

Dwelling Deep

By

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The China Inland Mission.

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The China Inland Mission was organized in 1865 to penetrate beyond the coast provinces and carry the Gospel into the interior of China. Having now, by the grace of God, established permanent stations in all the inland provinces, it exists to care for the churches thus established, and to extend the good news of Salvation into the still unreached parts of vast extent and heathen darkness.

The Mission is evangelical, interdenominational and international in character. It is supported by the free-will offerings of God's people, no personal solicitation and collections being authorized.

At the opening of 1914 there were in connection with the Mission, 1,076 foreign missionaries (including wives), and over 2,000 Chinese helpers (paid and unpaid). The number of communicants is over 30,000. The number baptized from the beginning amounts to about 45,000

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“Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor.”—Jeremiah 49: 30.

THE above words, from the prophecy of Jeremiah, appear in the midst of a series of judgments which Jehovah pronounces upon the cities and countries located about Palestine. The people of these places had been brought into a peculiar relationship to Israel, and thus, to Jehovah, for, though they had been used to punish Israel for her sins, the persecution of that people had been the persecution of Jehovah Himself. Hence, Jehovah's arm was bared in judgment, in behalf of His own honor and of Israel's welfare. And yet, even in dealing with these outside

nations, the Gracious One does not forget mercy. Hence, while He pronounces judgment, He makes a way of escape from judgment to as many as may take advantage of it. Previously, as recorded in the eighth verse of the chapter, He had cried: "Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan." And now, to this other city and country He cries: "Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Hazor." In other words, the storm must burst; but the distant mountains have rocky and vast caverns, and these shall be a hiding place and a place of refuge in the time of storm. So, then, Jehovah's exhortation is to flee and to dwell deep. And, what God cried to these nations, He cries to all who have come, in any sense, under His judgment. And thus His voice reaches the church, and individual Christians. For judgment begins with the church of God; it is even now abroad in the land; it is reaching particular churches and congregations;

it is dealing with many individual Christians; and it is a time when there is but one thing to do, namely, to "dwell deep." In doing this, the way of escape will be found.

The need of dwelling deep suggests the fact that Christians too often live in surface and exposed places. Indeed, it may be said that most Christians choose to live out in the open, and thus upon the surface of things, even though this does expose them to storm and tempest. There is not so much sunshine in deep caverns, and not so much companionship there. But God would have us understand that these considerations are not the final ones in the case. The last question with us should be: What has He, in mercy, commanded; and where is the place of safety? And the answer is: "Flee ye, get you far off, dwell deep!" There is heavy judgment upon superficial living. But there is rich blessing upon any man who will get into

the depth of things, and so reach the hidden fastnesses of God. And, in a word, these cavern depths are found in God Himself. There, and there only, is safety; and in that place there is such safety, that there also, is peace. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall garrison your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." It will be worth while then to consider in what special respect, spiritually speaking, we need to dwell deep.

First, we need to dwell deep in the person of Christ. Every Christian who knows Christ at all, knows Him as a Savior. And very blessed knowledge this is. It is a wonderful experience to come to Calvary's cross, and to see there more than a Man, to see there also the Son of God; to see more than a martyr, to see also the Substitute. Such perception means eternal salvation. But when we have so learned Christ, we have

not come to an end of Him. On the contrary, this is but the beginning of our knowledge of Christ and of our experiences in Him. So, then, we need to go deeper down into His wonderful being. We need to learn that He is also the Keeper of the soul; that He is also the Sanctifier of the spirit; that He is the One who gives peace, joy, power, and likeness to God; that He is, in short, our "all and in all." There are unsearchable depths in Christ; and hence, we should not be content until we have sought these out, and have found that in Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Second, we need to dwell deep in God's Word. There are a number of ways of studying the Scriptures. First, there is the theological way, where great doctrines are taken up and considered, such as the Inspiration of the Scriptures, the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Atonement, etc. This is a very profitable

way of studying the Word, especially in these days of declension, when personal safeguarding in doctrine is so much needed. Then there is the devotional way, where different portions of the Word are meditated upon, thoughtfully and persistently, until one obtains such an application of truth to one's life that it is like meeting with Jesus Himself, hearing His voice, and being blessed by Him. And this, too, is a most profitable way of studying the Scriptures, as those two men found out who went with Jesus to Emmaus, who heard Him expound the Scriptures, and who were constrained to testify that their hearts had burned within them as He spoke to them by the way. But, whether we take these ways of study, or other ways, there is need that we go still deeper down. Theological study may prove to minister only to our pride; and devotional study may prove to minister only to our emotions. Large knowledge does not necessarily empower,

and sweet feelings do not necessarily sanctify. Spiritual things, after all, are most practical. Therefore, we must make sure that we are studying the Word for the set purpose of putting into instant and full effect all that we learn from it. A little study and a little knowledge with this end obtained is worth much more than long study and great knowledge without such an end secured; and no emotions at all, but with determined obedience in the life, is worth infinitely more than tears which end with weeping and with nothing accomplished for God. This is the reason why some humble saint may know more of God's Word than some great theologian, and why some quiet, unobtrusive follower of Christ may be preparing for himself a far greater reward than some well-known and much-talked-about preacher. What God wants, of all things, is obedience, and no scriptural study is worth anything which does not result

in such. It is indeed, then, our personal need to go down into the depths of God's Word, and never to pause in our search until that Word is to our souls like a "great rock in a weary land," holding us fast and complete in all the will of God.

Third, we need to dwell deep in the life of prayer. Judging from the condition of the church and the world, many Christians know little about the deeper things of prayer. If they did, surely the church would not be where she is to-day, rich and yet poor, and large in numbers but weak in power; and surely the world would not be where she is to-day, with the larger half wholly ignorant of the fact that Christ died for sinful men. Plainly, a prayer revival is needed, one which will bring Christians to their knees in confession of sin, one which will liberate them from selfish and small petitioning, one which will make them intercessors for all men everywhere,

and one which will so empower them that they will be able to prevail with God. We live too often upon the surface of the prayer life, being personal, local, and, at best, denominational and national in our interceding, and not knowing the true vitality of prayer, namely, prayer in the name of Christ, in the power of the Spirit, and for all mankind. Therefore, God calls us to go deeper down in prayer, that in the "secret place" we may touch the depths of God's enabling, and so be able to do exploits for Him.

Fourth, we need to dwell deep in the life of the Holy Spirit. That was a wonderful day for us when we came to know that the Spirit is a person. Before that time, we had thought of Him as an influence, and we had spoken of Him as, "it." But, suddenly, we came to recognize Him as a Being, who was full of life, love and power, and who occupied a personal relationship to us, with whom we could have holy inter-

course. And that was another wonderful day when we learned about the filling of the Spirit, that is, that the Spirit who was in us was willing to possess and use us. These discoveries were like new conversions to us, and we rejoiced accordingly. And yet, here too we need to go deeper down; for the Scripture makes it plain that there is for the saint, not only the experience of knowing the Spirit as a person and being filled with Him, but also of actually being in this same Spirit, of living, moving and having our being in Him. It is a good thing, physically, to be filled with the air; but it is a better thing to be, not only filled with air, but also to live in the air with which we need to be filled. Likewise, it is a good thing to be filled with the Spirit. But it is a better thing to live and walk in the Spirit, that is, to have our life's environment nothing less than God the Holy Ghost, so that so far as our choice is concerned, we may live the

life which He would have us live, that we may speak the words which He would have us speak, that we may think the thoughts which He would have us think, yea, so that all that we do may be begun, continued, and ended in Him. Such a life in the Spirit calls for deep experiences. But there is no other way of being fully "preserved in Jesus Christ," and of being abandoned to the will and glory of God.

And, finally, we need to dwell deep in the holiness of God. A distinction is generally made between God's holiness and His righteousness. To put it simply: holiness is what God is; and righteousness is what He does. At the same time, between God's holiness and righteousness there is always an exact equivalent; that is, the one never is less nor never exceeds the other, but is ever equal to the other. Judicially the same is true of the Christian, for Christ's holiness and righteousness are equally imputed to

him. But, experimentally, this is not always the case, for it is a lamentable fact that the Christian's inner life does not always correspond to his outward life. Actually, of course, a man's righteousness can never exceed his holiness; but in appearance it may very much exceed it. So it is that there may come to pass a difference between profession and possession. Here, then, is the call to a deeper life, wherein we shall pass into such a true experience of God's holiness that we shall be within all that we profess to be without. A quest like this may give the soul deep heart-searching. But before it is over it will have an infinite rewarding.

A man once bought a farm, and by hard work he eked out a poor existence from it. At last he died, at which time his son inherited the farm. This son, by hard toiling, supported himself and family, though he had this advantage over his father, that he found on his place some black stuff which would burn, and with

which he fed his fires. Finally, this second farmer died, when his son inherited the place. After this, he too toiled and labored, and fed his fires. But one day an engineer passed that way and pointed out to the farmer that the out-cropping of that black stuff meant that there was a coal mine beneath the farm. So a company was formed, and they dug deep. That last farmer is now a millionaire. His grandfather and father had lived over that illimitable wealth for all their lives. But they had never known it and had died poor. And the last man would have repeated the sad experience had not his engineer-friend told him to leave his petty, surface farming, and to dig deep. And there is One who speaks to us, who bids us to go deeper down. May we have done, therefore, with surface living. In dwelling deep we shall find, not only safety, but also riches untold.