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*THE PROBLEM OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.*<sup>1</sup>

It has for a long time seemed to me that missionary facts, and the missionary problem generally, are susceptible of more special—may I say more scientific?—treatment than they usually receive; and the large size of the field which it has fallen to me to see is favourable to that methodical survey of the whole which is denied even to the missionary, for he represents but a single field.

There are two ways in which men who offer their lives to their fellow-men may regard the world. They mean the same thing in the end, but you will not misunderstand me if I express the apparent distinction in the boldest terms. The first view is that the world is lost and must be saved; the second, that the world is sunken and must be raised. According to the first, the peoples of the world are looked upon as souls—souls to be redeemed; the second thinks of them rather as men—men to be perfected; or as nations—nations to be made righteous. The first deals with a sinner's *status* in the sight of God, the second with his *character* in the sight of men. The first preaches mainly justification; the second mainly regeneration. The first is the standpoint of the popular evangelism; the second is the view of evolution.

The danger of the first is to save the souls of men and there leave them; the danger of the second is to ignore the soul altogether. As I shall speak now from the last standpoint, I point out its danger at once, and meet it by adding to its watchword, evolution, the qualifying term, Christian. This alone takes count of the whole nature of man, of sin and guilt, of the future and of the past, and recognises

<sup>1</sup> [This is an address delivered at the opening of the session in the Free Church College, Glasgow, in November, 1890. The manuscript has been kindly put at our disposal, and it seems suggestive enough to deserve a permanent form.—ED. EXPOSITOR.]

the Christian facts and forces as alone adequate to deal with them. The advantage of speaking of "the Christian evolution of the world," instead of, or, at least, as a change from, "the evangelization of the world," will appear as we go on. By making temporary use of the one standpoint, I do not exclude the other; and if I ignore it from this point onward, it is not because it is not legitimate, but simply because it is not the subject.

Nothing ought to be kept more persistently before the mind of those who are open to serve the world as missionaries than the great complexity of the missionary problem; and nothing more strikes one who goes round the world than the amazing variety of work required and the almost radical differences among the various mission fields. In the popular conception the peoples of the world are roughly divided into black and white, or Christian and heathen, and the man who designates himself for the mission field makes a general choice, taking the first opening that comes, and considering but little in his decision that there are many shades of black, and innumerable kinds of heathen. But it is just as absurd for a man to choose in general terms "the foreign field" and go abroad to rescue heathen, as for a planter to go anywhere abroad in the hope of sowing general seed and producing general coffee. The planter soon finds out that there are many soils in the world, some suited to one crop and some to another; that seed must be put in for each particular crop in one way and not in another; that he requires particular implements in each case and not any implements, and that the time between sowing and reaping, and even between sowing and sprouting, is an always appreciable and very varying interval. The mission field has like distinctions. Some crops it is mere waste of time to try to plant in one place; the specialist's business is to find out what *will* grow there. Some crops will not

and cannot come up in one year, or in ten years, or even in fifty years; it is the specialist's business to study scientifically the possibilities of growth, the limitations of growth, the impossibilities of growth. It is irrational also for the missionary to carry the same message, or rather the same *form* of message, to every land, or to think that the thought which told to-day will tell to-morrow; he must rotate his crops as God through the centuries rotates the social soil on which they are to grow. To every land he must take, not the general list of agricultural implements furnished by his college, but one or two of special make which possibly his college has never heard of. Above all, when he reaches his field, his duty is to find out what God has grown there already, for there is no field in the world where the Great Husbandman has not sown something. Instead of uprooting his Maker's work and clearing the field of all the plants that found no place in his small European herbarium, he will rather water the growths already there and continue the work at the point where the Spirit of God is already moving. A hasty critic, when these sentences were spoken, construed them into a plea for building up Christianity upon heathenism. The words are "what God has sown there," and "where the Spirit of God is already moving." The missionary problem, in short, so far from being a mere saving of promiscuous souls with a few well-worn appliances, is a most complex question of Social Evolution.

Let me illustrate the necessity of further specialization in regard to missions by reference to the three or four very different fields which I have just visited. As examples of what might be called a scientific classification of missions, one could scarcely pick any more typical than Australia, the South Sea Islands, China, and Japan. I include Australia among mission fields, and I might with it include

both British Columbia and Manitoba, because none of these countries can provide as yet for its own evangelization.

I. *Australia*. The missionary problem, or the mission churches problem, in these colonies is to deal with a civilized people undergoing abnormally rapid development. Australia is a case of prodigiously active growth in a few directions under most favourable natural conditions for nation-making. It is what a biologist would call an organic mass of the highest possible mobility, of almost perilous sensitiveness to prevailing impressions, with feeble safeguards to conserve its solid gains, and few boundary lines either to shape or limit other growths. The orderly progress here is complicated mainly by one thing, a continuous accretion of outside elements—due to immigration—which creates difficulties in assimilation. The chief problem of Christianity is to keep pace with the continuous growth; the immediate peril is that it may be wholly ignored in the pressure of competing growths.

II. *The South Sea Islands*, of which the New Hebrides are a type, lie exactly at the opposite end of the scale. Growth, so far from being active, has not even begun. Here are no nations, scarcely even tribes. The first step in evolution, aggregation, has not yet taken place. These people are still at zero, they are the Amœbae of the human world. There is no complication here of unassimilated elements introduced by immigration, but a serious opposite difficulty—depletion due to emigration to other countries, and to other causes which vitally affect the whole future problem. As to religion here, the field is altogether open, for there is none at all.

III. *China*. Midway between the South Sea Islands and the Australian colonies, this nation, as every one knows, is an instance of arrested development. On the fair way to become a higher vertebrate, it has stopped short at the crustacean. There are two complications: the amazing

strength of the ekoskeleton—the external shell of custom and tradition, so hardened by the deposits of centuries as to make the evolutionist's demand for mobility, *i.e.* for capacity to change, almost non-existent. Secondly, which directly concerns Christianity, there is a very powerful religion already in possession. These two complications make the missionary problem in China one of the most delicate in the world.

IV. If the South Sea Islands are the opposite of Australia, China, in turn, finds its almost perfect contrast in *Japan*. One with it in stagnation and isolation from external influences during three thousand years, almost within the last hour Japan has broken what Mr. Bagehot calls its "cake of custom," and so sudden and mature has already been its development that it is, at this moment, demanding from the Powers of Europe political recognition as one of the civilized nations of the world. This is an entirely different case from any of the preceding. It is the insect emerging from the chrysalis. From the Christian standpoint, the case is unique in history. Its own religion was abandoned a few years ago, and the country is at present looking for another.

Even this rough classification will serve to show how far from simple the missionary question really is, how the problem varies from place to place, how different the equipment for each particular field, how wise the mind which should know where to strike in, how responsible the hand which would finger these subtle threads of human destiny at all, or move among the roots of national life, which God alone has tended in the past. To the Christian evolutionist these differences are educative. They mark different stages in the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, none of them in vain, all of them to be allowed for, some perhaps to be reset in the superstructure Christianity would build upon them.

Suppose now the Churches had compiled a classification on some such lines of all the mission fields of the world, it would serve two practical purposes. In the first place, it would be the duty of the would-be missionary to go over that list, and select from it the exact kind of work to which he was most suited. In this way the missionary staff would be differentiated with more exactness than at present. Each man, also, having made his choice, would further equip himself along particular lines, and become a specialist at his work. In the second place, and what is just now of even more importance, it would make it possible for some men to be missionaries, and these among the best men entering the Universities, who see no room for them at present in the foreign field. Some men with such a review before them might see at once that there was no place for them in missionary work at all; but others, and I believe, a larger number than have ever been attracted by this career, would find there something open to them—would find in a service which they had looked upon, perhaps, as somewhat limited and narrow, something which, when looked upon in all its length and breadth, was large enough and rich enough in practical possibilities to make them offer to it the whole-hearted work of their lives. To-day, certainly, some of the best men do go to the foreign field; but the reason why more do not go is not indifference to its claims, but uncertainty as to whether they are exactly the type of men wanted, *i.e.*, in plain language, uncertainty as to whether the cut of their theology quite qualifies them to be the successors of Carey or Williams. These men feel orthodox enough, of course, to be clergymen at home, but they have a secret sense that their views might be scarcely the thing on Eromanga. The missionary theology—it is useless disguising it—is supposed to be a very special article, and a kind of theological modesty forbids some of our strongest men from

considering it conceivable that they should ever aspire to be missionaries. Now this feeling is very real, but I am convinced that it is very ignorant—ignorant of the changed standpoint from which scores of our missionaries are even now doing their work, ignorant of the world's real needs, ignorant of the hospitality which they would receive from many at least of the officials of most of the Mission Boards. And yet these Boards are not wholly guiltless of having made it appear, or permitting it to continue understood, that only those of a certain type need look for welcome at their doors. I am not referring to any particular Church ; but I do not think the mission committees of the world have ever worded their advertisement for men in language modern enough to include the class of whom I speak. I am not arguing for free-lances, or budding sceptics, or rationalists being turned loose on our mission fields, but for young men—and our colleges were never richer in them than at this moment—who combine with all modern culture the consecrated spirit and the Christ-like life; for men who are too honest to go under false pretences to a work which, though they be not yet specially enthusiastic for it, they are entirely willing to face, there ought to go forth a new and more charitable call. It ought at least to be understood that what qualifies to-day for the leading Churches at home ought not to disqualify for the work of Christ abroad, but that there is for Christian men of the highest originality and power a career in the foreign field at least as great and rational as that at home. Indeed, so far from such men feeling as if they were not wanted in the foreign field, or at the best that their presence there could but be tolerated by the Mission Boards, I am sure the committee at least of some Churches not only want these men to-day, but scarcely want anything else.

First, always, in opening a new mission field comes the splendid work of the pioneer, the old missionary pioneer

of the Sunday-school picture books, who stands with his Bible under the stereotyped palm tree, exhorting the crowd of impossible blacks. These we have had in most fields now, and their work must still and always continue. But next we have these same men in settled charges, founding congregations, and planting schools, and carrying on the whole evangelical work of the Christian Church. But next, among these, and gathered from these, and in addition to these, we require a further class not wholly absorbed with specific charges, or ecclesiastical progress, or the inculcation of Western creeds, but whose outlook goes forth to the nation as a whole; men who in many ways not directly on the programme of the missionary society will help on its education, its morality, and its healthy progress in all that makes for righteousness. This man, besides being the missionary, is the Christian politician, the apostle of a new social order, the moulder and consolidator of the State. He places the accent, if such an extreme expression of a distinction may be allowed, not on the progress of a Church but on the coming of the Kingdom of God. He is not the herald but the prophet of the Cross.

Of course every missionary who nowadays sets out for a foreign field acquires beforehand some general idea of the lie of things in the country to which he goes; but what is needed is more than a general idea. The Christianizing of a nation such as China or Japan is an intricate, ethical, philosophical and social as well as Christian problem; the serious taking of any new country indeed is not to be done by casual sharpshooters bringing down their man or two here and there, but by a carefully thought out attack upon central points, or by patient siege, planned with all a military tactician's knowledge. We have at present, and, as already said, we shall always need, and they will always do their measure of good, devoted men of the sharp-shooter order who aim at single souls; but in addition to these the

Kingdom of God needs men who work with a wider vision—men prepared by fulness of historical, ethnological, and sociological knowledge to become the statesmen of the Kingdom of God.

Let me spend what time remains in briefly expanding the classification already given—partly to illustrate better what I mean, but especially to furnish a few materials to help those whose eyes, when they think of their future life, sometimes turn towards distant lands.

I begin with the New Hebrides—mainly because least is known about them. The New Hebrides mission represents a class of missions differing so essentially from those of the third and fourth classes—China and Japan—that anyone who was taught to regard it as a typical mission work would be completely misguided; and for some men at least a mission work of this order would be almost the last thing they would throw themselves into. For what are the real facts? The New Hebrides are a group of small islands, a few about the size of Arran, a very few others two or three times as large, the whole of no geographical importance. They are peopled by beings of the lowest human type to the number of probably not more than 50,000, so that they are of no political importance. This does not refer to the islands but to the people. The islands themselves are of so great political importance at the present moment that the allegiance of Australia to England would tremble in the balance if there was any suspicion that the Home Government would hand them over to France. The population may be over or under that here stated. I have taken my figures from authorities on the spot, but any approximation to the numbers of inhabitants on these partially explored islands must be a guess. Whether we regard their quality or quantity, they can never play any appreciable part in the world's story; and the question which would immediately rise in the mind of the man who looked at the world from

the standpoint of evolution would be the direct one: Is it really worth while sending twenty first-rate men to till this vineyard which can never contribute anything of importance to mankind? If it be replied, But is it proved that they will not? the answer is a sad one. A closer study of these islands shows that instead of increasing their population, these are dying fast. On the first which I visited, Aneityum, when the missionaries reached it, there were some thousands of inhabitants. To-day there is a bare four hundred of depressed and sickly souls. The children are swept away by the white man's epidemics almost as soon as they are born, and the missionaries tell you that the total doom of this island may be a matter of some score years. The very church which was built for the islanders in better days has had to be cut in two, and even the portioned half is now too large; and a small chapel is to be built to hold the remnant of this once noble flock. It is a dismal story, but it is more than likely that it will be repeated in time to a greater or less extent, not only throughout this group, but throughout the whole of the unchristianized South Sea Islands. At New Caledonia I found the depletion of population even more appalling; and though here and there an island may escape, the ultimate prospect is almost total obliteration. This being so, what man who entered the mission field from the standpoint from which I speak, what man who wished his work, however small, to contribute to the permanent evolution of the world, would choose the New Hebrides for his mission field? No man would. Yet is the inference then to be drawn that this mission is a mistake? There is a book by an accomplished clergyman called *Wrong Missions to Wrong Races in Wrong Places*. Is its thesis, when it answers this question in the affirmative, correct? I should be the last to say so, though its warning is a true one. For, as we have seen, there are missions and missions; and this mission belongs to a type which ought

to be more clearly defined and acknowledged. In the evolutionary branch of missions it has simply no place at all—no place at all. It is a mistake from first to last. But it does not belong to this class, and is not to be judged by its standards—perhaps by higher ones. It belongs to the Order of the Good Samaritan. It is a mission of pure benevolence. Its parallel is the mission of Father Damien on the Leper Island. Who shall say that there are not, and will not always be, men among us who see that kind of mission, men who have no intellectual apprehension of evolution, but who possess the pitiful heart? or who will say that the day will ever come when the leaders of the wider movement will grudge such men to the lost places of the earth?

I cannot leave this subject without paying my passing tribute—may I say my homage? for tribute they need not—to the missionaries of the New Hebrides themselves. From a recent biography which all of you have read, you know something of the difficulties of their work. You remember the description of the Island of Tanna, the remoteness of its position, the strangeness of its language, the fierceness of its people; you remember how daily the savages sought the missionary's life, and how after years of facing death in a hundred forms he was driven from their shores with scarcely a single convert for his hire. Last June, sailing along Tanna, I tried to land near Mr. Paton's deserted field. With me was one of the missionaries who has now gained a footing on another part of that still cannibal island. As we neared the shore, a hundred painted savages poured from out the woods, and prepared to fire upon us with their guns and poisoned arrows. But the missionary stood up in the bow of the boat and spoke two words to them in their native tongue. Instantly every gun was laid upon the beach, and they rushed into the surf to welcome us ashore. No other unarmed man on this earth could have landed there. It meant that the foundation stone

of civilization upon Tanna was already laid. Every island was once like Tanna; some are like it still. But on one after another the cannibal spirit has been already conquered; schools are planted everywhere; and neat churches and manses gleam through the palm trees, and signify to the few ships which wander in those seas that here at least life and property are safe. At Eromanga I went to see the spot on the beach where Williams fell. Hard by were the graves of his murdered successors, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon. Their almost immediate successor, Mr. Robertson, is there to-day, his large church and beautiful manse within a stone-throw of the place where these first martyrs died; his leading elder the son of the cannibal who murdered Gordon. This monster left three sons; they are all elders of the Church, and life is as safe throughout that island to-day as in England. For the first year of their life in Eromanga Mr. and Mrs. Robertson lived in a bullet-proof stockade. They left it only under cover of night for a few yards and on few occasions, once to bury their firstborn babe. For a year they never saw a European. Their work was to let the people look at them. Their message was to be kind. By-and-by acquaintance was picked up with one or two natives; the circle of influence spread, and after years of extraordinary patience and self-denial, their lives again and again hanging by a thread, they won this island for civilization and Christianity.

On another island, where the missionary two years ago used to see the smoke of the cannibal feasts from his doorstep, the natives brought me their spears and bows and poisoned arrows. "We do not need them now," they said; "the missionary has taught us not to kill."

I have no words to express my admiration for these men, and, may I say, their wives, their even more heroic wives; they are perfect missionaries; their toil has paid a hundred times; and I count it one of the privileges of my life to have been one of the few eye-witnesses of their work,

As to the calls of this field for more men, I must add this. It is a proof of the sound sense of the New Hebrides missionaries, that they are pretty unanimous in agreeing that, considering the needs of the rest of the world, they have already a quite fair portion of workers. The staff, of course, could be doubled or trebled to-morrow with great advantage, but the missionaries do not ask it. With their present resources and the number of native teachers who are in training, they hope in time to cover these islands with mission stations by themselves. I confess these are the least greedy missionaries I ever heard of.

I am sorry that, owing to the shortness of my visit to China, I should feel it a pure presumption to say almost anything about this, the greatest mission field in the world. What I can offer is but a surface impression, and I warn you beforehand it is little worth. From the old standpoint the work in China seems to be splendid; men and women from every Christian Church in the world are busy all over the land, and small congregations of native Christians are springing up everywhere along their track. The industry and devotion of the workers—Roman Catholic, Episcopalian, Congregational, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and a host of others—is beyond all praise, and there is not one of the missionaries who will not tell you he is encouraged, that he sees some fruit, and that the future is full of hope. There seems to be great care, moreover, in the admission to the Churches of native Christians, and the belief in education and in medical missions is widely rooted. But from the ideal of a Christian evolution, there remains very much to criticise—happily less in the direction of commission than of omission. This band of missionaries—I speak not of this society or of that, for the work of each separate society is compact enough in itself, but of the army as a whole—is no steady phalanx set on a fixed campaign, but a disordered host of guerillas recruited from all denomina-

tions, wearing all uniforms, and waging a random fight. Some are equipped with obsolete weapons, some with modern armament; but they possess no common programme or consistent method. Besides being confusing to the Chinese, this means great waste of power, great loss of cumulative effect. This, of course, is inevitable at first, and it is not the sin of the missionaries, but of Christendom; and, after the late Shanghai conference, there is more than a hope that even this in time may be remedied. But what one would really like to see in addition to greater concentration, would be a more serious reconsideration of the manner of approach and the form of message most suited to the Chinese mind, and nature, and tradition, and some further contribution to the question how far its form of Christianity is to be Western, or how far a Chinese basis is possible or permissible. These questions might be left to adjust themselves but for one most serious fact: the converts in China, in the majority of districts, are almost exclusively drawn at present from the lower classes. There are exceptions, but the educated classes as a whole, the merchants and the mandarins, remain, I understand, almost wholly untouched. There is something wrong if this be the case. And leaving the present machinery to do the good work it is doing among the poor, I would join with the best of the missionaries in arguing for a few Rabbis to be sent to China, or to be picked from our fine scholars already there, who would quietly reconnoitre the whole situation, and shape the teaching of the country along well-considered lines—men, especially, who would lay themselves out through education, lectures, preaching, and literature to reach the intellect of the Empire. That some men are aiming at this, and doing it splendidly, we are already well aware. It is the direct policy of many missionaries and even of whole societies. But it is these missionaries themselves who are

crying out for more of it. Men will not take the trouble to enquire what some of these societies are really aiming at and really doing, and, in ignorance of either, they regard the whole missionary work as a waste of time and money. The things also which one hears of missionaries, in talking with the business men of the Eastern ports: the contempt, the charges of inefficiency, impracticableness, and general uselessness, are enough to make any traveller, not well on his guard, renounce the mission cause for ever. These impressions are reimported into this country by ninety out of every hundred men who return home from the great commercial houses of the East, and they build up a public opinion against foreign missions most wanton and most false. As a rule these critics have never had ten minutes' serious talk with a missionary in their lives. If they had, they would find two things. First, that there were some missionaries a thousand times worse in folly and incompetence than they had ever imagined; and, secondly, that there were others, and these by far the greater majority, than whom no wiser, saner, more practical, could be found in any of the business houses of the world. It is men of this latter class, and not merely the passing traveller, who are calling out to-day for more scientific work and more rational methods in the mission field. They are perfectly aware that the evangelization of China is not a mere carrying of the Gospel to illiterate and heathen savages; and that perfect knowledge both of the modes of thought of the people and of the true genius of Christianity are needed to direct a campaign that will be permanently effective there. The missionary who is an educationalist, who has some scientific and philosophic training, who knows something of sociology and political economy, and who will apply these in Christian forms to China, is the man most needed there at the present hour. For it is to be remembered that this is a case of arrested

motion, and that the most natural development, perhaps the only possible one, certainly the only permanent one, will be one which is a continuation of that already begun rather than one entirely abnormal and foreign.

It was new to me, though I ought to have known it before, that the Chinese, instead of looking up to Europeans, regard them as a most inferior and even barbaric people—clever, certainly, in a few directions, but with no sort of authority to instruct a *Celestial*. In most mission fields the missionary has a platform simply in the fact that he is a white man, that he came in a steam ship, and wears a hat; but the Chinaman has no such hallucination. He listens to a European missionary much as a London crowd would listen to a Red Indian—half curious, half amused, but wholly contemptuous as to his pretension to teach him anything. It is the deliberate opinion of many men who know China intimately, who are sympathetic with missionaries, who are even missionaries themselves, that half of the preaching, and especially the itinerating preaching, now being carried on throughout the Empire is absolutely useless. Some go so far as to say that it even does harm, that its ignorance and general quality make it almost an impertinence. In New York I met an influential Christian layman, who had just returned from a visit to China, where his son was a missionary, and he assured me that he meant to devote this entire winter to opening the eyes of the American Churches to the futility and falseness of method of much that was being done—being done in perfect good faith—by worthy men and worthy women, to convert the people of China. I cannot verify this criticism; I merely record it. But at a time when the loud cry for hundreds of more laymen to pour into China is sounding over this land the warning ought at least to be heard. I go further. This call is frequently uttered in such terms as to take almost an unfair advantage of a certain class of Christians

—uttered with a harrowing importunity and sensationalism of appeal which, when it falls upon a tender conscience or an excited mind, makes it seem blasphemy to decline. The kind of missionary secured by this process, to say the least, is neither the wisest nor the best, and China not only needs to be protected from these men, but they need to be protected from themselves and from those who, in genuine but unbalanced zeal, appeal to them; protected by sober statements from sober men, who love the work of God, and the souls of men not less, but who understand both better.

I pass now to a country where the situation is more delicate still. Japan is the most interesting country in the world at this moment. The past never witnessed a birth of a civilized nation so remarkable, so orderly, so sudden. Within the lifetime of all of us the Japanese were a wholly unilluminated race. They kept their doors shut against outside influence of every kind. No foreigner could even enter the land. To-day all is changed. They sent envoys to France, who brought back law; others to Germany, who gave them a military organization. From England they borrowed a navy; from America a system of national education. From the civilized world in general they imported a most perfect telegraph and postal system, railways and tramways, the electric light, Universities, technical colleges, and, within the last few months, Houses of Parliament and a vote. The Japanese have set themselves up, in short, with all the material and machinery of an advanced and rising civilized State—all the material except *one*. They have no religion. As was inevitable, heathenism has been abolished, and, as already said, the people are in the unique position at present of prospecting for a religion.

Now this last fact having become somewhat known, Japan to-day presents the spectacle of having already

within its borders representatives from every Church in Christendom prospecting for converts. Even the politicians being fairly agreed—and this in itself is most striking—that some sort of religion is necessary, these representatives are eagerly listened to, and get a perfectly honest chance.

The noblest building in the capital of Japan is the Cathedral of the Greek Church. Roman Catholics are there, Unitarians are there, Episcopalians of different degrees of height and Presbyterians of different degrees of breadth, and Methodists of different degrees of heat, and Baptists and Independents, and Theosophists and Spiritualists, and every sect and church and denomination under heaven. The issue will be one of the most interesting events in ecclesiastical history. For there is no favouritism and no prejudice. When the result is known, it will be the purest possible case of the survival of the fittest.

One cannot at all say at present who has it. It will be some sort of Christianity; probably not now the Roman Catholic or the Greek; and what makes the situation so extremely interesting and the hour so overwhelmingly important, is that every Christian man, and every Christian book, and every Christian stroke of work that are given to Japan have an immediate and almost palpable influence upon this problem. Such is the mood and such is the malleability of this nation at the present hour, that if a Christian of great size arose to-morrow, either among the Japanese themselves or among the European missionaries, he could almost give the country its religion. If there be here one prophet, or half a prophet, or even the making of half a prophet, let me assure him that there is no field in the world to-day where, so far as man can judge, his best years could be lived to so great a purpose.

With the mention of two more facts, I am done with Japan. You are aware that the work of the missionaries has been so successful that there are already thousands upon

thousands of Christian converts in the country. Very many of these know English as well as we do, and many are perfectly read in every form of modern European literature, and as able and as cultured as the picked men in our Universities. The man among these men whom I found was most regarded as a leader of thought among the Japanese Christians made to me this striking statement: "We have got," he said, "our Christianity almost exclusively from the missionaries, especially from the American missionaries, and we can never thank them enough. But after a little we began to look at it for ourselves, and we made a discovery. We found that Christianity was a greater and a richer thing than the missionaries told us. Perhaps they themselves were *second-handed*. At any rate, we must henceforth look at it for ourselves. We want Christianity, not perhaps necessarily a Western Christianity." His next sentence was expressed with some hesitation and much delicacy, but it meant this—"In the past they have helped us much; but . . . they may now : . . go."

In justice to the missionaries, let me say that one or two of the few whom I met were quite aware that this feeling existed towards some of them; and they also knew its cause; others knew that the Japanese were beginning to think them *de trop*, but they attributed it to conceit, and to the general anti-English reaction lately set in in all departments. But all were agreed that the Japanese church could not yet be left to stand alone. What exactly my critic would have replied, or rather how exactly he would have qualified by further statement [of his meaning, may possibly be inferred from the other circumstances which I wish to name. It happened in Tokio that I had the privilege of addressing some thirty or forty Japanese Christian pastors. At the close I asked them if they had any message they would like me to take home with me to the Churches here or in

America. They appointed a spokesman, who stood up and told me, in their name, that there were two things they would like me to say. The one was, "Tell them to send us one six thousand dollar missionary, rather than ten two thousand dollar missionaries." But the second request went deeper. I again give the exact words—"Tell them," he said, "that we want them to send us no more doctrines. Japan wants Christ."

I trust the narrative of these two facts will not be taken as a reproach to the missionaries. If they represent a true feeling, it is rather to their lasting honour that in a few years they should have taught the native Christians to see so far. Of the actual mission work in Japan I can say nothing, for I was only a few days there. But if I were to judge from the Japanese converts whom I met, I would question whether any mission work in the world had ever produced fruit of so fine a quality. How deep it is, how permanent it is, remain for the test of time to declare; but the immediate outlook, though disheartening possibly to individual missionaries, seems to me one of the richest hope and promise.

HENRY DRUMMOND.

### QUESTIONS.

AT the urgent request of the Editor, I began to string together a few suggestions, or rather questions, about the interpretation of passages in the New Testament, which have been scattered over many publications; and, further, at his special wish, some disconnected impressions of some of our great scholars, now passed away, are interwoven, just as they rose to my mind and slipped to the tip of the pen.

I. The riches hid below the surface of the earth belonged to the Emperor. All quarries were managed and worked by his own private officers for his private purse. Every block that was quarried was inspected by the proper officer,