

Missionary Department.



Preaching the Gospel in Annam.

PAUL M. HOSLER.

The following is a brief resume of the work God has graciously permitted me to do during the past Conference year. - July 1913 - July 1914

Building a Bamboo Chapel

Immediately upon our return to Tourane the work of building was uppermost in our thoughts. It was imperative that we should have a place of worship as our home was too cramped and otherwise unsuitable. Therefore we desired to put up a chapel requiring but very little expenditure of time and money. However, many obstacles were encountered and we were delayed for months. It was discovered that a permit must first be obtained and also that we could not erect a bamboo building on our premises. After this it was necessary to get permission from the mission to erect a small brick and stone chapel. The stone was ordered in November, but delivery was not made until four months later. In the meantime an appeal was made to the Resident for permission to put up a temporary bamboo structure. This was granted and our hearts rejoiced when we were able to meet for worship in our bamboo church.

Preaching the Gospel

Most of my time has been allotted to the preaching of the Gospel and the translation of portions of the Scriptures. At first it was difficult to know just what methods to adopt in order to reach the people. The Annamese do not live in large cities like the Chinese, but are found in numerous little villages which are scattered here and there. The markets were visited a few times but it was evident that it was not possible to reach very many of the men in this way as the women do most of the marketing. Furthermore our Annamese helpers did not care to go to these markets as they thought it beneath their dignity to do so.

The next step was to try the Village House. Here we invited the village elders and all others who would come. At times there would be as many as twenty or thirty but at other times it would be necessary to start to talk with only one or two. After some time it was possible for me to arrange to visit five of these places each week and there sow the precious seed. On some occasions there seemed to be quite some interest manifested and at other times very little interest was shown. As in all other mission fields one met the various classes of people. Some heard; but the evil one soon came to snatch away the Word. Others seemingly heard the Word with joy and would fain have us believe that they received it with honest hearts, but, alas, there was no depth. They were out of a job and were now at liberty to devote themselves to the Doctrine. Still others listened, but could not follow the Word for they were living among the thorns and briars of this world and were unwilling. If the three preceding classes heard the Word I feel very sure that there were those also who received the Word into honest hearts. I praise the Lord for this part of my last winter's work for I feel that some definite work has been done and that some are seeking the Lord.

Translation Work

Another matter that claimed a large part of my time during the past year was the translation work. Some time was spent on the revision of Mark's Gospel and reading

it over with several of our teachers; some hymns were also translated and these we have written into books to be used in our evening and Sunday meetings. The Gospel of John was also begun early in the year; but I regret to say, was well nigh crowded out by the work of preaching in the villages. Toward the close of March I began to give most of my time to the work of John's Gospel and before long the work was completed. It is now ready for the press and I do pray that the Lord will enable us soon to get some portions for our work in Annam—for it is very hard for a soldier to go to war without a gun.

In addition to this work on the Gospel of John it has been possible to do a little work on Genesis. I feel that this work is very important but also feel that the work of preaching the Gospel in the towns and villages is equally needy and so I feel constrained to devote half of my time to one of these needs and the other half to the other need.

Trips Inland

I am sorry not to be able to write of having made some good itinerating trips into the country for the purpose of selling the Scriptures and of preaching in the towns and villages. I have, however, been able to make two long journeys to the mountains for the purpose of buying wood for our proposed chapel at Tourane. The first trip was made in the month of February and was very interesting. I ascended rapids and falls and went far into the uninhabited land. My second trip was during the month of March and was not so exciting as the former one. On this journey, however, I had the privilege of seeing for the first time some of the Mois people. At one place on the border-marches I was able to proclaim the Word of God to one Chinaman, some Annamese and Mois in the Annamese language.

Services in The "Home"

There is still one more matter that causes me to give thanks unto the Lord. I am sure the reader will agree with me that I have kept the best wine until the last of the feast. Just a week before leaving I had a talk with our teachers and servants about their attitude to the doctrine. There was a very blessed response to what I said and that afternoon (which was Sunday) we all met together for prayer. They all prayed but one or two of the servants. Every day after that we met at 4 o'clock for united prayer and all who were assembled prayed. Then I began in the evening services to tell them to pray if they so desired; but I would not press them to do it. Again they all prayed except one cook who, at the time, was visiting our cook. I do praise the Lord for this evidence of His working and trust that it shall lead them to true repentance and conversion.