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THE CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOR TOPIC

By the Rev. Charles E. Schaeffer, D. D.

May 29th—How Have Missions Helped China? Luke 4:16-31.

It is practically impossible to do full justice to this topic because the influence which Missions and missionaries have had upon China in all the departments of life can never be fully measured nor adequately told. The Gospel of Christ goes into every country as a leavening influence. It penetrates and pervades the whole lump of human society. Its effect is not limited to a single area of life. Sometimes it does not appear in a single department of life, but is all pervasive. It lifts up the whole structure of human society. So Christian Missions are a dynamic that influences every aspect of life. This is true of every country throughout the world. It is equally true of China.

China is a great country: great in its extent of territory, in its multitudes of people, in its richness of resources. It is a very old country—one of the very oldest in the world. For centuries it was a most bigoted and exclusive country. The Chinese built their massive wall around their country, both to shut others out and to shut themselves in. In this way they simply perpetuated their own ideas and ideals. They conserved their customs and traditions and thus in many ways they remained more backward then some of the other nations of the world that had a different policy. But eventually the old wall gave way and foreign people and foreign thought and foreign life came into this great hermit nation and a new order of life began to develop. For a long time it was called "the sleeping giant of the East," but with the coming in of new ideas the giant began to get awake and now China is awake. It has been making such phenomenal progress within recent years that the world has scarcely been prepared to understand it. Much of the progress that has been made in China must be attributed to Christian Missions. China is in ferment today. It is in the very throes of a revolution. Human lives are endangered. Foreigners are excluded. Missionaries are banished. Foreign property is appropriated and sometimes destroyed. The outside world looks on with dismay and with fear and trembling.

There are those who say that present day conditions in China are due almost entirely to the missionaries. There is a sense in which there is much truth in this assertion. Undoubtedly the present ferment in China is due to the new spirit in the heart of China. If China were still asleep there would be no disturbance there. But is it not better for China to be awake and to be finding its place among the nations of the world, even though it raises a little dust and causes a little confusion for the time being, rather than to be a "sleeping giant" unconscious of its great strength and mission among the nations?

There is a sense in which the coming of the Kingdom of Christ among the nations as well as in the human heart always causes some disturbances. Jesus Himself said, "I am come not to send peace but a sword." "I am come to kindle a fire upon the earth." The Gospel must sometimes remove a lot of waste and dead material before it can be properly established. Sometimes it is necessary to have a violent thunder storm in order to clear the atmosphere. Sometimes it is necessary to have sorrow and tears in order that our hearts may be mellower and our eyes clearer. It is night that brings out the stars. It is always dangerous to release new ideas anywhere. New forces may get people into trouble. Every new thought is like dynamite which has both its good and destructive possibilities. So the Gospel of Christ, coming into China, has either directly or indirectly precipitated this revolution. With the missionaries have come the ideas of democracy and self-determination and freedom.

Sometimes these great principles must be worked out through sacrifice, sometimes even by bloodshed and revolution. The old order passes and a new one is being established. Probably many of the Chinese do not see this today. They may be fighting for a cause which they do not fully understand. They may be banishing the missionaries and destroying the Missions even though these are the influences that have served to bring about these great changes in society.

But the missionaries will not be barred forever. The time is coming after the storm has subsided when missionaries will be called back, but they will have to do their work along somewhat different lines and work upon a new basis. Perhaps some of the former missionaries cannot return. They may not fit into the new regime. It is a hopeless effort to try to force the life of Western civilization upon the people of China. You cannot reproduce the American Church in China. No one should try to do this. The work of the missionary whom our church sends out is not to establish a Reformed church in China, and certainly there ought to be no Methodist or Presbyterian or Baptist churches in China. The kind of a church that will be most effective for good will be a Christian church that will be indigenous to the soil of China itself. It will express itself through the thought-life, the customs, the ideals, the whole social and political order of the Chinese. The stock of Christianity must not be grafted in upon China, but it has got to be appropriated by China so that it will express itself in Chinese ways and not in American or European ways.

Now, it is along this line that Missions can be of greatest help to China or to any other country. Much has already been wrought. Missions have helped China physically. Medical missions have brought untold good to China's millions. They have combated disease and death and have greatly relieved human suffering and pain. Missions have brought new ideals to the Chinese and the Chinese have abandoned footbinding and opium eating and other habits that were injurious. Missions have profited China industrially. Here is a great country with marvellous natural resources. These are being more fully realized and utilized. Inventions and machinery have been introduced, factories have been established and in a sense the whole social and economic order has been reestablished very largely under the influence of Christian Missions. In some instances, alas! business men of non-Christian principles and ideals have exploited the Chinese and have in a measure neutralized the very efforts which the missionaries put forth in behalf of a higher order of life. Probably some of this exploitation on the part of capitalists and political plotters lies at the bottom of the present attitude which the Chinese are taking towards foreigners.

Christian Missions have helped China intellectually. While still a large portion of China's millions are unable to read and write, schools are being rapidly established, universities are drawing thousands of students, Chinese students are coming to America to study in our colleges and universities, and thus a new ferment of intellectuality is working in China, most of which is due to the influence of Christian nations.

Christian Missions have helped China spiritually. Many souls have accepted Jesus Christ. Churches have been built and the Bible is being read and studied and thus a new country is being created under the influences of the spirit of Jesus Christ. After the turmoil and the tumult has ceased and the smoke of battle has rolled away and the noise of marching armies has died down, there will be a new China arising, and with the proper perspective the future historian will be assigning to Christian Missions the rightful place in helping to bring about a new nation for God.



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By virtue of the authority of Chapter 132 of the Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland passed at its January Session in the year 1927, the Mayor and Common Council of Westminster gives notice that it invites sealed proposals for Forty Thousand Dollars ($40,000.00) of its bonds.

These bonds are each to be of the denomination of One Thousand Dollars ($1,000.00), will bear date July 1, 1927, with interest at 4½%, per annum, with coupons attached for the payment of said interest semi-annually on the first day of January and July of each year; they will be numbered from one to forty inclusive and will mature and be payable two a year in the consecutive order of their number after the year 1928, bond number one falling due and being payable January 1, 1929, Bond number two July 1, 1929, and the remainder of said bonds continuing to fall due and being payable two a year on the first day of January and July thereafter in their numerical order until the whole issue is retired and redeemed.

Sealed proposals will be received at the office of the Mayor and Common Council of Westminster, until the hour of twelve o'clock M. on June 1, 1927, and they will be opened that night at eight o'clock P. M., the envelope containing the proposal should should have endorsed on it "Proposal for Bonds." An offer from a Banking Institution of Westminster has been made for the whole or any part of the issue at par.

The offer or offers which are accepted will be expected to be complied with by paying cash for the bonds purchased on or before July first, 1927.

The right is reserved to reject any and all bids.

By order of the Mayor and Common Council of Westminster.

REVERDY N. SNADER,

5-6-4t Clerk.

Improved Uniform International

Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)
(©, 1927, Western Newspaper Union.)

Lesson for May 29

PETER UNDAUNTED BY PERSECUTION

LESSON TEXT—Acts 5:17-42.

GOLDEN TEXT—We ought to obey God rather than men.—Acts 5:29.

PRIMARY TOPIC—Peter Shows His Courage.

JUNIOR TOPIC — Peter Speaks Bravely for His Lord.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Standing Firm Under Persecution.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—The Source of Courage.

The vindication of the house of God against the hypocritical act of Ananias and Sapphira had a salutary effect upon the people. The hypocrites were deterred from joining the church, but true-hearted men and women were all the more attracted to it, even identifying themselves with it. So great was the stir in Jerusalem that even the sick folk were brought where but the shadow of Peter might fall upon them.

I. The Apostles in Prison (vv. 17-18).

The marvelous success which accompanied the teaching of the apostles was too much for the Sadducees to endure. Their jealous wrath was aroused to such an extent that they laid the cruel hand of persecution upon these witnesses for Christ. Cain was jealous of Abel; Joseph's brethren sold him in slavery because he was the favorite of Jacob. Saul was jealous of David when the women ascribed greater glory to him.

II. The Apostles' Miraculous Deliverance (vv. 19-21).

1. The Lord sent an angel to open the prison and let the prisoners free (v. 19).

There are no doors, nor bolts capable of shutting out God's angel.

2. They were commanded to go at once and speak to the people. (v. 20).

The message they were to deliver was the "Words of this life." Most likely this means eternal life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

3. Their prompt obedience (v. 21).

By daybreak they were teaching in the temple.

III. The Apostles Tried (vv. 21-32).

1. The meeting of the council (v.21).

In the early morning the Jewish council was convened by the high-priest.

2. Their perplexity (vv. 22-24).

The officer was sent to bring the prisoners, but lo, when they came to the jail it was empty. This news greatly perplexed the council.

3. The apostles again arrested (vv. 25, 26).

When one came with the news that the apostles were teaching in the temple, officers were dispatched to bring them before the council. They refrained from the use of violence because they feared the people.

4. The apostles questioned (vv. 27, 28).

The council demanded of them the reason for not heeding the charge which they had previously given that they should not teach any more in the name of Jesus. This persistent testimony the officers interpreted as an effort to bring the guilt of Jesus' blood upon themselves.

5. The apostle's answer.

Peter boldly replied that they were under obligation to obey God rather than men. He further told them that they were guilty of the murder of Jesus Christ and that God had raised Jesus from the dead and exalted Him to be a Prince and a Savior to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel, and also that He had made the apostles, with the Holy Spirit, witnesses of these things.

IV. The Result (vv. 33-42).

1. They determined to kill the apostles (v. 33).

Peter's stinging words cut to the quick, but their desperate wickedness filled them with murderous hatred instead of moving them to repentance. They could not answer the message, so the only way was to kill their accusers.

2. Gamaliel's counsel (vv. 34-39).

He advised neutrality, assuring them that if it be a work of men it would come to nought, but if it be of God they could not overthrow it because they would be engaged in the hopeless task of fighting against God.

3. The apostles beaten (v. 40).

While heeding Gamaliel's advice, they vented their rage by beating the apostles and charging them not to speak in Christ's name.

4. The behavior of the apostles (vv. 41,42).

They departed with hearts full of joy that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. They continued to preach Jesus Christ in public and in private.

An Undivided Heart

An undivided heart which worships God alone, and trusts Him as it should, is raised above all anxiety for earthly wants.

Salvation

Salvation has cost too much for God to give it to a person, when he is not hungry for it.—Echoes.

The Lie

A lie should be trampled on, extinguished wherever found.—Carlyle.

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