



Worldwide Missions

Missionary Biographies

James Gilmour

The Apostle to the Mongols

by Harlan P. Beach



Gilmour's Ancestry. Matthew Gilmour, mason and wright, and his good wife, whose piety was such that they gladly walked five miles to church, returning by lantern-light, were fitting grandparents for one who was a strict Sabbatarian like James Gilmour. In his paternal grandmother, also, was the prototype of the future amateur physician of Mongolia; for she had a great local reputation as lay doctor and nurse, and in those early days she procured vaccine lymph direct from the cow. John Pettigrew, his mother's father, was so scrupulously honest that, though only a farmer-miller, he compelled the minister to retract his charge of scant measure after grinding the parson's oatmeal. What wonder, then, that his famous grandson should be blunt and honest to the point of eccentricity!

Home Influences. James Gilmour was born June 12, 1843, at Cathkin; but in a short time the family removed to Glasgow, five miles away, though a few years later they returned to the country. The third son of a family of six boys, of whom all but one lived to manhood, he naturally saw plenty of life, and he was a prominent factor in all sorts of pranks and outdoor activities. Chaffing the men in the workshop and mill — his father and uncle were partners for a time in the lumber business — devising plans for mechanically increasing his stroke in swimming, tramping over mountain and through glen to secure geological specimens, rowing and dragging his skiff over shallows to a point on the Clyde rarely reached — these are some of the feats and activities of his boyhood and youth. But the indoor life of the home made a more lasting impression upon the boy. Family prayers of a prolonged and helpful type, though rather hard on illiterate apprentices, were a marked feature of the home training. So were the meetings around their mother's knee, when she read to the boys stories or told them of her hopes for their future. As one reads Gilmour's *Among the Mongols*, one cannot but believe that these stories were the remote cause of its fascinating style and racy descriptions — a De Foe, the London *Spectator* called Gilmour. Nor was the mother the only hero of those never-to-be-forgotten Sabbaths; for the father made the evenings memorable by placing upon the table the "big Bible" — Scott and Matthew Henry's — and reading therefrom interesting passages with pithy or quaint comments. In a word, the future apostle to the Mongols found in the home of this Scotch Congregationalist the most important foundation of his future usefulness.

Gilmour's Early Schooling. Four years in a subscription school, followed by a successful period of study at Gorbals Youths' School in Glasgow, proved to his father that he was deserving of higher opportunities; hence he was sent to the Glasgow High School, where he won prizes and thereby convinced his parents that he ought to give up all thought of entering a trade. Few boys have been more conscientious scholars than he. No slighting of work was tolerated, and to make the five miles to his school, he often went without his breakfast.

Further Education. At Glasgow University he exhibited the same traits: an ambition which did not rest satisfied until his best had been done and prizes in Greek, Latin, and English literature were won; a studiousness which could not rest in summer time, but which drove him to the library for loads of books; and a sense of justice which led him to join others in a revolt against an inefficient professor of moral philosophy. His most intimate college friend says of those days: "Throughout his college career Gilmour was a very hardworking student; his patient perseverance and powers of application were marvelous; and yet as a rule he was bright and cheerful, able in a twinkling to throw off the cares of work and enter with zest into the topics of the day. He had a keen appreciation of the humorous side of things, and his

merry laugh did one good. Altogether he was a delightful companion and was held in universal esteem. One of Gilmour's leading thoughts was unquestionably the unspeakable value of time, and this intensified with years. There was not a shred of indolence in his nature; it may be truthfully said that he never wilfully lost an hour." This testimony would hold good with regard to his later studies and life at the Theological Hall of the Congregational Church of Scotland, located at Edinburgh, and at Cheshunt and Highgate in England.

The Missionary Decision. Gilmour's conversion had been a gradual one, though in the process he had sometimes been in deep darkness.

"I can remember the time," he writes, "when the pains of hell got such a terrible hold upon me, that I would gladly have changed places in the world with anyone who had the hope of salvation. Death, life, prospects, honor, shame, seemed nothing compared with the hope of salvation, which I was then without. Could I ever be saved? was the question. Would I ever have the hope that I knew others had?"

But the light came full and clear in his first year at the University, and he developed into a hopeful, active Christian. Not until the first session in the Theological Hall did he decide upon his life work. The ministry was first chosen on the ground that, as one saved by grace, he was under obligations to do what he could to extend Christ's Kingdom, and the ministry was the vocation looking most directly to that end. When it came to the question of the place of his ministry his course of reasoning was almost identical with that of Robert Morrison, though Gilmour added a stronger conclusion:

"He who said 'preach,' said also, 'go ye into and preach,' and what Christ hath joined together let not man put asunder. This command seemed to me to be strictly a missionary injunction, and, as far as I can see, those to whom it was first delivered regarded it in that light; so that, apart altogether from choice and other lower reasons, my going forth is a matter of obedience to a plain command; and in place of assigning a reason for going abroad, I would prefer to say that I have failed to discover any reason why I should stay at home."

Appointment and Preparation. Near the close of the session of 1867, Gilmour applied for appointment to the London Missionary Society, and, being accepted, he was sent to Cheshunt College, fourteen miles north of London. The new life of a dormitory institution was not an easy one to become accustomed to, but apart from that he owed much to Cheshunt and to the books read there. Those which made the most abiding impression were even then out of ordinary use, — such volumes as James's *Earnest Ministry*, Baxter's *Reformed Pastor*, and some of Bunyan's works. Here, too, he gained the victory over his lust for prizes.

"So now I made a stand," he says, "threw ambition to the winds, and set to reading my Bible in good earnest. I made it my chief study during the last three months of my residence at Cheshunt, and I look back upon that period of my stay there as the most profitable I had."

In September, 1869, he entered the missionary seminary at Highgate, and also studied Chinese in London with Professor Summers. His preparation was not without its more practical aspects. Going out in the evening alone, he would conduct open-air services near the railway station, or else would invite those on the streets to special meetings, in a way which stirred all who heard him, as well as called forth many sneers. Through correspondence he reached many at a distance. He was also working for China even before he set sail for the Middle Kingdom. A friend writes: "When he knew what was to be his field of labor after his college course was over, how solicitous he was to go out fully prepared and fitted in spiritual equipment! The needs of the perishing heathen were very real and weighed heavily upon his heart, and he was very anxious to win volunteers among his college friends for this all-important work. How he longed and prayed for China's perishing millions, only his most intimate friends know."

At Peking. While in Edinburgh in 1869, Gilmour had those interviews with Mrs. Swan, a survivor of the first Protestant mission to the Mongols, which led to his appointment to

Mongolia. But the ocean and North China lay between him and his goal. The former was a place in which he could labor for those who needed his aid almost as much as his future parishioners; and so we see the canny Scot winning the respect of the crew in the silent night-watches and in manly fashion testifying to them of the power of Christ to save. A small but critical and skeptical audience in the cabin soon came to value the ministrations of "the only parson on board," even if he was a Dissenter. The unique experience of the world-traveler, that of seeing the great walls of Peking rise from the horizon of the flat plain and a little later of passing through them by a cavernous portal, was our hero's on May 18, 1870, a little before he had reached his twenty-seventh birthday. While no awful calamity, like that which visited the capital thirty years later, was impending, foreigners were in great fear of being exterminated. It was just before the sanguinary massacre of their fellow-countrymen in Tientsin, and men's hearts were failing them with fear. "Keep me, O God, in perfect peace," was the burden of his prayer for himself, and for the multitudes he felt that there was no other refuge.

"While others are writing to the papers and trying to stir up the feelings of the people, so that they may take action in the matter, perhaps I may do some good moving heaven. My creed leads me to think that prayer is efficacious, and surely a day's asking God to overrule all these events for good is not lost. Still, there is a great feeling that when a man is praying he is doing nothing; and this feeling, I am sure, makes us give undue importance to work, sometimes to the hurrying over, or even to the neglect of prayer."

On to the Plateau. A smattering of Chinese in London, and only a little beginning made in that language during less than three months at Peking was a meager preparation for a solitary plunge into the work which was before him. Moreover, the missionaries disapproved and the recent disturbances made his start somewhat hazardous. Yet he was of heroic mold, and so he creeps over the northern part of the Great Plain and up through the age-old stairway, known as Nan-kou, or South Pass. For days he is among pack camels, numbering into the thousands, while the silvery tinkle of the mule bells mingles with the deep bass of those suspended about the leading camels of each caravan of seven. And then those great cross walls, plunging down into the pass, followed at its northern end by the Great Wall itself, came into view and impressed him with the ancient greatness of a wonderful Empire. Kalgan, on the threshold of the Mongolian plateau, was reached at last, and the home of the American missionaries there was a House Beautiful in his weary pilgrimage. Eighteen days later Gilmour moves onward, up the famous pass where the great Khans had been centuries before; indeed to his right, far, far above the highway, is an arched rock through which one of them is said to have shot an arrow from the path below. Quaint caravans of soda carts, made without a single scrap of iron and drawn by recalcitrant oxen, come down the steep incline in alternate leaps and balks. But finally the summit is gained and here at last is grassland — miles of it rolling away to the horizon — and in the fleckless blue are thousands of skylarks, that have sung themselves out of sight but not out of hearing.

Mongolia. Who were these Mongols to whom Gilmour was giving his life, and what was their country? They are the descendants of those hordes' which under Genghis and Kublai, the two greatest Khans, swept westward and southward until Kublai's sway extended during the latter half of the thirteenth century "from the Arctic Ocean to the Strait of Malacca, and from Korea to Asia Minor and the confines of Hungary — an extent of territory the like of which had never before, and has never since, been governed by any one monarch in Asia." The land which they inhabit is only a scrap of their former realm. The traveler in the region of the nomad Mongols, where Gilmour spent most of his missionary life, sees scattered here and there over the rolling plateau, clusters of circular felt tents, flanked with stacks of argol — dried dung used as fuel. The superfluity of dogs is the first impression that is made upon the visitor, and children in swarms are equally omnipresent. Prayer-flags fluttering over the encampment, horsemen watching the widely scattered flocks and herds, lazy lamas going on pilgrimage — all setting off a land blue with myriads of forget-me-not's, make the scene one long to be remembered. The agricultural Mongols, who live in settled habitations along the Chinese border and who speak Chinese, differ but little from their neighbors in North China, and their land is simply a northern extension of the Imperial Province.

Learning Mongolian. Gilmour's first trip was to Kiachta, on the Siberian frontier, which he reached in fifty-four days from Peking. Here his troubles began. Though a trader, named

Grant, received him, he soon left his host because of the taunt that any one spending as much time as he on the language ought to make more rapid progress. He had experienced difficulty in securing a teacher, and that fact with Grant's sneer determined him to commit himself to the people and learn the language as does a child. He was providentially led to a tent whose occupant was friendly and who agreed to teach him the mysteries of the language. What happened during the next three months he thus describes:

"He was only temporarily located there and had no dog, so I could go out and in as I liked. He was rich, so could afford to keep a good fire burning — a luxury which could not have been enjoyed in the tent of a poor man. His business required him to keep two or three menservants about him; and as a man of his position could not but have good tea always on hand — a great attraction in the desert — the tent was seldom without conversation going on in it between two or three Mongols. This last — conversation carried on by Mongols, just as if no one had been listening — was exactly what I wanted; and I used to sit, pencil and notebook in hand, and take down such phrases as I could catch... In the quiet intervals of the day or evening I would con over again and again what I had caught. Learning the language in this way, I could soon speak a good deal more than I could understand, or my teacher explain to me. Though I could not parse the phrases, nor even separate out the words of which they were composed, much less understand the meaning of what I said, I knew when and how to use them and could hardly help having the accent correct, and I could not avoid learning first those words and phrases which were in most common use."

This sort of life, which was more or less continuous for years, gave Gilmour unsurpassed opportunities for studying the Mongolians themselves and their customs. A ride of 600 miles across the Desert of Gobi taught him the art of riding a Mongol horse, his knees well drawn up, and the power to endure thirst for long periods. The gentle art of dickering, which in the Orient is an accomplishment absolutely essential to happiness; the unwisdom of being too obliging to menials; how to camp out on the wilds; the proper forms of receiving and enduring Mongol hospitality; these and other items which made the people call him "Our Gilmour," were the basis of his influence with them. He also learned the power of the lamas, the priests of Mongolia's form of Buddhism. As the eldest son in every family is set apart to religion, the country swarms with lazy men, who are celibates in name, but in reality libertines. Gilmour asserts that

"the great sinners in Mongolia are the lamas; the great centers of wickedness are the temples." Of the blackmen, or laity, he writes: "The influence of the wickedness of the lamas is most hurtful. It is well known. The lamas sin, not among themselves, but sow their evil among the people. The people look upon the lamas as sacred and of course think they may do what the lamas do. Thus the corrupting influence spreads, and the state of Mongolia to-day, as regards uprightness and morality, is such as makes the heart more sick the more one knows of it."

Mongol Religiosity. Like the Japanese and Hindus, the Mongols are externally devoted to their religion as another extract from Gilmour picturesquely shows.

"One of the first things that the missionary notices in coming in contact with the Mongols is the completeness of the sway exercised over them by their religion. Meet a Mongol on the road, and the probability is that he is saying his prayers and counting his beads as he rides along. Ask him where he is going and on what errand, as the custom is, and likely he will tell you he is going to some shrine to worship. Follow him to the temple, and there you will find him one of a company with dust-marked foreheads, moving his lips and the never absent beads, going the rounds of the sacred place, prostrating himself at every shrine, bowing before every idol, and striking pious attitudes at every new object of reverence that meets his eye. Go to the quarters where Mongols congregate in towns, and you will find that quite a number of the shops and a large part of the trade there are dependant upon images, pictures, and other articles used in worship.

"Approach tents, and the prominent object is a flagstaff with prayer-flags fluttering at the top. Enter a tent, and there right opposite you as you put your head in at the door is the family altar, with its gods, its hangings, its offerings, and its brass cups. Let them make tea for you, and before you are asked to drink it a portion is thrown out by a hole in the roof of the tent by way of offering. Have them make dinner for you, and you will see a portion of it offered to the god of the fire, and after that perhaps you may be asked to eat. Wait till evening, and then you will see the little butter lamp lighted and set upon the altar as a pure offering. When bedtime comes, you will notice as they disrobe that each and all wear at their breast charms sewn up in cloth, or pictures of gods in metal cases with glass fronts. In the act of disrobing, prayers are said most industriously; and not till all are stretched on their felts does the sound of devotion cease. Among the first things in the morning you will hear them at their prayer again; and when your host comes with you to set you on your way, he will most likely give you as your landmark some cairn, sacred for the threefold reason that its every stone was gathered and laid in prayer, that prayer-flags flutter over the sacred pile, and that it is the supposed residence of the deity that presides over the neighborhood."

It is not surprising among a people so devoted to their religion and with such hostility to other faiths, that one accepting Christianity should become worse than an outcast. For these reasons, Gilmour made little religious impression upon the Mongols.

Gilmour at Work. Being now in a position to work effectively, and having experimented as to the best method of reaching his man, how does he do his work? He must keep near the people and to him this meant living as nearly like them as possible. Thus he went about from tent to tent as do they when on their travels. He also shared their fare, which consisted in the morning and at noonday of a tea made of meal fried in cracklings with tea poured over it, and at sunset of beef, mutton, or tripe, boiled and then fished out with the fire tongs and placed in a basin or on a board. It was then eaten by taking it between the teeth and cutting off the bite with a knife, thus endangering the lips. Millet boiled in soup was a second and more palatable dish. His great difficulty was to find privacy for personal prayer and for personal conversation with any who showed an interest in Christianity. As there is no such thing as privacy in Mongolia, he must arrange to have the person with whom he was working serve as an attendant on long walks or rides.

Tent Visitations. Approaching a tent-hamlet, he shouts out *hanoi*, "dog," which brings out all the old women and children, whose business it is to hold in check the fierce beasts. After entering the tent and partaking of snuff and removing the reserve by friendly sips of tea, he shows the company a set of Scripture pictures, which are entertainingly described. Next he produces tracts, catechisms, and a Gospel of St. Matthew which are also briefly explained. Very likely some lama will ask questions. He does not believe in a Bible which is so insignificant in bulk in comparison with his own Canon, which it may take a string of camels to transport. God's omnipresence is unbelievable to him. The Christian view of the hereafter and our theory of salvation are real problems to most Mongols. Gilmour's notorious love of argument made such questions a genuine pleasure, much as he deplored their opposition. It was exceedingly difficult to make the people understand spiritual truths; but it was easy to show what the Christian life was like through his own godly walk and conversation.

The First Convert. Though often disappointed and of the "conviction that any one Mongol coming out of Buddhism and entering Christianity would lead a very precarious existence on the plain, if in fact he could exist there at all," Gilmour was overjoyed to win his first and only convert among the nomad tribes, one Boyinto by name. The long story of the heroic confession of the young man amid the dense smoke of a lama's tent, and of his twenty-three mile walk, with feet causing him excruciating pain, that he might have private conversation and prayer with the young confessor, is one of the classics of missionary literature. Yet even this one convert was baptized by a missionary of the American Board and received into the Kalgan church.

A Romance. The writer well remembers the sensation made at a service in Peking when Gilmour, shortly after his wife's death, preached her funeral sermon. The funeral of this true heroine of China was no more unconventional than their courtship and marriage had been. Refused at home when he had proposed to a Scotch lassie, he fell a victim to a London young

woman whom he had never seen and whom he knew only through mutual friends and correspondence. Here is the chronicle of the romance, dated Peking, January 31, 1875.

"I proposed in January, went up to Mongolia in spring, rode about on my camels till July, and came down to Kalgan to find that I was an accepted man! I went to Tientsin to meet her; we arrived here on Thursday, and were married on Tuesday morning. We had a quiet week; then I went to the country on a nine days' tour and came back two days before Christmas. We have been at home ever since. Such is the romance of a matter of fact man."

Miss Prankard's first view of her future husband is thus pictured by her brother-in-law: "The morning was cold, and Gilmour was clad in an old overcoat which had seen much service in Siberia, and had a woolen comforter around his neck, having more regard for warmth than appearance. We had to follow back to Tientsin, Gilmour being thought by those on board the steamer to be the engineer!" Yet beating beneath the rough exterior was a most affectionate heart, and their home life was most delightful.

Their Mongol Home. The brave woman longed to relieve the loneliness of her husband and to share in its burdens; hence in the summer of 1876 they were in Mongolia for over four months, during which time his wife suffered unspeakably from lack of privacy, the rough fare of the plain, and a cataclysm of woes — ice even in May, a furious tempest lasting thirty-six hours and threatening to sweep tents and occupants away, the summer rains "pouring and lashing and roaring, the great drops bursting through the rent cloth and looking like pepper shaken from a box" and the most trying of their "meteorological experiences," the fierce heat of a Mongolian summer. Yet with all these discomforts there was the joy of getting close to the people, and proving their love by their works. A corpulent mandarin was one of their visitors, on which occasion their "tent was crammed with eager listeners, and we reasoned together from the Creation to the finish, including all manner of side-issues and important questions. It was a long time before he could be convinced that our Jesus was not spoken of in the Buddhist classics. When he was at length satisfied on that point, he wanted to know about the Trinity; how men could get good; how it was right that men should escape punishment due to their misdeeds by praying to Jesus; why God allowed animals, such as starving dogs, to lead a life of suffering; why God did not keep sin from entering the world; and how about the souls that died before Jesus came." In one of their two later sojourns in Mongolia they almost lost their lives in a fearful storm and flood. With a great swift-flowing river on both sides of their frail tent and the crash of thunder and the louder roar of the waters, they faced death for a time, but at last were saved.

In China. His marriage and the loneliness of both because of the necessitated absence in Mongolia of the husband made little difference with Gilmour's scheme of Mongol evangelization. Yet it so happened that he spent considerable time in China, either substituting for his Peking colleagues when they were on furlough, or else aiding the Tientsin members of his mission when they were left alone. On one of his trips to the sacred land of China, the Province of Shantung where Confucius and Mencius were born, he and his companion baptized a large number of Chinese. The circumstance raised grave questions in Gilmour's mind as to the advisability of administering the rite to those who had had so little instruction and oversight. His most continuous work in China was done in its capital not far from the palace grounds. A most vivid account of street chapel work was given before an enchained audience at the annual meeting of the London Missionary Society when he was home on his first furlough.

Hunting Mongols in Peking. That work, however, was not as distinctively his as were his labors for Mongols in Peking, many of whom spend the winters there. Part of the time he followed the plan of residing in the Yellow Temple, outside the city walls. Living here, he was constantly meeting among the worshippers, those whom he could converse with about Christianity. A more fruitful work was done, however, at the two Mongol encampments of Peking.

"I followed the example of the peddlers" he writes, "and, hanging two bags of books from my shoulders, hunted the Mongols out, going not only to the trading places, but in and out among the lanes where they lodged, visiting the Outside

Lodging first and the Inside Lodging later in the day. The number of Mongols outside the city became latterly so small that it was not visited very often... In many cases the Mongols before buying, and not infrequently after buying, would insist on having the book read, supposing that they got more for their money when they not only had the book, but had me let them hear its contents... As the purchasers of these books hailed from all parts of Mongolia, the tracts thus put into their hands will reach to even remote localities in the west, north, and east; and my prayer is that the reading of them may be the beginning of what shall lead to a saving knowledge of the truth in some minds. Hoping for some good result, I had my address stamped on many of the books, to enable such as might wish to learn more to know where to come. In some cases, Mongols wishing to buy books had no money, but were willing to give goods instead; and thus it happened that I sometimes made my way home at night with a miscellaneous collection of cheese, sour-curd, butter and millet cake and sheep's fat, representing the produce of part of the day's sale."

Gilmour's Furloughs. Twice in his missionary career, this rough hero of the desert revisited Great Britain. The first visit was due to his wife's ill-health, which began to break during the first summer in Mongolia. Aside from the charm of his vivid word-pictures which held his audiences spell-bound, he had published while at home his unique record of the early years in Mongolia, entitled *Among the Mongols*. This missionary "Robinson Crusoe" awakened both interest and enthusiasm, and requests to write books and articles for periodicals were a temptation to devote his life to literary work, or at least to give much time to such pursuits. Both visits were a tonic to the recluse of Mongolia, their chief delight being the opportunity of quickening his spiritual life through contact with earnest Christians at home. The hearty abandon to religion in the Salvation Army, and the deeper current of spirituality found in a little circle of friends, restored naturalness to a religious life which tended to become morbid in his Mongolian loneliness.

His Wife's Death. Though Mrs. Gilmour returned to China with her husband, she was spared to her family only a little more than two years longer. Her departure, leaving him with two boys and baby Alick, and the departure later of the two eldest to Great Britain, constitute one of the semi-tragedies of missions which finds its record in *James Gilmour and His Boys*. These pathetic epistles to his children reveal the tenderer side of his nature better than anything else written by him.

The Agricultural Mongols. In 1872 Gilmour had visited the settled Mongols in the eastern part of Mongolia, but he then reported that the nomad tribes were more needy and also more open to personal work. His wife's death and the failure of his Society to send out a colleague for work among the nomads, caused him to change his position, and during the last six years of his life the bulk of his work was done for them. Here he appears in a new role, that of lay doctor. Though he had done considerable of this on the plain and had had charge of the lay affairs of the London Hospital in Peking, thus gaining valuable experience, the work was never pushed as in Eastern Mongolia. Had he consulted his own preferences, this would not have been undertaken; since he had had no medical training, and to fail in a case might result disastrously. Indeed, the loss of an eye, operated on at the Peking hospital at Gilmour's suggestion, nearly occasioned the death of himself and his wife when they were on the plain. Yet everywhere he saw suffering which the wretched lama doctors regarded as the pathway to the sufferer's pocket, they spending their time in days of prayer for the patient, since in their opinion "work without prayer is of no avail." It was for such reasons and because his appeals for a colleague who was a physician were in vain, that he so emphasized this branch of the work. The character of his labor among these tribes may be gathered from this report of eight months spent among them: Patients seen, about 5,717; hearers preached to, 23,755; books sold, 3,067; tracts distributed, 4,500; miles traveled, 1,860; money spent, 120.92 taels — about \$150. During nine months of 1887 he attended between twelve and thirteen thousand cases.

Lay Medicine. Early in the morning Gilmour would sally out to the market place with his little cloth tent, and after pitching it would stand there all day nearly, preaching and healing diseases with his well-tried specifics. Itch, rheumatism, eye difficulties, spring diseases due to the damp of the thaw, ague, narry — occasioned by whiskey which so burns the stomach that many die of the disease — and the chronic maladies of women, affecting nearly every one of

those beyond girlhood, pass in motley order before him, and all are treated by the lay doctor. So successful was he that nothing was regarded as too hard for the foreign healer, and hence many cases must be turned away. "One man wants to be made clever, another to be made fat, another to be cured of insanity, another of tobacco, another of tea, another wants to be made strong so as to conquer in gymnastic exercises; most men want medicines to make their beards grow, while almost every man, woman and child wants to have his or her skin made as white as that of the foreigner."

The Nomad at Rest. In constant activity, except for his second brief furlough in Great Britain necessitated by ill-health, the remaining years of Gilmour's service were spent. It is true that he here saw occasional conversions and the nuclei of three native churches started; but over against these signs of promise were constant opposition from a people to whom he was giving his life, and the perils of a section abounding in thieves... His hopes would be once and again raised by the tidings of re-enforcements, but the two physicians who had been sent out, were speedily called away and by contrast his last state was worse than the first. He decided that he must be at the annual meeting of his mission which was to be held in Tientsin in 1891. In glad anticipation he made special preparation through prayer and a correspondence looking toward their first conference of native workers. The journey down, particularly that part of it over the newly constructed railroad, was thoroughly enjoyed. Gilmour was made chairman of the gathering; and in the meetings held every evening for the deepening of the spiritual life, also conducted by him, he was at his best. It was afterward recalled that the songs which he most delighted in at the meetings were such as "O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found," "In the shadow of His wings there is rest, sweet rest," "God holds the key of all unknown," and "Some one at last will his cross lay down." Less than a fortnight before the end he wrote his last letter to a Kalgan missionary, in which occurs this sentence,

"Lately I am becoming more and more impressed with the idea that what is wanted in China is not new 'lightning methods,' so much as good, honest, quiet, earnest, persistent work in old lines and ways."

The unusual burdens which Gilmour was bearing, added to heart weakness, finally culminated in an eleven days' attack of typhus fever. In his delirium he was again on the Mongolian plain, living out his old heroic role; or else he was addressing most earnestly his fellow-workers, urging them to a life of constant waiting on God, that their labors might become more fruitful. And then the struggle ceased and on Thursday, May 21, 1891, the lonely wanderer of the Mongolian plateau passed through the gates into the city. The future life had been so real to him, especially since his wife's death, that heaven was not so great a surprise to him as to those who have not been living in heaven from day to day.

The Funeral. Like Mackenzie's passing, the departure of Gilmour was an event worthily lamented. A lovely afternoon; a hymn sheet with Bunyan's words printed on it, "The pilgrim they laid in an upper chamber whose window opened toward the sunrising"; the coffin borne by relays of bearers, both foreigners and native friends; singing by the Chinese of their version of "In the Christians home in glory"; and casting into the open grave by Chinese boys of the flowers which Gilmour so loved: these are some of the features of an occasion which meant to many a new inspiration to arise and fulfill the works which a man of heroic mold had set before them, both by word and example.

A Wasted Life? The reader cannot but feel inclined to say that so strenuous a life, lived for those who were so nearly hopeless from a spiritual point of view, was a waste of force. Even his own associates and his Society questioned the wisdom of his continuing in a field so sparsely settled and so abounding in difficulties. But if success is not measured by actual conversions and is viewed from the standpoint of the builder of massive foundations and the inspirer of others with apostolic ideals, the years were gloriously spent. He had, like his Master, trodden the wine press alone, and of the people there were very few with him. And also like Jesus, he preached and lived ideals which even his associates could not accept. His periods of fasting, his intense reverence for the Sabbath which, however, always included its right use, his strong position with reference to the use of tobacco and liquor, and his gradual rise from asceticism to a life singular in its imitation of Christ, constitute a legacy to every missionary and a stimulus to higher living for all Christians.

Still Living. His friend and biographer, Richard Lovett, writes: "Love, self-crucifixion, Jesus Christ followed in adversity, in loneliness, in manifold perils, under almost every form of trial and hindrance and resistance, both active and passive — these are the seeds James Gilmour has sown so richly on the hard Mongolian plain, and over its eastern mountains and valleys. 'In due time we shall reap, if we faint not.' His work goes on ... Upon us who yet remain rests the responsibility of carrying forward the work he began, of re-enforcing the workers, of bearing Mongolia upon our prayers, until Buddhism shall fade away before the pure truth and the perfect love of Jesus Christ, and even the hard and unresponsive Mongols come to recognize the truths James Gilmour so long and faithfully tried to teach them — that they need the Great Physician even more than they need the earthly doctor, and that He is more able and willing to heal the hurt of their souls than the earthly physician is to remove the disease of their bodies." And the work is literally going on. While the London Missionary Society has continued the enterprise, it has been more largely cared for by other bodies of Christians, especially on the grass land. The Boxer Uprising scattered the workers and Christians, but the field is slowly being covered again. Except for the Chinese settlers, Mongolian missions will always be difficult to carry on; but the Church is never without heroic souls who will be the lineal successors of this pioneer and of that goodly fellowship of old, who "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

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