

1914
April
May

Missionary Department.



Preaching the Word in Annam.

On an early Spring morning the writer in company with his teacher boarded the little train for Faifoo. The purpose of this itinerating trip was to reach a few of the many villages in the delta of Quang Nam with the Good News of the Gospel. It is only a small train that runs between Tourane and the above mentioned city, but we are very glad to have it. It is not comfortable, but it saves us a great deal of time. Were it not for the French Government, we would have the same conditions here as in China. There are railroads, waterways, and good roads. A small motor boat or an automobile would greatly increase the efficiency of our work in these numerous villages, save the time and strength of the missionaries, and enlarge our sphere of usefulness.

This little railroad passes through a sandy desert. How dreamy and lifeless it looked! It was but a true picture of the many souls that live in this land. They are "Strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." The sand has drifted into mounds about twenty or thirty feet high, and on a windy day it reminds one of a snow storm. Owing to these conditions the railroad has to keep natives shoveling the sand off the tracks. Sometimes a train gets sand bound and has to be shoveled out.

The first place of interest is Marble Mountain. There are several of these mountains which rise abruptly out of the sand and are of solid marble. The natives make all sorts of things out of this marble. One of the most pretty designs is a tea-set, comprising a tray, four cups, and a tea-pot. It takes a long time to work them out, and complete they sell for the nominal sum of fifty cents or a dollar. All the stone used for building purposes and roadbeds is of this white marble. The implements which the natives use to cut the marble are very primitive, yet practical. For instance, if they want to cut a piece of marble two feet long, 18 inches wide, and 6 inches thick, it takes them five days. They use a piece of sheet iron cut into the shape of a saw. This saw is pulled by two men. There is a jug of water placed above the center of the block that is being cut. This flows fast enough to let a little sand under the blade of the saw. These men will sit here day after day, and all they earn is from seven to ten cents a day.

In one of these mountains there is a large, natural cave, one of the prettiest I ever saw. The rock formations were exquisite, I could not begin to describe them. The Buddhist priests are not slow to use these pretty spots for their temples. It is a known fact that their temples and pagodas command the most advantageous sights. This cave is about one hundred feet high and sixty feet in diameter. There are several openings in the top which let in sufficient light to see the beauties of nature and the handiwork of God. As one enters, four idols may be seen on either side of the stone steps leading down into the cave proper. Directly, in front of the entrance and on the other side about half way up, is a shrine with the god of heaven. There are several altars and shrines there. The Annamese say there is a deep under ground tunnel which opens into the sea. There is such a current of air coming out of the openings that it is impossible

to descend with a lamp. It is a place of renown, for the Emperors of Annam have visited it.

Faifoo is the capitol of the province of Quang Nam. It is about 20 miles from Tourane. There are about 2000 Chinese in the city, a typical Chinese city. I stayed four days in a Chinese inn and visited among them and was cordially treated. I found that some of their temples were used for other purposes. The spirit of the revolution in China has had its effects there too. One of the temples is being used for a school and reading room. There was one entirely deserted. I asked, "What did you do with your idols?" Some one answered, "They were no good so we threw them out." I am praying the Annamese will reach that stage, too, where they will see the uselessness of their idols. In one of their temples, they have an idol about fifteen feet high, most carefully and jealously guarded and protected. This idol is supposed to drive away plagues and pestilences. It is kept in a glass case, that it may not be contaminated by contagious diseases. Poor blinded humanity, to think that this graven image can ward off disease. This is not only true of this city but of the hundreds and thousands of villages scattered over the length and breadth of the land. This is a call for prayer. Pray, dear friends, that these poor souls may soon be enlightened and turn from the error of their way and serve the true and living God.

The usual visit was made to the French Resident and much encouragement was derived from his attitude. He said, "You are at liberty to go where you chose; you have as much right as the Roman Catholic and Buddhist priests." He informed me that the French and Annamese governments were neutral as to religious matters. I was very much surprised to hear that there was so much religious liberty granted. This is a wonderful answer to prayer and we have every reason to praise the Lord for it. The Protestant work in Madagascar has suffered much at the hands of the French officials, but God's hands are upon us and the work here. This is largely due to the great number of faithful intercessors whose prayers have risen to the Throne of Grace where our faithful High Priest in His untiring ministry is pleading our cause before the Father. Do not let your faith grow dim nor slacken for one moment in your prayers for this people. The enemy is much alive in these days and we have to be alive and active in our faith and prayer.

During my stay in Faifoo, I visited several villages and preached the Gospel for the first time to these long neglected people. There is scarcely a village in this vicinity that has heard of a Saviour who died for them. How new it seems to them! They wonder if it can be true and if it is all for them. Our hearts long to know how much has really gone home. We know if we faithfully declare the Word, God will do His part and give the increase. Every place I visited, I asked if they had ever heard about the Lord Jesus Christ and His power to save. And invariably the answer would be in the negative. Just think of it, after all these years of Christian teaching there are those who have never so much as heard of a Saviour who loves and cares for them. Ought we not give them a witness of the true light, which lightens every man?

The native officials, nobility, and people were very respectful and attentive. We have just received the first edition of the Gospel of Mark in the colloquial characters. I took only a few copies with me for distribution. This is one of our present needs. We are handicapped for lack

of the Scriptures in the vernacular. We are hampered for lack of a translation of the Bible for our preparation in teaching the Gospel.

The next place I visited was the old citadel of Quang Nam. It was formally the capital of the province. Now the Annamese Governor and the Judge live there. The Governor was very cold and dignified. The Judge was a most pleasant and congenial man. I stayed with the latter for two days and a half. He said, "You may stay as long as you please." This Judge is of the third rank of officials. There are ten different ranks of officials. While staying with him, I lived like a prince. I ate from the same table, and he was surprised to see how well I could manipulate the chopsticks. I am beginning to understand what Paul meant when he said, "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound . . . to be full, and to be hungry, etc." I had a good opportunity to talk with the official about the Gospel. My heart rejoiced in the fact of being able to witness to a high official. I prayed that he might see the light of the glorious Gospel. I made him a present of a Bible in the Chinese characters. I asked him to read it, for I said, "All the things I told you are in this book." May I solicit the earnest prayers of the readers that this man may be convicted of his need of a Saviour.

After I left the official's home, I stayed in an Annamese hut. While there I had an attack of malaria fever. It would have been serious had not God intervened. I immediately committed myself to His loving care and keeping. I claimed the promise, and true to His word the assurance came, and the fever was broken. The Lord is faithful! It does not matter where we are, His faithfulness reaches to the remotest corner of the earth. God will never disappoint faith. He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." "In Him is no variableness, neither shadow cast by turning." "Scenes may vary, and friends grow strange, but the changeless ne'er shall change."

I had good opportunity in one of the villages. It was a large village and a big turnout. The house of the chef de Canton was too small, so he invited us to a nearby temple. Oh, the eager faces and poor benighted souls. One naturally wonders how much of the truth spoken went home to their hearts. There was a little restlessness, but that is to be expected in a heathen audience. The truth hurts and sometimes cuts deep, and men too often "love darkness rather than light." The writer was trying in his weakness to lift up Jesus that all men might be drawn unto Him. The fact was made plain that "There is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby they must be saved." It is in this name we shall conquer and defeat the enemy. My purpose is to focus that love wherewith He loved us upon this cold, rigid ice-berg of heathenism. This is the only solution to the great problem which faces us today. We do not want to use force to blast this icy mass, for there will still be the icy fragments. What we want to do is to dissolve this great mass with the warming rays of the Sun of Righteousness. I believe that the day is not far distant when this huge bulk of heathenism shall run down like a river and be lost in the waters of that life-giving stream which flows from the throne of God. Cease not to pray that God will convict those, who have heard the Word preached, of their sin and need of a Saviour.

Author not
indicated. ^{in Soderby}
Either Hosler or ~~Birke~~
Probably Hosler
Probably Soderby

1914
April 5

June 20, 1914

June 20 1914 A Sunday School in Annam. ^{AW p. 205}

A few months ago the children in the Gospel Tabernacle, New York, said good bye to a missionary who was going to Annam. He had been attending the Tabernacle and its Sunday school for many years, and while we were sorry to say good bye to him, still we were very happy to know he was going to a country where the little children did not know anything about Jesus. And now he writes to tell how the missionaries have opened up a new Sunday school in that country, the very first Protestant school in that great land. But we shall let you read his letter.

Mr. Birbal

My dear young friends:

It has been on my heart for some time to write a letter to you; and I think there is no time like today; for this day, April 5, 1914, marks the beginning of Sunday School work in Annam. Last Sunday the first Protestant chapel in this dark land was opened. Now, what do you imagine it looks like? To be sure, it is nothing like the fine big Tabernacle, where you go every Sunday, and where I went Sunday after Sunday for more than twelve years. Our chapel here is very small, and is built of bamboo poles and dried grass. Even the roof is of this dried grass. The benches are made of wood. Although our little chapel is not very pretty nor large, we are so glad to have it; for it is so necessary to have a place where the people can gather to hear of Jesus. Is it not too bad that this is the only Jesus church for Annamese in this big land? You know that in New York there are ever so many, many people—you see them everywhere—and you also know that there are many Sunday Schools and churches; but just think of it, here in Annam there are five times as many people as in New York, and this little chapel I have told about, is the first and only church where Jesus is truly worshiped.

And as I just told you, we had our first Sunday School in this little grass house today. Seven little children came this first time and heard about Jesus or "Thanh Ya Do" as He is called in this language. You should have heard them learning to sing that sweet hymn, "Yes, Jesus loves me." They seemed so glad to be there and we feel sure that before long many more dear little boys and girls will hear about our Sunday School and will come and learn that Jesus really loves them, and died to save them. And will it not be lovely when many of these little yellow-skinned boys and girls shall trust Jesus and find the same joy which we who love Him have found?

Today I heard a true story about a lady who was a missionary in Africa for many years. When she was a little girl, the noted missionary to India, Dr. Chamberlain, spoke to her Sunday School in a small town in Michigan. This great and good man asked the children to write this in their Bibles, "Mr. Chamberlain asks me to become a missionary." This particular girl wrote it in her Bible; but she added, "and I thought I would—may God help me." Years passed by; but one day she found herself on her way as a missionary to Africa. God had taken her at her word when she was only a little girl, and many years later sent her to dark Africa; where she did a great work for the Lord during her twenty years of service.

Miss Hazenby?

Today a greater than Mr. Chamberlain is asking you to

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