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Grinding Barley in the Near East



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1872—JOHN IRVINE ARMSTRONG—1924

AN APPRECIATION

R. E. MAGILL, *Secretary*

With aching hearts, stunned minds, but, we trust, with submissive wills and unquestionable faith, we announce the death of the Editor-in-Chief of our Sunday School Publications, Rev. John I. Armstrong, D. D., which occurred on March 8, 1924.

He was stricken with pneumonia on Monday, March 3rd, and after five days' illness, during which every remedy known to modern medical science was used, he entered into eternal rest.

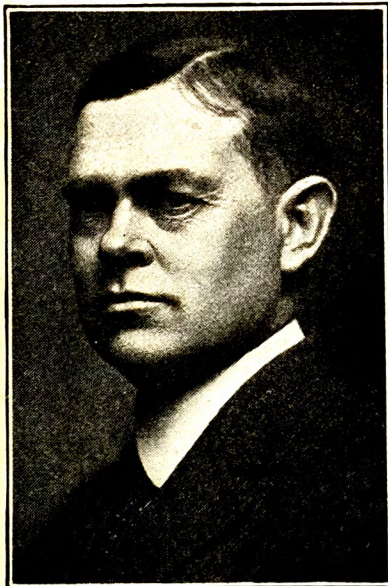
Dr. Armstrong left as a legacy a record of service to our Church and to the Kingdom of God conspicuous for its devotion to high ideals, the sacrificial giving of himself to his work, gracious consideration of the opinions of others, and of loyalty to his friends. He consecrated his life to the task of Christian education, and to a mental endowment of a high order he added the equipment which comes through continuous study and research. He received the degree of A. B. and M. from Hampden-Sidney College and immediately took up the profession of teaching. He was associated with the Wallace School for boys at Nashville, Tenn., until he entered Union Seminary at Richmond for his theological training. He graduated with distinction in 1904, and was called at once to the chair of Moral Philosophy and Preaching by his Alma Mater, Hampden-Sidney College. This position he

held until he accepted the chair of Philosophy and English Bible at Agnes Scott College, Decatur, Ga., in 1906. In order to enlarge his usefulness, he accepted at the same time the pastorate of the Kirkwood Presbyterian Church in the suburbs of Atlanta. The heavy burden was carried successfully.

He became Educational Secretary of Foreign Missions in 1913, and held this position until 1920. A volume of literature of an exceptionally high order was created, and the Church was given a new vision of its missionary obligation and an intensive course of study

was launched, which, if followed, will give our people an intimate knowledge of conditions in every field we occupy.

The Lewisburg Seminary of West Virginia found itself in need of a President, and laid a call upon Dr. Armstrong's heart. He accepted this arduous task in 1920, and rendered a great service to the cause of Christian education in carrying this institution through a grave financial crisis.



John Irvine Armstrong.

The Publication Committee made three attempts to have Dr. Armstrong accept a place on its Editorial Staff. Our last call, to become Editor-in-Chief of all the Publications of the Southern Presbyterian Church, appealed to him as offering a field of boundless usefulness and a task that would tax his resources to the limit. It was characteristic of the man that he always sought tasks that involved great personal sacrifice. He took full charge of our publications on April 1, 1923, and here entered upon what promised to be his largest service to the Church. He began at once a broad and constructive plan of developing and improving our periodicals, and enlisted at once the enthusiastic support of his associates in the Editorial and Educational Departments.

Dr. Armstrong personally reviewed every line of copy appearing in our twenty-four Sunday School periodicals, and his fine judgment was reflected in the improvement of all the periodicals. In addition he prepared the expository notes which appeared in the *Earnest Worker*, and many of the leading Editorials.

Throughout the Church his fine work and spirit were recognized, and this sudden ending of a rich and fruitful life brings grief and regret to the whole Church. He leaves a devoted wife and five children, ages six to eighteen years, and the sympathy of the whole Church is with them in their great bereavement.

came the news of the special revival services at Mutoto, with its impetus to renewed endeavour on the part of natives and missionaries alike. This was Lusambo's lead and opportunity. A revival was the great need of our station at this particular time.

It was arranged that Rev. Plumer Smith, of Mutoto, should come to us for a series of special services. Friday, the 13th of April, was the time set for his arrival. After a most trying trip with its temptations to turn back, Mr. Smith arrived on the day appointed. The services, which continued for seven days, began that night.

What were some of the results of the meeting? A general clean-up, let us say, of practically every Christian in the village and many who were not Christians, but who expressed the desire to be instructed in the teachings of Christianity. Two hundred and six confessions were made, first in private, then in open. The most impressive feature about the confessions was the

spirit of shame in which a great many of the confessions were made. My two years in the Congo have not come to me to consider genuine shame as a characteristic of a Congo native.

Three months have passed since the meetings closed. Let us briefly consider what has taken place since. The attendances upon all services and Bible classes have increased from five per cent to ninety per cent; the Catechumen classes, one hundred per cent; gifts, twenty-five per cent. In addition to these results we must not lose sight of the genuine interest that has developed in all departments of the work, and a steadily increasing demand for Bibles. One of the common expressions in the village is, "We are happy."

Elisha received the double portion of Elijah's spirit because he was a faithful and watchful friend, he allowed himself to be led of the Spirit and remained faithful to God will enable us to see our opportunity of serving Him and humanity.

CHINA.

S. H. CHESTER

THE TRANSITION of China from monarchy to republicanism is progressing slowly as such movements have always progressed. It took about fifty years for the French Revolution to work itself out through confusion and chaos and numerous extremes and reactions into an orderly system of republican government. It was many years after our Declaration of Independence before the relations between the general government and the several States of the Union were satisfactorily arranged, and only by a great Civil War that these relations were settled on a basis acknowledged by the whole country. We should not therefore become discouraged because China has not in the few years since monarchy was overthrown been able to arrive at a comfortably working arrangement as between the Central Government at Peking and the Provinces. Much of the confusion and disorder that has prevailed in recent years has been due to this State of things.

The prevalence of banditry throughout a large part of China continues and in most cases is directly traceable to the inability of both the Central and Provisional Government to command the resources with which to pay off their recruits, or to the stealing and squandering of these resources by corrupt officials.

Along with political changes China is also undergoing far-reaching changes in the commercial and industrial life of her people. The modern factory employing large numbers of people, with female labor, child labor, night work, long hours, low wages and congested living conditions, is taking the place of the old native types of industry to which the people have been accustomed for ages. All of this results in much confusion and oftentimes much misery among the laboring classes.

Some beginnings have already been made towards the relief of these conditions. The National Christian Conference in 1922 adopted resolutions concerning the aboli-

tion of child-labor of those under twelve years of age, the observance of one day of rest in seven and the protection of the life and health of the workers. Groups of Christian workers are endeavoring to bring before the authorities in the factories and which have been adopted by the Chambers of Commerce composed of both native and foreign business men in some of the cities.

The present religious situation throughout China has been set forth in the splendid *Survey* volume, published under the auspices of the National Christian Council. The title of this volume is the "Christian Occupation of China." It is now available and should be an indispensable part of the equipment of the Foreign Mission Office both as a source of information to be given to the supporters of our work at home and as a guide in the formulation of all plans for the advance in the work.

The development of the work and the establishment of organized indigenous churches in every part of China together with the spirit of national self-assertion which affects church members as well as others, has produced a situation requiring a re-adjustment of relations between missions and churches which needs to be handled with the greatest wisdom and tact if our missions are to retain their influence with the native church and to furnish it with the guidance which it still needs for many years to come. We do not believe that any body of men of the same number in Southern Presbyterian ministry could be gotten together with a higher average of ability and consecration than are to be found in the members of our two Chinese missions and we are more and more convinced that our policy will be to leave the settlement of these problems as they arise very largely in their hands.