed Buddhism from Japan has lately been begun in the southern provinces. Shintoism exists. And among the higher nobility and in other ranks Roman Catholicism claims a powerful following. These facts go to show how far from an attitude of persecution is that of the present régime toward invading faiths, and how far from imposing a standard of belief upon its subjects.

The most formidable obstacle at present standing in the way of missionaries to Korea is the want of the Scriptures in the vernacular.

To him who would preach Jesus there is seldom difficulty to obtain hearers. He has but to go out upon the highway and ask a question or offer a book to any passer. Street preaching, though nominally prohibited by government, has met no interference for years. But with most in a given audience curiosity is and remains the only ground of interest. As a rule, the remarks of the crowd relate only to the dress and peculiarities of the speaker. Those who ask questions regarding the subject of discourse soon turn away and apparently dismiss it from their thoughts forever. Here and there, however, some listener goes so far as to buy a book, to accept the loan of one, or to promise to call at the missionary's house. The infrequency with which such promises are fulfilled indicates how much of our effort must be looked on as sowing for a long-distant harvest time.

Among the books most constantly circulated are several catechisms, epitomes of Christian teaching in the form of question and answer; Griffith John's "Exhortation to Repentance;" Milne's "The Two Friends," and certain others, favorites wherever known. These are all summaries more or less simple of the essential truths of salvation, and are for the most part translations of tracts long popular in China. Excellent in themselves, it is futile to expect that any one or even all of them together can compare in convincing power with the Holy Word of God itself.

It is, furthermore, indispensable to the upbuilding of converts that they should enjoy the privilege of studying directly the teachings of Christ and of the apostles as recorded in the New Testament. To scholars, it is true, the entire Bible is available in the Chinese character, as translated by the missionaries in China. But not nearly all the inhabitants of Korea belong to the class known as scholars, and but a very small proportion of those who have gone through years of drilling under the parrot-like method of Oriental instruction, and have learned to call off the characters in a single song tone of voice, can read them understandingly. Moreover, with rare exceptions, women are wholly excluded by their ignorance from the benefits of a Chinese text, while facility in reading the *emmoun*, or native character, is readily acquired by natives in a few weeks' time.

About the period when the first Protestant missionaries entered Korea, Rev. John Ross, of Manchuria, issued a translation of the New Testament effected by Koreans who had crossed the border, and had studied the tenets of Christianity under him. This consisted largely of a transliteration of Chinese words into the *emmoun* character, and contains, besides, so many purely northern expressions, as to be almost unintelligible to those in other regions. In fact, it seems to strike the ordinary Korean much as does a sentence in Highland Scotch or in the Yorkshire dialect upon the ear of an American newspaper reader. While it has indisputably been the means of making conversions, it is so far from the ideal as to be practically ignored by local workers.

So it resulted that five years ago a committee was formed, somewhat after the manner in which the same task was undertaken in China, for the purpose of providing a serviceable translation of the Scriptures. It is not to be laid to their charge that they have as yet effected nothing of permanent value. The difficulties prove almost insuperable. Compared with the other languages of the East, Korean is asserted by all who have more than a superficial knowledge of it to excel in perplexities. The question of terms is not easily resolved. And second to none other is that of employing a vocabulary of simple Korean words. As in India, Syria, and elsewhere, our teachers are necessarily taken from among those literati to whom pedantry is a second nature, and in whose eyes words are the more admirable according as their etymology is more recondite. Under the guidance of such men it is difficult to approach the noble simplicity of scriptural diction; and the failure of much of the translation work that

has hitherto been attempted in Korea is due to such an infusion of Chinese terms as renders it comparable to the Latinized phraseology of a scientific treatise when contrasted with the pure Anglo-Saxon of Addison. For such reasons as these the efforts of the committee to provide a translation of the Bible have been uniformly unsuccessful. And among the portions of Scripture that have been rendered into Korean in one quarter and another, none has yet reached the plane of ready comprehension by the ordinary native mind.

A tentative text of Mark and of Luke have for some years been sparingly circulated, but both are far from satisfactory. And beyond these the only means the Korean Christian or inquirer has of reading the Word of God is to seek it in a foreign tongue.

Deprived thus of the power to place the inspired Word in the hands of the people, shall we wonder that the missionary still looks to the future for the harvest of souls that forms the inevitable sequel to such abundant prayer for Korea?

Closely connected with the fact that our assistants are nearly all from a class that holds itself above the people is the further fact that, almost without exception, they try to keep the plane of our work also above that of the people. In this they adhere to the characteristic idea of their nationalism. Perhaps I ought to say lack of nationalism. For, in all that is highest of a nation's individual life—in literature, in religion, in philosophy, in government, in arts and sciences, and in all the essentials of her social system—Korea has always chosen to sit at the feet of China. In this she has been both gainer and loser. While in all these departments she has received the best China had to give, yet she has completely stultified her own national development. To the missionary this imports chiefly that he finds none of those elements of manliness which are both the effect and the ground of Christian training.

Among the social institutions she shares with her patron is a modified feudalism, a system whereby the toiler and the trader are adjudged unworthy to share the higher privileges of the aristocracies. These aristocracies are two in Korea—an aristocracy of rank and an aristocracy of learning. It is to the latter that our language helpers necessarily belong. And being the first to receive Christianity from us, they seem to share a not unnatural inclination to retain its benefits within their own caste. This inclination is manifest in the dominant influence they exercise over the literature we prepare, an influence by which tracts and treatises so often take on the obscure phraseology of a semi-Chinese vocabulary instead of the plainness and simplicity of speech we had intended. In conveying the verbal message by public preaching and private explanation there has too often lurked behind their words the subtle implication that the Church was an intellectual community, whose teachings were above the grasp of common people, and that such were unwelcome there. This is becoming less and less the case. The Church has enlarged her bounds. Those

who for a time monopolized her privileges have been more rightly taught by the Holy Spirit. Yet enough of the clique spirit remains among competent personal helpers to form even now a serious obstacle to the progress of Gospel work.

The attitude of the ordinary Korean mind toward religious questions is not one of vacancy. If the nation has no religion, at least it has a legion of superstitions. Every locality, mountain, river, plain, tree, rock, is peopled with spirits, whose influence extends to crops, traffic, birth, death, marriage, and all the other events of life for whoever comes within their proximity. To their devotees no act of importance can be undertaken till they have been consulted, and calamities, being their complaint of neglect, are to be retrieved by offerings to them. Although some of the better class profess to be uninfluenced by these beliefs and dreads, their emancipation is but partial. Spirit worship enters as a prominent factor into the daily life of every native of the land.

But aside from these local and general superstitions, the people, both high and low, are bound by the thralldom of a far more oppressive system of spiritism. Among the oftenest quoted and the most commendable of the precepts of Confucius are those which inculcate a reverential regard for the memory of one's progenitors. In course of time the observance of these precepts has degenerated into a system of absolute idolatry, wherein a man may receive but slight consideration during life, may be starved and abused and ignored by a degenerate offspring, but nevertheless at death becomes deified into an object of the highest veneration, and thereafter is worshipped at stated times in the form of an ancestral tablet both at the domestic shrine and at the grave. So exacting are the demands of this cult, that the living often forego the absolute necessities of life, even running deeply in debt in order that their ancestors may appear to suffer no neglect. To this practice all social relations for the living are subordinate. And so all-pervasive are its obligations, that he who ignores them is speedily visited with the extreme of social ostracism. Not only is he cut off from the amenities of friendly intercourse, but he can find no employer, no employment from others; none will buy from or sell to him; he is cut off from the use of the village well; his animals are stolen or killed; the officials exact from him an undue proportion of the communal taxes, and in a thousand other ways he becomes the object of petty persecution. Because of his supposed unfilial conduct he is likely to suffer repeated beatings at the hands of the other members of his own family, his entire possessions to be confiscated by them, and, proving obdurate, he may be expelled from the clan or even slain. Nearly all these persecutions have been borne by converts to Christianity, and the dread of them is a powerful restraint upon many who would otherwise seek baptism.

Its slavery to ancestral worship is the great curse of this people. Around it as a national principle they rally as do Americans about that of personal liberty. But, in contrast to the latter, it is an essentially selfish

principle; an adherence to it has completely obviated the possibility to its citizens of individual action. As members of the family clan all live and die, and only such as break away from social ties are able to enter into the freedom of Christian privilege.

In some quarters an obstacle to the reception of truth lies in the perverted teachings of Roman Catholicism, which has long had a firm footing in Korea. It is said to number at present about thirty thousand converts in the several provinces. It is not to be supposed that many of these have received any spiritual training. They form, to all intents, simply an extensive organization whose members support one another in forcing others to yield to them in temporal affairs. They have such a bad name among other classes that not a few refuse Protestant books until assured that they have nothing to do with Catholicism.

Another group of obstacles exists in the social customs of Korea. Family life is thoroughly patriarchal. Marriage is almost obligatory; the unmarried state a shame to either sex. Male children are esteemed because they perpetuate the ancestral line and maintain ancestral worship. Female children at marriage are transferred to the family of their husbands, and therefore are lightly esteemed by their parents; while the wife who brings forth only daughters is likely to find herself soon replaced in her spouse's affection. Young people take no part in the choice of their partners. Women of the better classes rarely leave their homes. Those seen upon the streets all belong to the lower orders. The wife is never looked upon as a companion by her helpmeet, and, if she belong to a respectable class, passes her life in the seclusion of the women's quarters.

Such conditions inevitably preclude the possibility of home life as we enjoy it. The domestic circle is to the Korean an incomprehensible phrase. The Christian household is an innovation which revolutionizes the very basis of society. This is inevitable. We are often told that missionaries must not interfere with social customs, but only preach Christianity. Yet Christian homes are a prime essential of the Christian Church, and the Christian home involves much at direct variance with Korean views. It is therefore incumbent upon the Christian teacher to inculcate the abandonment to some extent of native usages and their substitution by those founded on Christian precepts.

Rather an after-problem than an obstacle to conversion is the question of self-support by converts. The time has passed when all can find employment among foreigners. It has not yet ceased to be the case that nearly all baptized in the capital make early application for positions as personal teachers, and this mainly for the reason that it is impossible for them to continue in their old pursuits and still practise Christian morality. But even here not a few are developing a self-reliance in these matters that bids fair in time to produce a self-supporting Church.

Another phase of the work problem, however, is quite as important, though less puzzling. Labor is looked on as degrading in Korea. There

is consequently a large class whose claim to be "gentlemen" interferes with any pursuit which might afford a livelihood in the absence of inherited wealth. But Korean custom recognizes a hospitality so wide that whoever establishes himself in the guest-room must be supplied with food, fire, even clothing, until such time as he chooses to depart. Now the infusion of grace to withstand such customs is a labor the Holy Spirit alone can accomplish. But they place the missionary in many a position of doubt, and they make it more difficult than we are apt to appreciate for converts either to accept or to maintain the labor standard established by Scripture.

Other obstacles might be named, but these suffice. Korea is still within the grasp of the arch-enemy, and he is even now tightening his grip upon her. Yet with greater certainty she is being prayed away from him; and what I have written may serve some as an indication upon what lines prayer is most specifically needed.

A REMARKABLE EXAMPLE OF MORALITY vs. CHRISTIANITY.

Sir Jansetjee Jejeebhoy was a public-spirited Parsee merchant of Bombay, a man of fine business ability and great will force, who died April 14th, 1859, aged seventy-six, worth \$4,000,000. In 1822, at forty years of age, he gave proof of a remarkable munificence, releasing debtors from jail by assuming their debts, and for thirty-six years his beneficence never slackened. He gave over \$1,500,000 away in promiscuous charity, utterly indifferent to class or creed; and, in honor of his patriotism and munificence, he was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1849 and presented with a gold medal bearing her image set in diamonds in 1843. The hospital at Bombay bears his name, a monument to his noble charity; the Grant medical college was endowed by him, which furnishes India with skilled medical practitioners. He established at Bombay an asylum for the education and support of poor Parsee children. No man ever contributed more to the prosperity of the Presidency of Bombay; and Lord Elphinstone, the governor, said that besides the great works which endear his name to future generations, his private—almost secret—charities divided the weekly bread to thousands of his fellow-creatures. His wealth was gotten by sagacity, industry, and integrity, and given with wisdom, discrimination, and sense. And yet Jejeebhoy for three quarters of a century confronted the Christian religion as he beheld it in the East Indies, and persistently and obstinately clung to the superstitions in which he had been born and nurtured.

He died as he had lived, a *Parsee*, a Persian fire-worshipper; he adhered to the Zend-Avesta and rejected the Bible, and day after day did just what Alexander the Great did before him—went down to the sea beach and bowed in worship before the rising sun. With all his noble, patriotic, humane, and philanthropic impulses he was born and bred an idolater, and