

## Missionaries Not Getting Heathens

(Below is a synopsis of a discourse given at both the Columbus and Asbury Park conventions by Bro. Robert R. Hollister, who has been in the Orient for the past four years—a report from the public press. 1914 Convention Report, starting on page 140.)

*Missionaries Not Getting Heathens—Says Lecturer.—“Teeming Millions” of the Far East Unmoved by Appeals, I.B.S.A Members Told—Superstition and Ignorance Together With Sectarian Differences, Held to Blame.*

World-wide missionary effort has been largely in vain, according to R. Robert Hollister of New York, journalist and lecturer, who yesterday addressed The International Bible Students' Association at Memorial Hall. “The hem of heathendom's garment has scarcely been touched,” he said. “The nations have hardly deviated one iota from the even tenor of their way.”

Mr. Hollister said that superstitious religions, poverty, ignorance and the caste system, together with sectarian differences among the missionaries themselves, explain why so comparatively few heathens have been “brought to the feet of Christ.”

The lecturer recently returned from a four years' world tour. Two years were spent in the mission fields of China, Japan, Korea and India. He said, in part, in his lecture:

“Jesus Christ's prophecy that the Gospel should be preached throughout the world has been fulfilled. The Bible has been published in 500 different languages and dialects and scattered to earth's remotest bounds. The heart of China and the fastnesses of Tibet have been penetrated. India has been visited and the Bible, which contains a balm for every woe, has been prescribed for her loathsome maladies. Rays of truth have been flashed into the gloomy shades of Darkest Africa. South America and the islands of the sea have not been ignored. This world-wide proclamation of the Gospel has been made at the cost of great personal sacrifice. Thousands of lives and millions of money have been offered upon the altar of foreign missions.

“In view of these facts, we quite naturally inquire: Has this witness to all nations brought them to the feet of Christ? Is heathendom now Christian? Have its shrines and idols been demolished? Have its temples become gathering places for the worship of the one true God?

“No; we cannot make these claims, however much we should be gratified to do so. The hem of heathendom's garment has scarcely been touched. The nations have hardly deviated one iota from the even tenor of their way. Their teeming millions have been alike unmoved by appeal or threat. Our God of love has not drawn them. The portrayal

of a hell of torture has not coerced them. Heathendom has viewed with varied and mingled feelings Christendom's persistent propaganda. The majority of her people look on impassive and unconcerned, some with wonderment and curiosity, others with contempt and derision or hatred and malice.

“Only a comparative few have even professed an acceptance of Christ as their Lord, perhaps 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 during the past 100 years, by far the most active period of missionary effort. A considerable number of these converts might be termed ‘rice Christians’, because chiefly influenced by the material benefits they expected to obtain.

“To meet this situation, various suggestions are made. Some claim that God will save the heathen through their ignorance. Others claim that God was trying to reveal himself through Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed, et al. We cannot acquiesce in these views. They appear to us as God dishonoring and unscriptural. The Apostle Paul informs us that ‘whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ There is no suggestion that whosoever calleth upon an idol, or his ancestors, or upon Buddha, Confucius or Mohammed shall be saved. Our Lord said: ‘I am the door; by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.’ All must approach by the door, and Christ is that door.

“Do you inquire why so few of heathendom have been reached by Christendom? I reply that there are many and varied reasons why missionary efforts to woo the heathen en masse have been so unavailing: superstitious religions, dense ignorance, extreme poverty and the caste system. Besides these, almost insurmountable obstacles having their origin in heathendom, there are other retarding influences which emanate from Christian sources.

“First among these we mention sectarian differences, which have greatly confused the Orientals. There are Northern Presbyterians in the southern provinces, and Southern Methodists in the north. Trinitarians insist that God is three, while Unitarians quote Scriptures to prove that God is one. Calvinists claim that only a small elect minority are to be saved, while Universalists urge that eventually every man will escape. Roman Catholics and Episcopalians, with great assurance, lay claim to ‘apostolic succession,’ and both succeed at least in hopelessly muddling the unsophisticated investigators. Fully 100 different missionary boards and organizations have representatives upon the mission fields, endeavoring to justify their existence and the vast sums of money expended by adding converts to their struggling and disheartened ranks.

“Another deterring factor has been the widespread teaching that God had made provision for the eternal torturing of the vast majority of humanity. To some extent these sad tidings of great misery awaiting the vast majority are today proclaimed upon the mission fields, and the baneful influence is incalculable. Allow me to explain my contention by relating a conversation I had with the proprietor and publisher of the ‘Indu-Prakash,’

Bombay, Hindu, of no small intelligence. As always I was anxious to make known the riches of the Gospel message, but this gentleman cut me short with words having this import: ‘You Christian missionaries come to us Hindus and proclaim a God of infinite wisdom, justice, love and power that attracts us. You tell us that we must accept Jesus, since there is no other name given under Heaven whereby we must be saved. You explain in His own words, ‘I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.’ You add that unless we do accept Him, we shall be ‘lost,’ and by that you mean that we shall suffer an eternity of woe and torture. I ask you what about my dead friends and relatives who never heard the only name? You give me no satisfaction; according to these verses of the Bible and your theory they are in hell, and yet a God who was possessed of all power could easily have sent a saving message to every individual member of the human race had He so desired. No, thank you, Missionary, I would rather go to hell and reside with my friends and relatives than go to Heaven and live with a God of that description.’”

Two questions were considered by Mr. Hollister: (1) “Why is heathendom in an outcast, disinherited condition?” (2) “What has been done towards heathendom’s recovery?”

The speaker argued that the heathen were in their present lamentable condition through the operation of hereditary laws. That as the Bible states, “By one man sin entered into the world and death as the result of sin, and so death passed upon all men.” However, the speaker said, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Christ at His first advent gave His life a ransom for all. In the meantime, the Gospel has been preached in all the world for a witness and has drawn from all nations a select class called the Christian church, which was to be a representative body, of every kindred, nation and tongue. Jesus promised to return and then He would exercise His authority and power by calling all the dead back to life. His church would be given glorious spiritual bodies like His own. They, associated with Him as kings and priests, would reign and bless all the families of the earth including heathendom. This good time would be the world’s “judgment day,” a period of 1,000 years, during which all who had not previously enjoyed a full, fair opportunity would be granted one. Those accepting life upon the terms offered, loyalty and obedience to Christ’s kingdom, would live everlastingly upon the perfected earth; the earth would abide forever according to the Bible. Disobedient and incorrigible people would die the “second death.” It would be utter extinction, pictured in Revelation as a lake of fire and brimstone, which was a symbol of total destruction.