

Missionary Correspondence.

Rev. H. C. Sanders, M. D.
(Continued.)

CHAPTER VIII. *A Near "Jonah."*

"And he (Jesus) said unto them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And they straightway left their nets and followed Him."

It was the following spring that I felt myself nearing another crisis in my Christian experience. God was calling me to leave my summer fishing and enter fully into the work of soul winning. I felt it and yet held back, Jonah like. More and more clearly came the conviction until I had practically no doubts. But I had already engaged to work in a fish trap for the spring months and must keep my promise. I prayed that if God wished me to step out now He would somehow help me to be honorably released from that obligation. Then came a felon on the ball of my right thumb of which the scar still remains to bear witness to my wilfulness. I found no difficulty in securing a capable supply until my thumb should be healed. The difficulty was the other way. My substitute had been to see my employer and had tried to take my position from me. Thus God had wonderfully answered prayer—first the felon, then the thrusting upon me of a permanent supply. But instead of accepting this latter as from Him, I was indignant, stood up for my rights, taking the situation that was mine by agreement. I had yet learned so little of Him who is meek and lowly.

At the end of two months, rendered sad by the conviction that I was running away from God, the trapping season closed. And now that I was again free, would I obey God and leave my fishing and school teaching? This was the question that must be answered. But how to begin was the thing that bothered me. I hesitated to take the first step without seeing the second and third. The lesson was yet unlearned that God generally reveals but one step at a time.

Instead of following the path of duty, I resolved to spend the fall in net fishing as I had the three previous years.

The very day work finished in the trap I set my nets so no time should be lost. And though I thoroughly understood the work, things continually went wrong. Other fishermen would have a barrel to a net, while my nets would be in a snarl and contain but a pail full of herring. More than the ordinary precautions were observed. I placed extra heavy anchors at the north end of the nets to hold them from dragging down with the ebb tides. Then the nets were shifted further in shore, where the tides do not run so strong. Every day something was found wrong, until I began to think that the hand of God was against me. So very unaccountable were the happenings that one morning I said aloud, "Lord, it is enough, I will leave my nets and follow Thee." That afternoon saw all my netting outfit carefully stored, while I returned home feeling that I was leaving forever the work of my boyhood days.

I had now taken the only step I could yet see, but felt that God would somehow give the needed light. The next Wednesday evening that light came. It was prayer meeting night and I usually had a few minutes prayer before leaving home. As I knelt before the Lord there came over me a great depression—a feeling akin to that of guilt. I prayed, "Lord, why this cloud of condemnation? What have

I done today that grieves Thee?" The burden and darkness only increased until I was in an agony of anxiety and attention; then the Lord spoke. I heard no audible voice, but the actual words came like they were being spoken to my mind: "Tonight, at the prayer meeting, you tell the people that I have called you to work in My vineyard and that you are going to obey the call." Here was a crisis indeed. Though I had been so gradually led up to this point, yet I shrank from making a public announcement of my purpose. I pleaded that the matter might be postponed, but was held to the present. After about ten minutes of mental agony and weighing of costs, I said, "Yes, Lord, I will." The moment this decision was formed the feeling like condemnation passed away and there came to me a joy deeper and sweeter than can be expressed, and with it these words, "Had you waited two years more it would have been too late." Oh, the gladness of my heart that I had yielded my will in obedience before it was too late for the Heavenly Potter to mould the vessel according to His first design. It seemed so like the time of my conversion; I had come very near deciding the wrong way. Also, after the flood of joy and light that now filled my soul, I could so clearly see what disobedience would have meant—a remodeling of the clay into some other vessel less useful to the Master. Just why two years more delay would have made all this difference I do not fully understand; but I was certain that God had spoken. And yet in looking back over those two following years I find them filled with important developments. In a word, I was licensed to preach and later ordained to the Christian ministry, formally accepted by the Reformed Baptists as their missionary-in-training, and had begun study at the Missionary Training Institute of Brooklyn.

My heart overflows with the joy of gratitude as I recall these early days when God led so patiently, giving such clear guidance that has ever since been to me a strong bulwark against popular unbelief.

I think I must have been the happiest one at that Wednesday evening meeting, for the joy of the Lord filled and thrilled me. When Pastor Kinney heard my statement it occurred to him that I should begin at once by preaching in our home church next Sunday evening. I hesitated, but he urged and had his way. How well I remember that first sermon. Thoroughly commonplace in itself, yet, like my Chatterbox and Pilgrim's Progress, it marked a time of important beginnings.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ON MISSIONS.

By Mrs. H. C. Sanders.

One of the hardest things that our missionaries have to do is to convey to the people of Asia and Africa any true conception of sin. There is no word in any non-Christian language which means sin in the sense of moral evil, and the missionaries have to do what the disciples of the first century did, take some other word and fill it with a new meaning. If you were to tell a Chinese audience that they were sinners, they would think you were calling them criminals. The ideal man in the conception of non-Christian religions is one who, like the Pharisee of old, punctiliously keeps certain rites and ceremonies, but who may be a vile man at heart. A man may be a good Buddhist but a bad man. Walking with a missionary through the streets of Tokyo, I saw Buddhist priests coming out of houses of vile character. I learned that it was a custom

for priests to go often to such places to receive the offerings of the inmates and to pronounce a blessing upon their nefarious traffic. When a new resort of vice is to be opened, priests aid with religious ceremonies. The vilest things that I saw in two journeys around the world were in the temples of India and China. The most popular god in India is the god of lust; the next is the god of devilry; and the third is the god of cruelty.—*Selected.*

The economic burden of heathenism can be appreciated from the statement of an English Congregationalist missionary in China that in one small temple courtyard he measured a pile of ashes from burnt paper money offered to the dead that was forty feet in circumference and four feet deep.—*Electric Messages.*

In the oases of the Tripolitan Sahara are small colonies of Jews dwelling in holes in the earth, like prehistoric troglodytes. Their chief centre is Tigrena, with 800 inhabitants all living underground. About the entrances, fig, olive, and pomegranate trees are cultivated. An educated Parisian Jew describes a visit to the rabbi of this settlement. The conversation was held in Hebrew. In the rabbi's hole, together with mediaeval Hebrew manuscripts, were goats and hens, but neither chairs nor table. He, too, is a Zionist who believes that "the end of days" is approaching, that Messiah is at the door, and in this hope comforts himself and the poverty-stricken Israelites in these Saharan caves.—*Selected.*

Significant changes are being worked out in the ancient Empire of China. In accordance with an official edict, New Year's day was celebrated on January 1, instead of February 6. The Chinese Republic has adopted the Gregorian calendar. President Yuan also issued an edict doing away with ancient robes and flowing trousers. The women are now to wear Occidental skirts, and the men sack suits, derby or silk hats, and leather shoes.—*Selected.*

At the central education conference held in Peking, a resolution was adopted recommending that the Chinese minister of education omit entirely the requirement in the public schools of worshipping Confucius. This will be a great step toward the overthrow of this religion, for when school children are no more required to bow before the tablet of Confucius, the religion will gradually be less respected and finally forgotten.—*Selected.*

Recently in the city of Canton many idols of the most frequented temples were dragged into the streets and beheaded.—*Selected.*

PROGRESS IN JERUSALEM

Jerusalem is at last to be modernized. The walls of the old city inclose 209 acres; thirty acres being occupied by the Temple inclosure. The tide of immigration is such that it is impossible to house the thousands of Jews who are arriving, so building has been going on outside the city walls. The growth of this extramural population has made it necessary to keep some of the city gates open day and night for some time, but now they are all to be thrown open and to remain open perpetually. Modern equipments will be installed as rapidly as possible. A French company has been given a contract to lay tram lines; an English company will install electric light throughout the city; a German company will construct reservoirs about sixteen miles distant, and convey water to the city. Jerusalem bids fair to become the capital city of the Jewish race.—*Selected.*

All Europe has its eyes upon the commercial possibilities that will follow the opening up of Mesopotamia (the Euphrates Valley) by the vast irrigation projects now under con-