
A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE VI.

THE RELATION OF ENGLAND'S OPIUM POLICY TO CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN CHINA.

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PROFESSOR LEGGE, of Oxford, reports, in his Religions of China, the following conversation between himself and the Chinese ambassador at London in 1877: "'You know,' said the Chinaman, 'both England and China. Which country do you say is the better of the two?' I replied, 'England.' He was disappointed, and added, 'I mean, looking at them from a *moral* stand-point, — looked at from the stand-point of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, which country do you say is the better?' After some demur and fencing I again replied, 'England.' I never saw a man more surprised. He pushed his chair back, got on his feet, took a turn across the room, cried out, 'You say, that, looked at from the moral stand-point, England is better than China! Then how is it that England insists on our taking her opium?'"[1]

It is easy for the Christian reader to spring to the conclusion that this is only another instance of the conceit and ignorance of the Chinese people. But, if we distinguish between the English people and the English government, and remember that the Chinaman has known England chiefly as a great commercial power, a different conclusion is at least possible. At any rate, the Chinaman's opinion starts some questions which cannot be settled by simply saying that he is a heathen. Of what degree of intelligence is he possessed? What facts of experience constitute the grounds of his conclusion? Does England's opium policy represent *Christian* civiliza-

[1] The Religions of China, by Professor James Legge, Oxford, p. 308.

tion? And if so, what are its points of superiority over Chinese civilization? Viewed in the light of the last hundred years of intercourse between the two powers, what relation does English civilization sustain to the "golden rule"? What is to be the influence of that intercourse upon the spread of Christianity in the Chinese Empire? These, and many other kindred questions in which all Christendom is interested, force the subject at the head of this paper anew upon public attention. A moral evil affecting the destiny of millions of men, and sustained by the government of one of the most powerful empires of Christendom, would seem to be always a timely theme. But there are two or three special reasons why it should be discussed anew at this time. The fact that, in the providence of God, China has become one of the chief mission fields of the world, brings that country into special prominence. If England has had the monopoly of the opium trade, she cannot have the monopoly of interest in its consequences to China. All Christian people are now on the alert for China's redemption. Whoever wrongs China to-day, wrongs the Christian world.

Again, the remarkable awakening of the Christian conscience of the English people themselves on this subject is stimulating thought and interest in other lands. Earnest Christian men in England have fought the opium policy from the beginning. But in recent years the agitation of the subject has become general and intense. The "Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade," with the Earl of Shaftesbury at its head, is pushing the defenders of the traffic to the wall.[1] Hitherto, American mis-

[1] This society is supported by almost the entire Christian sentiment of England. In accordance with its views, the Evangelical Alliance assembled at Basel in 1879, unanimously adopted the following declaration: "That this conference, prompted by the reports laid before it as to the present state of evangelical missions in China and India, expresses its full sympathy with the efforts for the suppression of the opium traffic which have been made during many years past, and desires to support the protests against the trade which from time to time have been raised by various evangelical

sionaries in China have wisely left their English brethren there to fight the battle with their own government. But now it would seem to be the duty of all Christians to extend their sympathy and aid to English reformers in this anti-opium struggle, both in the interest of China and of England herself.

Moreover, Americans have a peculiar interest in this theme. To them it has become a personal one. The opium curse forced upon China so many years ago is now, through Chinese immigration, introduced here, and, like the liquor traffic, stands directly athwart the path of Christian progress in America as well as China. The last ten or twelve years have witnessed an enormous growth of this vice in all parts of our country. Of the 105,000 Chinese in this country, more than 20,000 are victims of opium.[1] The amount of opium consumed for smoking purposes, in 1880, was then increasing at the rate of 17,000 pounds per year.[2] Opium dens were multiplying in every city. According to the recent statement of Dr. F. N. Hammond, made to the Medical Society of New York, "only about 20,000 pounds of opium were used in the United States in 1840. In 1880 the amount had risen to 533,450 pounds. In 1868 there were about 70,000 opium eaters in this country; now there are more than 500,000. Women are addicted to the use of the drug even more than men."[3] If these statements are reliable, the opium vice is fast becoming a national evil of America as of China. And

and missionary churches and by many distinguished friends of Christian missions. The conference unites with their English brethren in declaring this long-established trade to be a crying injustice against China, a cause of offence which deeply injures the honor of the Christian name both in Christian and heathen countries, and especially an immense obstacle to the spread of Christian missionary work." See Protestant Foreign Missions, by Dr. Christlieb, p. 209.

[1] Opium Smoking in America and China, by H. H. Kane, M.D., pp. 18 and 19.

[2] Ibid., p. 18.

[3] New York Independent.

this is an ever strengthening reason why the subject should be kept before the American public.

I. No intelligent discussion of the opium question can be had without at least a brief sketch of the historical facts involved, sufficient to put the salient points of the case before the reader's mind.

England's opium policy began in 1773. Eight years later Warren Hastings sent 1,600 chests of opium to China. In 1795 the East India Company became the "sole cultivators and sellers of opium in British India."[1] The opium revenue of India at once rose to 200,000 pounds a year. Here began the great temptation to the Chinese people, and here began also the desperate but ineffectual struggle of the Chinese government against that evil which is now undermining the most venerable empire of earth. In 1799 the Emperor issued a decree against the importation of opium, and threatened transportation, and afterward death by strangling, to opium smokers. This was followed by heavy penalties against smuggling, which had become the prevailing crime.[2] Notwithstanding these radical measures, the business was pushed by the company till the profits at Calcutta rose to more than 1,000,000 pounds sterling a year.

The directors at London, it would seem, had some conscientious scruples about the business, for, in 1817, they wrote that if they could completely abolish the consumption of opium they "would gladly do it in compassion for mankind."[3] They went on, however, enormously increasing the production of the drug, extending its cultivation into central India, and forcing the Indian princes to grant them the exclusive right to buy and sell the native opium. They also compelled the natives of Malwa to pay a duty

[1] Article in Modern Review entitled "England's Opium Dealings," republished in Littell's Living Age, vol. xxxii. (fifth series) p. 383. See also American Eclectic, vol. i. for articles for and against the traffic.

[2] History of Our Own Times, by Justin McCarthy, M.P., vol. i. p. 137.

[3] Littell's Living Age, vol. xxxii. (fifth series) p. 338.

of sixty pounds on every chest of opium which passed through British territory to the coast.

In 1821 the governor of Canton made still further ineffectual efforts to suppress the illegal trade. But foreign smuggling continued, Chinese officials were corrupted, and the business increased.

A crisis was now at hand. The charter of the East India Company expired in 1834, and the British government itself became the sole manager of the China trade. From this point onward Parliament is alone responsible. The trade was henceforth no longer a mere matter of smuggling. There was no duty on opium to be avoided at the Chinese ports. Its sale in any form was a crime. The trade was simply a violation of law, carried on by brute force. The only right was might; the only motive, revenue. Armed gunboats laden with opium entered the Chinese waters and landed their cargoes in "sheer defiance of the government." And now poor China, in her desperation and helplessness, becomes divided as to what is best to do. Some, in despair of suppressing the trade, advise its legalization, and vainly hope thereby (as some do with our own liquor traffic) to diminish the evil. Others beg the Emperor to take still more stringent measures to stamp it out. The latter course overwhelmingly prevailed. Accordingly Lin reached Canton in 1839, seized 20,000 chests of opium, threw them into the Canton river, and declared all trade with England at an end.[1] This was too much. England was not to be despoiled of her revenue. The laws of China were "heathenish." The British flag had been insulted. Retribution must follow; and hence the first "opium war," the defeat of China, and the treaty of Nankin in 1842. This gave four ports to British trade; Hong Kong became a British possession; $21,000,000 were paid by China to reimburse England for the expenses of the war, and $6,000,000 more to pay for the

[1] Commercial Relations of Great Britain with China, in the British and Foreign Review for April, 1840; also American Eclectic, vol. i. p. 112.

opium which Lin had destroyed and which was really contraband by law.

Even in this forced treaty, however, no point was yielded by the Chinese as to the legalization of the opium traffic. This made no difference with England, as long as she had a more effective mode of warfare and wanted the revenue for India. The amount of opium sent from India to China, now that the right of might was established, rose at once from 25,000 to 70,000 chests. British merchants kept a fleet of armed vessels to push the friendly trade, and Hong Kong became the great centre of the business, where multitudes of corrupted Chinese officials themselves yielded to the temptation and joined against their country in the general system of piracy. To render the system more complete, it was arranged that the English government of Hong Kong should grant an annual license to Chinese boats conniving with the pirates, "to hoist the British flag, should the river police or revenue cruisers press too hard upon their stern."[1] In 1856, a boat named "The Arrow," owned and manned by the Chinese, but commanded by an Englishman, and thus flying the British flag, was boarded by the Chinese commissioner Yeh. The English governor of Hong Kong demanded apology and reparation. China refused, and the second opium war was the result.[2] After two years of unequal strife China was of course hopelessly defeated, humiliated, and compelled, in 1858, to submit to the treaty of Tientsin. By that treaty the Yang-tze river and five more seaports were opened to English trade; an ambassador was established at Peking; Canton was fined $4,000,000; the legalization of the opium trade was extorted, and English exterritori-

[1] Littell's Living Age, vol. xxxii. (fifth series) p. 390. See also Sir Edward Fry's essays in Contemporary Review for February, 1876.

[2] Nearly all authorities agree that the license of this boat had expired ten days before this event occurred, thus rendering the flying of the British flag on that occasion illegal, even by British law itself. See Our Opium Trade with China, by W. E. Ormerod, p. 9.

ality established. It should be noticed, however, that although the Chinese government was practically compelled to legalize the opium traffic, it did not cease to implore the British government to give it up. In 1869 the Chinese minister addressed to Sir Rutherford Alcock a petition urging the abandonment of the trade, on the grounds of justice and humanity. The only result of this petition was, that in order to soothe the feelings of China, a promise was made that the Imperial government should be allowed to raise the import duty from thirty to fifty taels per chest. Even that promise, however, owing to the opposition of the English chambers of commerce, was never kept.

To conclude this mortifying history, the English government in India in 1875 sent out an exploring party through Burmah, to discover, if possible, routes of inland trade with the southwest provinces of China. Passports were obtained for these visitors. An English officer was despatched through China to meet them. He reached them in safety, but was afterward savagely murdered by the Chinese near the Burmese border, and the exploring party was driven back. For this cruel outrage on the part of the Chinese, reparation was demanded of the government at Peking, and this led to the famous Chefoo convention between Sir Thomas Wade and Li Hung Chang, which resulted in several further concessions on the part of the Chinese. They were to make reparation for the Yunnan outrage; they were to open several new ports to British trade; they were to permit English exploring parties to pass through the provinces; they were to publish through the Empire a proclamation protecting foreign travellers, and, of course (a *sine qua non* in every case), they were to pay 200,000 ounces of silver to Great Britain.

On the part of England, the promise was made that "the internal duties upon opium in its passage from province to province within the Empire, and which had been constantly evaded, should be collected in one sum by the

Chinese government at the port of import. It was further agreed that, while the opening of the ports, and so forth, should be carried out within six months, the *British* concessions concerning internal revenue should come into force as soon as the British government had arrived at an understanding on the subject with other foreign governments." This agreement was signed by Sir Thomas Wade and Li Hung Chang. The government at Peking ratified the agreement at once, and within six months the ports were opened, the fine paid, the proclamation of protection issued, and China was opened to the world. On the other hand, the English Parliament has not ratified *their* part of the agreement to this day.[1] The result is, that while England is in full possession of the benefits resulting from the Chefoo agreement, the conditions on which they were conferred are withheld from China. The case is put thus by an English writer: "By the tariff of the treaty of Tientsin we compel China to admit Indian opium into her treaty ports, at a low duty which we refuse to allow her to increase, and at the same time prevent her from extinguishing smuggling."

II. Before proceeding to any moral considerations, let us briefly examine some of the effects of this traffic upon

[1] Littell's Living Age, vol. xxxii. (fifth series) p. 391. It seems that after nine or ten years of refusal on the part of the English government to ratify the Chefoo convention, China has at last been induced to accept an additional article, which will operate wholly in the interest of a still more extensive sale of Indian opium in China; as will be seen from the following statement in the New York Independent for June 4th, 1885: "The new opium treaty between England and China is almost settled. This new convention assumes the form of an additional article to the Chefoo treaty, and abolishes all the barriers heretofore existing against the free diffusion of opium throughout the Chinese Empire inland. The treaty also settles a uniform rate of lekin of sixty taels per chest, and maintains the existing customs duty of thirty taels. This will allow opium to pass freely throughout China. It is probable that China will extend a similar system of trade to other goods imported by English merchants." No philanthropist can regard this otherwise than as a further calamity to China, and as a new proof of the persistent and unscrupulous selfishness of the English government.

the three parties — India, China, and England — immediately concerned.

First, financially. It can hardly be doubted, that, although the opium trade has secured to British India an immense revenue, it is, after all, proving to be what Dr. S. Wells Williams said, "a financial blunder." It has been a policy by which England has pulled down with one hand what she was building up with the other. The immense cultivation of opium in India has monopolized the best part of the country, supplanting the production of food crops to such an extent that impoverishment and famine are the result. Vast areas of the richest land in India are thus devoted, not to the production of food, but to the production of governmental revenue.[1] According to the report of G. Smith, LL.D., on East India finance, in the year 1871, thousands of people perished from starvation in consequence of so much land in Malwa being devoted to the poppy. He further states that prior to the introduction of British rule in Aracan, the people were hard-working, sober, and simple-minded; but one of the first measures of the Bengal Board of Revenue was to organize efforts to introduce the use of the drug, and to create a taste for it among the rising generation. The plan, to use his own words, "was to open a shop with a few cakes of opium and to invite the young men, and distribute it gratuitously. Then, when the taste was established, to sell the opium at a low rate, and finally, as it spread through the neighborhood, the price was raised and large profits ensued."[2] This infamous practice is bearing its fruits. Mr. Hind, assistant commissioner for the English government, says he saw "a fine, healthy generation of strong men succeeded by a rising generation of

[1] The Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. xvii. p. 789, states that 876,454 acres were under poppy cultivation in Bengal in 1883, and at least as much in Malwa.

[2] Report of East India Finance Committee for 1871. Extracts from Blue Books, published by Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, p. 9.

opium smokers, who indulged to such an extent that their mental and physical powers were alike wasted. Then followed a fearful increase of gambling and dakoity." England herself has seen the need of checking the consumption of opium among her Indian subjects, as a mere financial measure.

The same material ruin is of course going on in China. For China is now not only the consumer of 7,000 tons of British opium annually, but also the producer of at least an equal amount. The result is an immense perversion of Chinese territory to poppy cultivation, as well as an immense drain of money from the country; a decrease of food crops and an impoverishment of the soil. Thus, China grows financially poorer as the process goes on. Even England herself does not escape the effects of the great "financial blunder." British merchants and manufacturers long ago discovered that the opium trade, in whatever form, would inevitably undermine the general commerce of Great Britain with China. Such is indeed the fact, and hence we have a new application of Pharaoh's dream—the ill-favored and lean kine eating up the well-favored and fat kine, and the thin and blasted ears devouring the rank and full ears. English trade with China is feeling the natural reaction of a selfish disregard of the golden rule.

Second. The *physical* effects of the opium habit upon the consumers are too well known to require more than a few words. The testimony of medical men is unanimous as to its destructive influence upon the human frame. The following sentiment may be taken as expressing the view of medical men in England: "However valuable opium may be when employed as an article of medicine, it is impossible for any one who is acquainted with the subject to doubt that the habitual use of it produces the most pernicious consequences, destroying the healthy action of the digestive organs, weakening the powers of the mind as well as those of the body, and rendering the

individual who indulges in it a worse than useless member of society. I cannot but regard those who promote the use of opium as an article of luxury as inflicting the most serious injury upon the human race."[1] It is also conceded that the habitual use of opium affects population by producing sterility. The Chinese claim that about one-half of regular opium smokers are childless, and that the family of the smoker will be extinct in the third generation. Physicians — like Dr. H. H. Kane, of New York, who has made the subject a special study — confirm the statement that sterility is the result.

Mr. C. A. Bruce, English superintendent of tea plantations in Assam, implored the British government to prevent the cultivation of opium in that territory, and adds: "If something is not done, the immigrants from the plains will soon be infected by the opium mania, that dreadful plague which has depopulated this beautiful country."[2]

Third. The *moral* effect of the opium habit, of course, transcends all others in importance, and the testimony against it is unanimous, conclusive, and overwhelming. It is a low and vulgar prejudice which in London has tried to rule out, as "partisan," and "fanatical," the testimony of Christian missionaries in China. It is the same sort of selfish impudence which the liquor oligarchy and its political friends constantly use against Christian prohibitionists in our own land. It reveals the weakness of their cause. Opium smokers, it is well known, cannot be trusted. When the habit prevails, the moral sense becomes so impaired that selfishness overcomes every other consideration. Dr. Williams says: "There are millions in China to whom opium is dearer than houses or children

[1] Testimony of Sir Benjamin Brodie, "backed up by twenty-four of the greatest medical authorities of the country." Plain Questions and Straightforward Answers about the Opium Trade, by Rev. Griffith John, p. 18.

[2] Review of the Opium Question, by Arthur [illegible]e, of the Church Missionary Society, Ningpo, p. 51.

or wives, dearer than life itself."[1] Sir Thomas Wade, whose long residence in China, whose attainments in the language, and whose official position at Peking, entitle him to confidence, says: "It is to me vain to think otherwise of the use of the drug in China than as of a habit many times more pernicious, nationally speaking, than the gin and whiskey drinking which we deplore at home. It takes possession more insidiously and keeps its hold as tenaciously. I know of no case of radical cure. It has issued, in every case within my knowledge, in the steady descent, moral and physical, of the smoker, and is so far a greater mischief than drink."[2] Dr. Williams, with a still wider range of experience, confirms this testimony. An opium eater recently came under the writer's own observation, and the confession was, that as soon as the effect had passed away and reaction had begun, every fibre of her system cried for more, and *there was no crime she would not commit, if necessary,* to secure it. An anti-opium society composed of Chinamen at Canton, in a paper to the anti-opium society of England, in a peculiarly anti-climactic statement, thus summarizes the effects of the drug: "It squanders wealth, interrupts industry, destroys life, cramps talent, disorganizes government, enfeebles the army, loosens the bonds of society, corrupts the morals of the people, and is an evil beyond description." "Hence," say they, "it is unworthy England's character, a breach of international friendship, an obstruction to missionary work, and contrary to the Bible." And then, with a stinging irony which the House of Lords ought to feel, these heathen remind their English brethren that the New Testament says, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." "Is it possible," they add, "that the instruction of the

[1] Report of Missionary Conference in Shanghai in 1877.

[2] England, China, and Opium, by Sir Edward Fry, one of the judges of the High Court of Justice, p. 12. Quoted from Blue book China, No. 5, 1871.

Saviour has never reached the ear of your honored country?"[1]

III. The question now forces itself upon us, What is the *morality* of England's opium policy; what are England's grounds of defence? It is manifest that this long struggle with China was not begun and has not been continued in the interest of trade in general. No great principle affecting the nations was at stake. From first to last, it has been in the interest of a particular branch of trade, in pushing which England alone was interested. Neither is it claimed that the struggle was carried on in order to open China to the Christian religion. In the good providence of God that was one result. Possibly England finds comfort in that fact, but that was God's part, not England's. England can only claim the honor due to her real motive. The Scotch worshipper who dropped a sovereign into the contribution box, when he meant only to put in a penny, after attempting to take it back and being refused the privilege, said, "Weel, weel, I'll get credit for it in heaven." "Na, na," replied the elder, "ye'll just get credit for the *penny ye intended* to put in." The morality of England's conduct is not affected by the fact that God brings good out of evil. On the other hand, however, we must discriminate between the Christian sentiment of the *English people* and the commercial sentiment of the *English government*. England is a complex body, foremost in noble philanthropies and Christian missions, foremost also in the passion for power and in the greed of gain. Christian England could never have done what political and commercial England has. The question then recurs, What are England's grounds of justifica-

[1] This address was published in Canton in the Chinese language, and translated into English by John Chalmers, LL.D. The address makes this further appeal: "Some tens of millions of human beings in distress are looking on tiptoe, with outstretched necks, for salvation to come from you, O just and benevolent men of England! If not for the good of honor of your country, then, for mercy's sake, do this good deed now to save a people; and the rescued millions shall themselves be your great reward."

tion for her opium policy? We have searched in all directions, through government documents, extracts from "blue books," general histories and reviews, for a complete list of her arguments in her own defence, and will try to present them fairly and in order. It is to be noticed that almost no statesman has been found to defend the traffic as absolutely moral in itself.[1] Hence the defence is at a disadvantage to start with.

Accordingly, the *first* grand plea is generally on the ground of *necessity*. What else can we do? How else can we secure $40,000,000 a year to keep the government of India in running order? Lord Hartington argued thus: "We must not be led always solely by those feelings of morality in which we might justly indulge, if we were dealing with our own interests." That is, it was for India, British India, and hence what might be an immoral and unjust thing to do to China for the purpose of putting money into their own pockets, might be all right, even benevolent, if done to help India. To stop the opium trade with China would be to take $40,000,000 annually from that great needy portion of the world now under British rule. Abolish the trade, and the deficit must be met. There is the rub. India cannot be educated; a government of justice cannot be maintained; cheap postage and railroads and telegraph lines cannot be introduced; a sufficient police force cannot be kept up! Very likely, but what a confession! To maintain a British government in India, the government of China must be bullied and crippled, and its possessions wrenched away by force of arms. To administer justice in India, injustice must be forced upon China at the mouth of English cannon. To support a police force and a standing army of 200,000

[1] Sir George Birdwood, however, seems to be an exception. He even goes so far as to use the following language in the London Times: "I repeat, that of itself opium smoking is almost as harmless an indulgence as twiddling the thumbs. All I insist upon is the downright innocency of opium smoking," etc.

men; to sustain cheap postage and ten thousand miles of railroad and twenty thousand miles of telegraph line in India; $670,000,000 in twenty years must be taken out of China, against the continued protest of her government, for a drug which produces only impoverishment and moral death. To educate, yes, possibly to Christianize, 200,000,000 in British India, 300,000,000 of people must be debauched and damned in China! That is the logic of the whole matter. We have heard many times of "robbing Peter to pay Paul," but whoever heard before of debauching Peter's morals, and the morals of all his relations, to build up Paul's virtue? The British government's conception of the morality of this business seems to be based upon two principles: first, that we may justly wrong a neighbor for the benefit of a friend, especially if the friend be a blood relation, while it would be unjust to do the same thing to benefit ourselves; and, secondly, the spoils justify the means. Compare this moral code with that of China. When the emperor was urged to legalize the traffic, he said: "It is true I cannot prevent the introduction of the flowing poison; gain-seeking and corrupt men will, for profit and sensuality, defeat my wishes; but nothing will induce me to derive a revenue from the vice and misery of my people."[1] Why could not the Chinese emperor prevent the introduction of the flowing poison? Because England could rout China on the field of battle. Sir Thomas Wade, ambassador at Peking, wrote home: "Nothing that has been gained was received by the free will of the Chinese. The concessions made to us have been, from first to last, extorted against the conscience of the nation, — in defiance, that is to say, of the moral convictions of her educated men."[2] Compare the English standard of morals in this matter with the remarkable letter of Li

[1] Plain Questions and Straightforward Answers about the Opium Trade, p. 27.

[2] Extracts from Blue Books China, No. 5—Anti-opium tr: t, \ · 8, p. 10.

Hung Chang, addressed, in 1881, to the Anglo-Oriental Society for the suppression of the opium trade. He says: "The sense of injury which China has so long borne with reference to opium, finds some relief in the sympathy which a society like yours, existing in England, bespeaks. Opium is a subject in the discussion of which England and China can never meet on common ground. China views the whole question from a *moral* stand-point; England, from a fiscal. I may take the opportunity to assert here, once for all, that the single aim of my government in taxing opium will be in the future, as it has been in the past, to *repress* the traffic, never to gain a revenue from such a source. Having failed to kill a serpent, who would be so rash as to nurse it in his bosom?"[1]

A *second* ground of justification of the opium policy, urged again and again in the earlier days of the struggle, was the national arrogance, ignorance, conceit, the intolerable complications of red tape, and the haughty exclusiveness of the Chinese. All this was very exasperating to a proud and intelligent people. Add to this the fact that the Chinese were semi-barbarous, unacquainted with the usages of Christian nations, and frequently violating all the rules of etiquette between independent powers. It is easy to see how disgusting this must have been to the haughty spirit of English lords; and especially, how trying to a Christian people to have these pagans parading their moral principles, and quoting the golden rule in the faces of Englishmen who happened to be in China looking at things not from the moral but from the fiscal point of view. But there is another side to all this. If the Chinese were tediously formal and punctilious in the carrying out of their governmental arrangements, that was their misfortune. A high-toned Christian people should have borne with it. Moreover, if the Chinese were exclusive and shy of foreigners, that was a reason for their being enlightened but not wronged. The spirit of the *gospel* alone

[1] Republished by Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade.

could have lifted conceited and prejudiced men out of their exclusiveness. But England had no thought, in these transactions, of giving China the gospel. Grant that there was no bond of international law recognized between England and China, there was still a bond of morality and humanity, which no difference of civilization could repeal. Grant that there was no acknowledged *jus gentium*, there was still the *lex naturalis*, which England, even more than China, was bound to observe, unless Christian ethics are a farce.

A *third* ground of justification claimed by the English has always been the alleged *insincerity* of the Chinese in opposing the traffic.[1] Chinese officers connived at the trade and partook of the profits. The smuggling and piracy was largely carried on through the treachery of Chinese lower officials, and this, said Lushington in parliament, acquitted the smugglers. But surely the treachery of these bribed and corrupted Chinamen no more proves the government insincere in its opposition to opium, than does the secret violation of the Maine law by the connivance of a few policemen with rumsellers prove the insincerity of the legislation of that State. Besides, these Chinese officials were corrupted by English money. It is frequently affirmed that the reason why China opposes the traffic is *not* on the high moral ground of interest in the well-being of the people, but to gain a monopoly of the trade and to prevent the enormous drainage of their silver into the English exchequer.[2] This last reason might be a good one in itself; but that the profoundest motive of the imperial government was to finally stamp out the whole opium business is beyond the possibility of a reasonable doubt. When we take into account the rigid and

[1] History of Our Own Times, by Justin McCarthy, vol. i. p. 136.

[2] Lord Palmerston argued that with China it was an "exportation of bullion question," and an "agricultural protection question," and not a moral one at all. Lord Macaulay defended the traffic on the ground of necessity, while Gladstone denounced it as infamous.

repeated prohibitions of the trade, the fearful penalties attached to the violation of the law, the constant resistance to legalizing the traffic, the persistent petitions to the British government to unite with them in destroying it, the bloody wars waged against it, and the noble declarations both of emperors and prime ministers as to the desire of the government,—it would seem that only men to whom language and history have no meaning can question their sincerity. But beyond all this, when 20,000 chests of English opium, worth ten million dollars, which might have been appropriated to government use, had been captured, and when Lin referred to the emperor for orders as to the disposition of it, his majesty commanded the whole to be destroyed in the presence of the civil and military officers, the inhabitants of the coast, and the foreigners, "that they may know and tremble thereat." A sublime spectacle indeed, and a "solitary instance in the history of the world," says Dr. Williams, "of a pagan monarch preferring to destroy what would injure his subjects, rather than to fill his own pockets with its sale."[1] That at least has the look of sincerity. But even if China had not been sincere, that in itself would be no justification to England for introducing a great moral evil and helping Chinese subjects to break their own laws.

Other defensive arguments have been urged which only show the imbecility of really able men when defending a bad cause. Take the following: "The opium traffic is not yet proved to be worse than the liquor traffic at home."[2] Or this: "The habit of opium smoking was begun in China before England imported the drug." That is, Adam sinned before Judas, therefore Judas is excusable. Pagan China practised the evil habit to some insignificant degree, therefore Christian England may force the drug upon them at the rate of 7,000 tons a year!

[1] The Middle Kingdom, by Dr. S. Wells Williams, vol. ii. p. 518.

[2] History of Our Own Times, p. 136.

Here is another line of defence: "If *we* do not send opium to China, some other nation will." Or this: "The use of opium prevents *drunkenness*."[1] The general defence when all summed up seems to be this: China wants opium, India is well fitted to supply it, England desires a large revenue; therefore, proceed without reference to moral considerations.

The conscience of the people has never been wholly dead; but here was England's predicament: If she continued the trade without legalization, as she did for many years, she was a pirate; if she indirectly compelled China to legalize it, she was none the less selfish; if she continued the traffic in *any* form, she hurt her trade with China in all other commodities; if she *stopped* the trade, she lost her Indian revenue. This last evil was worse than all the rest, and was not to be thought of.[2] Ethically and morally, British conduct in this matter can not be placed any higher than that of the Chinese. Commercially, our Anglo-Saxon parent needs the gospel of Christ as really as our Mongolian sister. The most charitable view we can take of the position of the English government in the whole transaction is to suppose that it acted upon the principle enunciated by Renan, that Christianity and national life are incompatible. He said: "A nation must perish if it begins to interest itself in the well-being of mankind. A people that takes into its bosom the fire of the kingdom of God is doomed to be itself consumed by it."[3] Another Frenchman informs us that "England's greatness cannot do without injustice. It lives by it, is nourished by it. The entire edifice of her

[1] Sir George Birdwood, quoted in Plain Questions and Answers, p. 15.

[2] To secure governmental revenue from the indulgence of popular vices is the great temptation to statesmen of this age in all civilized countries. While not necessarily wrong, if used simply as a check to vice, it does stand in the way of moral reform. As long as citizens can lighten their own taxes by allowing the sale of opium or whiskey, the progress of prohibition in either case will be slow.

[3] M. Renan's Lectures on Primitive Christianity.

power would fall to pieces the moment she attempted to make a universal application of pure Christian morality."[1] But to assume that British financiers acted upon such principles is to justify their intention at the expense of their intelligence. Anglo-Saxons, to say the least, do not believe the sentiments of these Frenchmen. The English government has failed toward China in one essential thing —*justice*. And in a world that belongs to God, she herself must suffer for it in the end. God does not let nations slip any more than individuals. We are not living in a world of chance, but in a universe of law.

IV. In attempting, now, to estimate the influence of this enormous evil on the spread of Christanity in China, two things must be borne in mind: (1) That the last war with England undoubtedly was used in the providence of God to open China to Christian missions. The good that may flow to China in the future from this circumstance is of course beyond computation. But the unfortunate thing connected with this gaining of liberty to propagate Christianity in that empire is, that while it opened Chinese ports, it closed Chinese hearts. (2) It must also be borne in mind, that the comparatively slow progress of Christianity in China is not all to be attributed to this evil. There are other formidable hindrances, apart from opium, which missionaries have to meet, and which render China perhaps the hardest field in the world to evangelize. But, with a language said to be "invented by the devil to exclude Christianity," and a system of government backed by a superstition which constitutes the "Gibralter of heathenism," was it not all the more inexcusable to add the curse of opium to these other hindrances to the cause of Christ? There can be little doubt, that of the difficulties which lie in the way of the conversion of China, the various unchristian influences which proceed from nominally Christian lands are the hardest to

[1] England, Political and Social, by Auguste Laugel, p. 318.

overcome. The vices of civilization are always more deadly foes of Christ than those of savage life.'

1. The opium traffic as a hindrance to Christianity is seen first of all in its effect upon the immediate victims of the vice. Here the hindrance lies, not chiefly in the prejudice awakened against Christian nations, but in the tremendous hold which the opium habit has upon Chinese life, and the extent to which it prevails. It is now a national vice. It is fastened upon the people more firmly than the drink habit of England or America. The hope of ever eradicating it from the life of the Chinese is now dying out of the hearts of intelligent Christian missionaries. The time for that hope has gone by. The sublime struggle of the Chinese government, which has been compared to that of Laocoon in the coils of the serpents, has failed. The best that can now be done by human agency is to mitigate the evil as far as possible, by urging upon China the gospel, on the one hand, and by getting England to clear herself from further criminal responsibility, on the other.

The *extent* to which the evil prevails is a vexed question. No reliable statistics have yet been prepared. The evil manifestly prevails more in the cities than in the country. Dr. Williams, writing nearly forty years ago, was of the opinion that the smokers of China numbered not less than 2,500,000. At a meeting held in Exeter Hall two years ago, for the investigation of this subject, J. Maxwell, M. D., testified that in the city of Taiwan Foo more than one-fifth of the adult male population used the pipe, and that the Chinese estimate was much higher than that. In the city of Soo Chow, one of the largest in China, the same witness said that there was unimpeachable evidence that seven-tenths of the adult male population used opium. At a missionary conference held in Shanghai in 1877, Rev.

[1] "In no other heathen land has belief in the unselfishness of Christian love been made so difficult as in this land of China, groaning under the withering curse of opium." Christlieb's Protestant Foreign Missions, p. 208.

H. C. Dubois, of Soo Chow, said that thirty years ago there were five or six opium dens in that city; now there are 7,000, and that eight out of every ten men smoked.[1] In the province of Sze Chuen it is said that seven in every ten men and three in every ten women use opium. It has been estimated that if 60,000 die annually in Great Britain from the use of strong drink, 600,000 die in China annually from the use of opium. The simple fact that the Chinese pay $125,000,000 a year for opium shows that the evil is colossal. Sir Robert Hart's estimate in 1881 that there are not more than 2,000,000 smokers, which is half a million less than Dr. Williams' estimate of thirty-seven years ago, while he admits that the number is rapidly increasing, certainly cannot be taken as the truth, especially when many Christian men now in China estimate the number at three or four times that amount. Sir Robert estimates the population of the empire at 300,000,000, and then parades repeatedly in italics the small percentage of the people affected by the opium vice, as if that were a complete vindication of England's course; and then, with a suppressed sneer and with contemptuous astonishment, he says that the Chinese people are opposed to this traffic which brings them a large revenue and touches only an "infinitesimally small proportion of the population," and that it only draws "from five pence to eleven pence apiece per day from the pockets of those who indulge in it."[2] Now five pence to eleven pence apiece per day may seem a small matter to Sir Robert Hart, with a salary of thirty or forty thousand a year; but his suggestion loses its force when we remember that a good mechanic in China earns only about eleven pence per day, and a common laborer only about seven pence per day, when health is good and the weather fine. This would not seem to leave very much for the support of wife and children. Yet these

[1] Report of Missionary Conference at Shanghai in 1877.

[2] Report of Sir Robert Hart, Inspector-General of Customs in China, published in 1881, p. 4.

stupid people, he adds, "do not find in either the revenue produced or in the statistical demonstration of its percentage innocuousness any sufficient reason for welcoming the growth of the trade, or for desisting from the attempt to check the consumption of opium." *Marvellous stupidity!*

The opinion of many missionaries on the field to-day is that most of the estimates of the number of smokers are too small. Dr. Henry Porter, writing from Shantung last fall, not only shows that the vice is enormously increasing, but is inclined to estimate the victims not far from 10,000,000. He says: "Mr. Sheffield has just spent a month in Mongolia, and reports that the majority of the faces of the men bear the marks of opium." Mr. Bagnall, of the American Bible Society, says of the people of Shantung and Honan, "the men all seem to smoke." An opium patient of Dr. Porter's reported to him that the Chow magistrate, that is, the sub-prefect in his district, smokes three tael a day. "Hence he must smoke," says Dr. Porter, "three times a day, eight pipes at each smoking, two hours for each bout, and sleeping in addition." When asked if it did not consume time, the patient replied, "Yes, he never appears upon his judgment seat till four o'clock in the afternoon." When our missionaries in Shanse say to their teachers, "What proportion of your people use opium?" a frequent answer is, "*Eleven out of every ten.*" Rev. C. D. Tenney, from that province, writes that the last stage of the opium taker is the *begging* stage. "Nearly all the beggars in this part of China are opium sots."[1] But suppose even the English Inspector-General's report

[1] A writer in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, vol. xvii. p. 794, states that "in 1858 it was estimated that about 2,000,000 of Chinese smoked opium, and in 1878 from one-fourth to three-tenths of the entire population of 400,000,000." Four hundred million is the estimate of twenty or thirty years ago, and is probably much too large for the present time, as the population has been rapidly diminishing in late years. Sir Robert Hart puts the number at 300,000,000, and Rev. J. H. Taylor, of the China Inland Mission, at the Mild-May Conference, London, puts it as low as 240,000,000 (Christlieb's Protestant Missions, p. 190). But one-fourth of even this lowest estimate would give 60,000,000 smokers. See also Chinese Recorder for Jan. 1884.

to be correct as to the number of smokers, is it not safe to add three more to every one of his two million to represent the wives, children, and friends who directly suffer from his vice? No honest estimate of the evil of intemperance could be made by simply giving the number of drinking men. Moreover, thinking people will be slow to believe the statement of Sir Robert Hart, that the opium business "does not specially damage either the finances of the state or the wealth of the people," when we are informed that China pays out annually $4,000,000 more for opium than she receives for tea; and $10,000,000 more than from her exportation of silk, and $12,000,000 more than she pays other countries for cotton and woolen goods.[1] Sir Robert's way of treating the whole subject is simply the ordinary English governmental method; that is, to look at it, as Li Hung Chang said, "entirely from the fiscal point of view." The moral argument, however, against the opium business does not rest solely upon the exact estimate of the number of smokers. It rests chiefly upon the intrinsic evil effects upon man's moral and physical nature, upon the tremendous hold which the habit has upon the victim, and the fact that it is now become, through English influence, a national vice.

Now then, this gigantic national evil, thus fastened upon the people, it is needless to say, is essentially antagonistic to the religion of Christ. These millions of victims, like the drunkards of our own land, are almost hopelessly beyond the reach of the gospel. The moral nature of the confirmed smoker becomes so debauched that Christian truth finds but little to which it can appeal. This enormous class cannot be received into missionary churches, even when they seem to have accepted Christian truth, till the habit is abandoned, and that is well-nigh beyond reasonable expectation. Thus this trade, said an English missionary in 1877, "speaks more convincingly to

[1] President Angell, in the Bibliotheca Sacra, January, 1885, p. 111.

the Chinese mind *against* Christianity than the missionary does or can do for it."

2. Another class of the Chinese people, strongly armed by the opium business against the gospel, are the *producers*. This class must also be very large. One-half of all the opium consumed in China is now raised at home. It has become a national product, and when we remember that the profit on opium on a given quantity of land is twice as great as that from grain, we can understand the fearful temptation to extend and perpetuate the evil to which Chinese farmers are exposed. It is precisely the temptation which the brewers and distillers in our own country are too weak or too selfish to resist. And as the financial interest of every manufacturer and trafficker in intoxicants is measured by the zeal with which he fights Christianity, so it must be with the producers of opium. In both cases the manufacturers are the most heartless and inveterate foes of Christ. That radical antagonism between the preacher of the gospel and every man who proposes to enrich himself by pandering to the moral weaknesses of his fellow men must grow more and more deadly as the struggle goes on.

3. A further hindrance which this satanic business puts in the way of Christ is the effect it has had on the Chinese government officials. Multitudes of them have been utterly corrupted by English smuggling and bribes so that they are secretly on the side of the producer and the trader, and hostile to those who oppose the traffic. Those of them who have not been corrupted have been alienated in their feelings and disgusted with the selfish and mercenary spirit of western nations which claim to be governed by the principles of the gospel. This corruption of lower officials has both discouraged and baffled the government of China in its long, heroic struggles against the vice.

4. Perhaps the greatest obstruction in the way of Christianity is the *prejudice* the opium traffic has created in the mind, not of producer, or trader, or consumer, or official,

but in the minds of the great mass of the better classes of the Chinese people against *all* who bear the Christian name. The masses of the people suspect, ignorantly, of course, but sincerely, that the design, even of Christians, is to ruin, not to save, them as a people. Dr. Nevius remarks that "the suspicion and distrust which the Chinese have manifested is not so much the result of their natural disposition or the teaching of their sages, as of their unfortunate and prejudicing experience in their intercourse with foreigners." We need not be surprised, therefore, to find, as we do, a Chinese Christian referring to the sentiments of his countrymen on this subject in the following language: "It is clear, say they [the Chinese], that our country is being ruined. These mission schools and hospitals are not really established with good intention. Why do they not put an end to the sale of opium? Would not this be better than ten thousand hospitals and ten thousand preaching halls?" English Christians themselves have said: "There is not a greater barrier to the introduction of the gospel in China by the hand of foreigners than the trade in opium by those who bear the Christian name." This reasonable and universal feeling, be it remembered, is not simply against the British government, as such, but against the English people. The Chinese, as a whole, cannot distinguish, as we can, between England as a government and England as individuals. Hence any act of that government which claims to be Christian is taken by the Chinese masses as a measure of the principles of Christianity, and thus the prejudice is in some degree against all Christian nations.

5. It will be in place to add here that this cruel and sordid policy has done infinite injury to England herself. However incomparable as a mercantile, or matchless as a military power, England, as a Christian power in China, has paralyzed her own right arm. This false position into which English Christians are forced, against the protest of the nation's conscience, is what now stimulates the great uprising of the English Christian public against the

traffic. Surely no greater calamity can befall a nation with a splendid Christian history behind it, than to let its mercantile cupidity neutralize its natural ability to lift from semi-barbarism to Christian manhood the greatest empire of the world.

V. What is to be done? *Agitate, agitate*, till the British government acknowledges God and the moral law in its conduct toward China. Agitation, in this, as in other moral reforms, is the inalienable right of a Christian people. The anti-opium movement in parliament just now is but a half-way measure. It simply aims to have England treat China as she would treat Germany or France. It is not an attempt to stop Chinese opium smoking — that is now beyond England's power. It is only an attempt to deliver England herself from the shame and the wrong connected with the trade. In the words of Sir Joseph Pease, in a recent speech in the House of Commons, it is to have England "leave China free to deal with the *duties* in regard to the drug as she likes."[1] This would be a great gain, but the case cannot rest there. The British government must adjust itself to the golden rule, or bear the contempt of Christendom. The least that it can do is to provide an Indian revenue some other way, abandon the opium traffic altogether, and say to China, We will now co-operate with you in your heroic effort to mitigate, if not to wipe out, the curse which this traffic has brought upon you. This will be humiliating to the pride of a lordly parliament, but parliament cannot afford to always nurse its pride at the expense of the respect of mankind. "Every act," says the *Chinese Recorder*, "which tends to bring Christianity into contempt is treason against the civilization of the human race." England knows this too well to persist forever in her present policy. England has been quick to recognize and defend the rights of other *civilized* nations; why should she go back to the pagan

[1] Debate in the House of Commons April 3, 1883. Published in Friend of China for May, 1883.

principles of Greece and Rome in her conduct toward semi-barbarous nations? England has stood in the front rank for the abolition of piracy and slavery. She cannot ultimately, in this age of moral progress, belie her splendid record. The opium traffic is an evil on which Christianity *must* lay its hand. If Christ has wrought a change in the treatment of captives, in the rules of war, in the extent and force of international law, He must also at last, relax the grip of merciless commercial greed. England has a church whose heart is sound and whose conscience is aroused. To defy that conscience would be, for Anglo-Saxons, national suicide. England has a Christian queen whom the world has learned to revere. England has a Christian statesman whom the nations delight to honor. Queen and statesman are both in declining years. Would to God that England might do justice to poor China before Victoria and Gladstone die!