

# The Modern Crusade

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Edited by  
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THE WORLD FIELD OF THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH.By REV. S. H. CHESTER, D. D., *Nashville, Tenn.*,*Secretary of Foreign Missions.*

I will do the very best I can to give you in the briefest possible space a bird's-eye view of that part of the non-Christian world, which, in the providence of God, has fallen to us as our task. I want to say that in my humble judgment the greatest forward step in active administration in our time has been the proposed division of the territory of the non-Christian world among the churches of Jesus Christ.

We wonder many times at what seems to be a dark, inscrutable division of Protestantism into so many forms. For long years the various denominations have spent their time contending with one another over points of more or less importance. What if it should turn out in this age of the world that, after all, God is going to use just that very state of things to the friendly mobilization of the different branches of the Church of Christ as the condition that will most hasten the coming of His Kingdom in the world?

I have been more and more amazed, as I study the question, at the way God has honored and favored us in that part of the non-Christian world, which he has assigned to us as our special portion of the field. Over there just at the mouth of the Gulf of Mexico, you will observe on that map the gem of the Antilles, which because of its beauties might be called the gem of all the Islands of the Sea. That is where God has given us our part in the island world. And there is our Mexico field. God has favored us in giving us these two fields. On the Northern border of Mexico, where the spirit of Texas has gone over and leavened the people, you will find the best and most progressive population of Mexico. These two fields, that have been assigned to us, are supposed to contain a population of one half a million souls each.

Our South American field is in the country that was formerly called the Empire of Brazil, and they are very anxious in these days to call it the United States of South America. We think we have the greatest country in the world here in the United States of North America, and in a great many respects we have. But if you go

across the United States, you will pass along many sandy flats and arid plains; you will also pass through level valleys and alluvial plains, but the poor land always in the majority. Start across the United States of South America, from North to South, or East to West, and you will find exactly one character of top soil. An old professor once said that it was composed of about three or four feet of glacial drift from a great glacier that slid down over the country enriching it by deposits, so much so, that those people are able to get an abundant food supply without cultivation. The capacity of that country in supporting population, in my humble judgment, is three or four times that of the whole of North America. The section of Brazil to the north and south of the eighth degree of latitude, is depending wholly upon our church and the Southern Baptist Convention for any knowledge it shall ever get of the true gospel of Jesus. There are three millions of the present population of that country, who, if they ever know what the gospel is, must learn it from the missionaries we have sent there to teach them.

Our Eastern work is in China, Japan and Korea. The greatest mission field in the world, as everybody knows, is China; and I wonder why it is that God gave us our part in Central China, the richest and most densely populated part of that great empire. The people live in that country like swarms of ants or flies, and yet they manage to get three square meals of rice a day, and to supplement that with roast pig and duck on holidays and feast days. It is a well fed population as compared with many of the European nations. And this is the field in which we are to be His tool, and that is the country in which we are going to plant churches for Jesus Christ. People who know them best say that they are, as compared with other oriental people, distinguished by their wonderful industry and perseverance, their respect for law and authority, and above all else for their reliability, the reliability with which they recognize as inviolate the obligation of a contract. What a foundation that is, to build a superstructure on! That is the highest type of character.

Then, one other trait which ought to commend them, and that is that they are a nation of born Calvinists. You talk to a Chinaman half an hour, and you will probably hear more about "the decrees of heaven" and "the will of heaven" than you will hear in half a day in the theological class rooms of one of our American seminaries. Their idea of God is that of a great power that sits back in state and doesn't care anything about the ordinary mortal, whom no one but the emperor

can approach, and, believing as they do in an overruling providence, this combined with their visional powers, makes them a nation of fatalists and pessimists. Now, suppose we could supplant that notion of heaven and God, which they have, by the one which we have; and suppose we could teach them to believe in the God of Love, as we believe in Him, then what a transformation there would be!

We have such an opportunity there as never confronted a church before in the Eastern world. Dr. Bradley tells us about the present attitude of those people. There are twelve or fifteen millions of them, and they are our charge. Nobody else is going there, because we are there, and we have the opportunity of planting right there in the heart of the far East, the greatest church the world has ever seen, which, if it would not be Presbyterian in name, would still be Presbyterian in quality, and characterized by the same aggressiveness which is prevalent in this country, and especially which is characteristic of the followers of Calvin and John Knox.

I have no time now to speak of all these countries. Eleven years ago I was in Korea, and there was a gentleman there from Chattanooga, Tennessee, trying to survey and build a railroad. I am glad that he didn't get it built before I got there, because I would have been deprived of the pleasure of riding through Korea on a Korean pony. Our field is in the southern part. It is unnecessary for me to tell you of the opportunities we have there, and talk about evangelizing them in this generation. If we will send the men and women there, we can evangelize that country in ten years at the farthest, that country which had the darkest heathenism of the Orient.

And just a word about Africa, skipping over Japan. When our pioneer missionaries went to Africa, they went twelve hundred miles from the coast, and about eight hundred miles from the nearest touch with missionaries of other churches. We were told by our friends that in doing so they were in the greatest peril. And they did incur very great peril, by giving up their liberty, having to give up liberty, or else life. And, as we think of it now and hear the story which Dr. Sheppard tells us, we think it is a miracle that they escaped. That is the human side of it. The providential side of it is, that they found there the finest and largest of all the tribes in Africa. It is the tribe that will make the very best native agent for evangelizing the rest of the continent. There they found a spot so hidden and secluded that they were able to lay a foundation and to plant a church before the attention of King Leopold was called to it; he

who was then engaged, as he is now, in his work of devastating and ruining that great country in the name of philanthropy and religion. They have been trying to get us out of there, but God put us there and there we are going to stay. We have our treaty rights. And I want to suggest to this great convention, that we express to our Department of State our appreciation of the noble and Christian stand they have taken with reference to our rights and our work in Africa. Perhaps you have seen in the papers the statement of the last act of Secretary Root, as he retired from the great work he has been doing. As our secretary of State, he united with the British Government and required a guarantee in the transfer of this country from King Leopold to Belgium and that guarantee is to cease persecuting our missionaries in the courts, for what they call "calumnious denunciation;" which is the contention of the agents of the State, when the missionaries are simply stating the facts as to what they have seen there and as to the cruelties that have been practiced there.

Just a few days ago I had the privilege of an interview with the new Secretary of State, and I told him what they were doing. He handed me a piece of paper and a pencil and told me to put down whatever message I would like for him to send to our consul over there and I sat there in his presence and wrote the message; then he called a messenger and sent a cablegram demanding that an investigation be made and that the facts be immediately reported to our State Department in order that they could take proper cognizance of it.

Now as we look over this great world field of ours, what is the passage of Scripture that suggests itself to our minds?

"Say not ye there are yet four months, and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to the harvest, and he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the Harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."