

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

The Missionary World.

EVEN through the tremendous pressure of war news, paragraphs on the internal politics of China continue to find place in the daily press. The sudden death of the first great President at the moment when the eight southern provinces had revolted from his rule, and the appointment of a new President, General Li Yüan Hung—a man who is reported to be entirely honest and free from any bias against Christianity—are among the great events of the world. The problems before the new ruler are overwhelming, and there is need for earnest prayer that the forces of order may prevail while an adequate constitution is being established. The *Wesleyan Foreign Field* has an excellent paper on the whole situation, by the Rev. G. S. Warren, with a map showing the rebel provinces and the order in which they broke away. Another illuminating paper on China is that by the veteran Dr. Arthur H. Smith in the *International Review of Missions*. He records a chapter of missionary experience covering four and forty years, and closes with a survey of the present conditions in China, part of which we quote.

“We have entered upon a new China in which, within the memory of men now living, there has been more change than there has been in all the ages. . . . The Christian Church has trained many pupils who have proved wayward . . . the new liberty tends to degenerate into licence, and the safeguards which Chinese society has always thrown round women . . . are melting like mud walls in a flood. . . . Unrest in China and dissatisfaction with world conditions are reflected . . . in Chinese schools, Christian as well as other. But these phenomena and others like them represent but a single phase. New and skilled Christian workers . . . though in numbers painfully inadequate, are constantly coming forward. The Chinese Church . . . is struggling to take many of the heavy burdens which have hitherto been borne by foreigners only. . . . The conception of social service has sunk deep into the Chinese consciousness. . . . The student body of China has been made accessible, and tens of thousands of them are now studying the Scriptures. Merchants, scholars and officials are increasingly friendly to the Christian Church. . . . Christians in high places are no longer rare. China, ‘the enigma of history,’ is and probably long will be the greatest mission field in the world. In no other has there been greater changes. In no other is there more hope for the future.”

* * * * *

To the general public “Swanwick” stands for a Derbyshire village difficult of access and noted for large coalpits. To a large and growing number of religious agencies “Swanwick” means the place where their special conference or convention is held, a place

which for the time being is their own. Hence, according to the standing of the questioner, "Have you been to Swanwick?" may refer to the Central Board of Missions Convention, or the Summer School of the London Jews' Society, or the Conference of C.M.S. Missionaries, or the Wesleyan Laymen's Convention, or a Conference or Bible School of the Student Christian Movement, or any one of a score of other meetings. Of all the Swanwick gatherings none has a wider significance than the Conference of Representatives of British Missionary Societies (an outcome of the World Missionary Conference of 1910), which met there again this year from June 21-23. Several addresses of quite outstanding value were given—notably those by the Rev. W. Temple and Mr. J. H. Oldham—but the special feature of the conference was the way in which such questions as Christian literature in the mission field, medical education in China, and the evangelization of the Moslem world proved capable of co-operative treatment. Several important committees, not only broadly representative of British missionary interests but also linked through the Continuation Committee with international work, were appointed, and promise to render efficient service to the missionary societies.

* * * * *

The brief weeks of the summer holiday offer busy men an opportunity for refreshing not only tired bodies but wearied and depleted minds. It is therefore of high importance that books selected for reading, in addition to any merely light recreative literature, should have true significance and be closely related to the actual conditions which will confront us on our return to work. An ideal book for such holiday reading is *The World and the Gospel*, by Mr. J. H. Oldham, secretary of the Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference. Simply but quite fearlessly the great fundamental questions which the title suggests, and which have been brought into prominence by the war, are discussed and illustrated from a wide range of knowledge and of thought. Those who preach or teach about foreign missions will find that this small volume sets their work in a new and almost startling light. The familiar teachings of the Christian Gospel and the well-known bases of the missionary enterprise are restated with force and freshness, in full view of the unparalleled changes which are taking place throughout the world to-day. The book, which has been issued

by the United Council for Missionary Education, costs 2s., and can be had from the larger missionary societies or through any bookseller.

* * * * *

It is not our custom in these pages to chronicle the home-call of missionary leaders, but the death of Ralph Wardlaw Thompson, for over thirty years the great foreign secretary of the London Missionary Society, cannot be passed by. It seems but a few short weeks since the writer sat with him in a quiet interval after lunch in a city restaurant and marvelled at the blending of youth and age, of adventure and calmness in his outlook on the missionary world. His day of active work was over and he knew it, but men still turned to him for guidance and inspiration because of the far-reaching vision and ordered thought which were his to the last. A fine survey of his character and work, written by one of his colleagues, appears in the July number of the *L.M.S. Chronicle*. From it we learn that Dr. Wardlaw Thompson is seen at his best in his letters. May we venture to urge that these be given as quickly and as fully as may be to the Church? At the present juncture few books would meet a greater need than a frank exposition of the life of a great missionary secretary who rose to the full measure of his task both in personal and in administrative work. Dr. Wardlaw Thompson never belonged only to the L.M.S.; we are therefore full of hope that the society may still see its way to share with others the fruitage of his thought and life.

* * * * *

The table of contents of the July number of *The East and The West* gives promise of a number of unusual interest. Several of the articles, however, are rather disappointing in view either of their title or of the author's name. The opening paper by an Irish Presbyterian missionary, Dr. Margaret Stevenson, on "Original Investigation in the Mission Field," is highly suggestive, and will no doubt be brought to the notice of the outgoing missionaries at the vacation course of the Board of Study for Missionary Preparation, now in session at Oxford. A sympathetic and well-informed article on "Russian Missions and Missionaries in Siberia," by a Roman Catholic writer, should be read in conjunction with an able account of "The Conversion of Russia," by the Editor of *The East and The West*, which appears in the *International Review of*

Missions. Canon Robinson also contributes to his own periodical another interesting study on the conversion of Europe, dealing this time with Ulfilas and the Goths.

* * * * *

By means of a map of admirable clearness and some eighteen pages of descriptive text, Mr. W. J. W. Roome, whose name is closely associated with the evangelization of Africa, illustrates, in the *International Review of Missions*, certain strategic lines along which Christian missions have already developed in Africa, especially in relation to the advance of Islam. He shows the advance up the Niger reaching out through the Sudan towards stations on the Nile, with a great stretch of territory still unoccupied; and the advance up the Congo which, except for a gap of about 300 miles already prospected for mission stations, makes a chain right across Africa, joining up with the C.M.S. stations on the Upper Nile. Mr. Roome traces the parts of this strategic line where Islam is already strongly in evidence, and the parts where Islam is still almost unknown. His article, based on personal investigation carried out in several journeys to Africa, is of great value to all who desire a broad and accurate knowledge of African missions in relation to Islam.

* * * * *

The *Moslem World* for July contains an article also by Mr. Roome, based on a recent journey to Africa, dealing with "Islam on the Congo." In the same issue there is a most interesting paper giving a translation of a report issued by a Mohammedan Conference which met at Peking in January, 1916, attended by about 300 Ahungs (Mullahs) from the northern provinces of China. The conference had no political object but was designed simply for the strengthening of the Mohammedans as a religious body; the members decided to prepare treatises to enlighten Mohammedans—a long list of selected subjects is given; to translate their scriptures; to improve their grammar schools and normal schools; and to emphasize the importance of lectures as a means of increasing the knowledge of the people. The conference is to hold regular meetings once a month, and a great council twice a year. A business office has been opened in Peking, the telephone number of which is given.

* * * * *

The news from the Syrian mission field given in the monthly

organ of the Friends Foreign Mission Association and supported in its general outline by telegrams in the daily press adds one more to the tragic sufferings of the war. The Turks have thrown a cordon round Mount Lebanon, and the Christian community there are being starved. Remittances sent by emigrants in America through the American Mission have now to be deposited at the Ottoman Bank, which has been ordered not to effect payment for one year and then only in government paper. There is widespread distress also throughout Syria and Palestine. The Americans are doing their utmost to secure liberty for the distribution of relief, but up to the date of writing their efforts have failed.

* * * * *

An article in the *International Review of Missions* on "The Home Base of Missions in Norway," by the Rev. Lars Dahle, secretary of the Norwegian Missionary Society and a well-remembered speaker at the World Missionary Conference, gives, in addition to a study of organization and relationships, a most attractive picture of the methods of raising funds for foreign missions. Large donors are not numerous in Norway, the greater part of the income is raised by local associations—one-half coming from the women's associations—which cover the country and which stimulate the interest of the people. In the poorer country districts where money is very scarce the people devise all sorts of ingenious means for supporting the cause they love. Some grow flowers and sell them, people with a large family and little money send their children to the forest to gather berries for sale, fishermen set aside one of their nets for the mission and give the value of all the fish caught in it. In country districts a farmer often allots a piece of land—it is called after some favourite mission station—others give the necessary manure, the young men till it, plant it, and harvest the crop, which is sold for the benefit of the mission. Where sheep breeding is common, a lamb is often set apart; it wears a collar marked "Mission," and in due time is sold and the proceeds given for the work. Mr. Dahle quotes the case of a very poor cottager in the far north who one year had no money with which to pay his annual subscription. So he went into the forest, cut down a great tree, made some good chopping blocks, put them in his boat and rowed alone to a place ten miles off, where he sold the blocks, and the mission got its money as usual.