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THE  
CHURCHMAN

SEPTEMBER, 1895.

ART. I.—CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN CHINA.

A people numerous as the ocean sands,  
And glorying as the mightiest of mankind ;  
Yet where they are, contented to remain ;  
From age to age resolved to cultivate  
Peace, and the arts of peace : turning to gold  
The very ground they tread on, and the leaves  
They gather from their trees year after year.

ROGERS.

THE recent war between China and Japan has been not only startling in its issues, but also misleading in its apparent lessons and conclusions. The sudden and complete collapse of China's colossal power before the vigorous attacks of Europeanized Japan, though a surprise to the world at large, was no surprise to those who knew something of the ramifications of decay in Chinese official systems, both civil, military and naval—years of corruption and misrule, of unpaid officials and consequent official extortion and wholesale pilfering, of uneducated and ill-trained officers, and rank and file without love of country or trust in their leaders—all this must of necessity have produced sooner or later failure and collapse, notwithstanding many cases of individual heroism and conspicuous gallantry. And the grave fears which many have long entertained, lest the very wide spread of the opium habit in the Chinese army might enervate and demoralize her fighting power, seem to have been fulfilled in a startling manner indeed. But if the world concludes from this war that the Chinese are cowards and have no stomach for hard fighting, the world is quite mistaken. Well trained, well paid, well led, the Chinese on land or on sea may yet prove most formidable foes not to Eastern Powers only, but also to the armies and navies of the West. Or if we conclude from recent events that Japan is civilized and enlightened, and China far behind in

barbarism and ignorance, here again the conclusion is hasty, and in great measure erroneous. Whatever advantage quick-silver Japan may have taken of her contact with the West during the past twenty-five years—and however thick or thin the veneer of Western customs may be which now covers the Japanese people—it is notorious that Chinese civilization has for long centuries commanded the homage of Japan, so far at any rate as literature is concerned, insomuch that no educated Japanese would allow himself to be ignorant of Chinese classical lore; whereas educated Chinese are as a rule profoundly and contemptuously ignorant of Japanese literature. Now, this leads me to the position which I wish to maintain in the present paper—namely, that China, from the fact of her ancient civilization, from the glory of her ancient literature, from the comparatively high tone of her ancient religions, and from her pride of power and of fancied universal superiority, affords to Christian missions a field of almost unique difficulty, and a field therefore of supreme honour and importance.

We have been sometimes asked by unfriendly or patronizing critics to realize the audacity and presumption of our missionary enterprise by imagining a Buddhist priest or a Confucianist sage on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral, or on the slopes of Hampstead Heath, expounding in imperfect English his foreign creed and philosophy for the enlightenment of educated Christian Englishmen. The comparison has never seemed to me quite honest, and therefore not quite so alarming as the critics would wish us to believe. For in the first place it is based upon a disguised but yet perceptible *petitio principii*. The whole force must be derived from the assumption, which we utterly reject, that the claims, historical, doctrinal and spiritual, of Christianity and of other religions are so nearly similar as to reduce them merely to rival claimants for the faith of mankind. If this were so, then indeed an English Christian preacher in Chinese temple courts, and a Buddhist preacher in English Christian shrines, would be on a par, either as to absurdity or as to audacity, whichever you please.

But if Christianity be, as its great facts of Divine miracle absolutely prove to be the case, Divine, heavenly, and not Western or Eastern, then the picture fades away, and the comparison fails to convince or to alarm. Moreover, in many mission fields—in regions of West or East or Central Africa, or amongst the Makololo and other tribes of South Africa, or amongst the Papuans of Australia, or the Eskimo of the far North—the comparison is almost impossible. There, in countless instances, the European Christian missionary en-

counters barbarism, gross ignorance, dying if not extinct religions, conscience in a state of coma, literature unknown, the languages not reduced to writing, and even the simplest arts of civilization in agricultural implements or mechanical contrivances absent. And the consequence is, that so far from threatening to send rival religious emissaries to England, the natives, if not blinded by ferocious hostility, regard the missionary as a demi-god, as far and away their superior in knowledge and education; and they listen to the religious teaching also as the word of a superior race, and as claiming their fear at any rate, and their awed attention—a voice as it were from mid-air, if not from the very heaven of heavens.

In China the scene is quite different, so that the critics' comparative picture looms once more on our sight. And firm faith in our Divine mission, and simple obedience to our Lord's command, save us triumphantly, it is true, but thus *only*, from ridicule, and the charge of audacity and meddlesomeness; because in China we are *not* demi-gods, but, in common parlance, barbarians or worse. We may boast of our Western civilization, and of the triumphs and wonders of our printed literature, and the Chinese scholar will tell you quietly that the secret of printing was discovered in China so long ago as A.D. 177, when the ancient classics were engraved on stone and impressions taken from them; and that block printing was practised in the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 618-910), and adopted for the printing of the nine classics by Imperial order A.D. 952, or 470 years before the birth of Caxton (A.D. 1422)—as far before that father of European printing as we are after him. Or if we venture to speak of the wide spread of education in England, especially during this nineteenth century, and of our system of competitive examinations, opening the avenues to posts of emolument and of influence in civil and military departments practically to the whole population of our islands, our Chinese friend will courteously remind us that this wonderful proof of the awakening of England has been the custom in the Central Realm for at least a thousand years; that the highest office in the empire below the dragon throne has been open to the lowest peasant in the land by competitive examination through all these centuries; and that the reverence for literature, and the universality of the education of boys with a view to a literary career, has been a characteristic of Chinese civilization all through the dark middle ages of England's and Europe's comparative ignorance and semi-barbarism. "To be sure," the Chinese disputant will perhaps add, "we cannot keep pace with you gentlemen from the West in the discoveries and applications of modern science. Your astronomical knowledge

we envy and admire ; your railways, telegraphs, mining and geological researches, all these outstrip us. But while you were asleep in scarcely more than animal life, untaught and untrained in reading and composition, our nation was absorbed in the study and imitation of the historical records of our ancient realm ; of the odes, which were old when our old sage Confucius lived and taught and worked two thousand five hundred years ago ; and of the philosophy of Mencius and Chwangtse : and they were absorbed also in the investigation of the secrets of nature by way of astrology, geomancy and kindred sciences."

And when we draw nearer, and, abandoning all further allusion to the effects of education and civilization in Christian lands, strive to bring our friend face to face with the message and the great Sender of the message, he replies, still perhaps courteously and calmly, "You bring us religions from the far West. Doubtless your system is an excellent one, and well suited for your honourable country. But we in China are not devoid of religious systems ; we have, in fact, three creeds—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism ; two founded and sanctioned by the great teachers and philosophers, Confucius and Laotzu, six hundred years before your sage lived." Here we eagerly correct our friend. "Not so," we say, "for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. But pray proceed." "The third," he says, "Buddhism, was founded by the great Indian sage even earlier in the world's history, and was brought to our country eighteen hundred years ago. These creeds all teach us to be good, and we accept them ; why should you introduce this foreign creed, with a similar object, doubtless, but superfluous and disturbing, in our opinion, and also in the opinion of our great Emperor, Yung Ching, who, in his sacred edict nearly two hundred years ago, warned us against strange and outlandish creeds ?" Are we to reply with denunciation and wholesale condemnation ? God forbid ! St. Paul refrained from such with far greater provocation and temptation in image-ridden Athens. China's creeds are not self-condemned, as so many of India's systems are. They all three promulgate and approve of high-toned systems of morality ; their searches after the absolute are often startling in their earnestness and keenness ; and their temples for the most part are filled with images of placid and majestic mien, or of terror only and threatening. Our answer must be very far indeed from one of supercilious contempt, or haughty disdain. We accept large parts of their moral precepts. We simply ask, Has anyone in your honourable country followed these systems honestly and constantly ? Your religions talk of good deeds—can they tell you how to get rid of the guilt of our bad deeds ? They all admit the presence of moral evil—

can they eradicate it? Can they pardon the past, and justify the sinner, and guide the bewildered, sin-plagued soul into the land of righteousness? Your own great sage, Confucius, and your common proverbial talk, unite in admitting that there is none righteous, no, not one; and that there is no place of prayer for the sinner against heaven!

And it is just here that faith, the faith which, as I have said above, alone justifies our mission enterprise, becomes no longer mere endurance, but flashes into triumph. For here the vague guesses of religious thought yield to the certainty of Christian verities. Here in the atonement, and justification, and intercession of the incarnate Son of God, and in the Divine Spirit's sanctifying power, moral failures and moral faults are forgiven and obliterated; morality is no longer a scheme of duty, but a living reality; and the soul is prepared for life eternal without transmigration, or restless change, in that blissful atmosphere where holiness is the everlasting environment.

But my contention is that it requires a very firm grasp on Christian certainties, and a very loyal obedience to the Saviour's command, to buoy the missionary up, when sometimes in weakness and in weariness, sometimes confronted by Chinese pride and arrogance, or by polite superciliousness, he tells his message on a foreign shore, and in a foreign tongue.

Neither must we forget, in estimating aright the difficulties of missionary enterprise in China, and its successes notwithstanding, that we are not in China the *conquering* race. We are regarded, indeed, as a *masterful* race, more particularly in the wars of 1840-42 and 1856-58; but the prestige which attaches to the English name in India, where, with the strange expansion of our power, order, security, civilization, and improvement have come to the people—such a prestige is to a very small extent indeed ascribed to the European name in China. In China surely, if anywhere, our Divine faith conquers in its own Divine might, and not by any adventitious advantages.

Now, is it conquering? It is most certainly advancing and expanding, and is conquering *hearts*, if not nations and tribes. "The Word of the Lord," the blessed Book of God, in the *Wén-li* or classical style (the dead language of China, which is used for literature alone), and in the *Kwan-hwa* and other spoken languages—that Word which has its own voice wherever it speaks to readers or hearers, and its own fine-tempered edge of convicting sharpness, has now "free course," and is "running" through the land, though not yet everywhere "glorified." "The wires are laid," as a missionary in Mid-China said long ago; "we wait but the flash from heaven." Christianity, though often exposed to ignorant and truculent assault, and

Christians, though often tried by official or by family worry and persecution, yet enjoy full legal toleration. And the official recognition of the beneficent object of our Divine religion, in the treaty which sanctions the promulgation and acceptance of Christianity, has never been officially traversed or withdrawn.

The number of Chinese Christian adherents in connection with the Protestant churches of Europe and America has grown to a body exceeding 100,000; whereas seventy years ago every Protestant Chinese Christian could have been seated in one small room in Hong-Kong. The Roman Catholic Christians are estimated at more than a million.

The Church of England, though still far behind some other Christian Missions in China, is developing her organization. In 1861, when the writer first went to China, we had one English Bishop for all China and Japan. Now there are four English Bishops in China (one for Western Mid-China is to be consecrated very shortly), three for Japan, and one in Corea; besides an American Bishop in China, and one in Japan.

The number of native clergy in China connected with the Churches of the Anglican Communion amounts to upwards of thirty, whereas there was scarcely more than one Chinese in Holy Orders thirty-five years ago.

Theological colleges, training schools, and day schools for boys and girls in very large numbers, are carrying on work of supreme importance; and Mission hospitals, some of them admirably equipped, and managed with cleanliness, and skill, and energy which European hospitals could scarcely surpass, are exercising influence of incalculable value.

And, thank God, "the engrafted Word" brought home by the Spirit of God, has "saved" a large number of Chinese "souls," who have passed beyond the reach of the voices of persecutor or of tempter for ever; and the loving Spirit of God is leading daily increasing numbers into the land of righteousness.

I shall be thankful indeed to God if this brief review of China as a Mission-field, of unique difficulty and of supreme interest and importance, may lead readers of the *CHURCHMAN* to deeper and more careful study of this great land, and its history and people; and then, further on to the solemn question, Why should I not go in person, and help in my measure, by the Holy Spirit's grace, to win China for Christ?

ARTHUR E. MOULE, B.D.

NOTE.—The foregoing article was written before the appalling news from China reached England of the sudden outbreak of ferocious fanaticism by which missionaries belonging to the C.M.S. and C.E.Z.M.S., well known to many readers of the *CHURCHMAN*, and loved and honoured for their life and work, had been murdered with great barbarity.

China seems bent upon ruining her reputation in the eyes of the civilized world. Public authority must demand, not blind vengeance, but justice, which is the truest mercy; and the full recognition and guarantee of those treaty rights and privileges, the lapse or ignoring of which may endanger the safety of every foreigner in China. In calmer moments one might be tempted to plead that till the staring posters in the streets of London and at every railway-station bookstall shall be clear for, say six consecutive months, from the announcement of murder, outrage and violent crime in England, China cannot in common justice be condemned as cruel, barbarous, and inhuman, because of the barbarous and inhuman cruelty of a band of fanatics in one of its wide provinces.

But these are not calm moments, and I leave the argument of my paper unaltered, and perhaps only fortified by the terrible events at Kucheng on August 1. Put the worst construction possible on these massacres, I still maintain that a country with such strange, unique, and contradictory features, an ancient civilization, a literature of extreme antiquity and of the greatest interest, religions in their original forms marked by pathetic earnestness and high moral codes, pride of race, of history and of the fancied suzerainty of the world, all these rudely shaken by outbreaks of local atrocities indescribable in their horrors, and of cruelty inconceivable in its diabolical details, afford surely to the Christian athlete a foe to be thrown in the Master's name, and by those "wrestling thews" which the Spirit of God alone can give—a foe not to be despised or ridiculed, not to be hated or neglected, but to be won and conquered by faith and prayer and the Gospel of the grace of God.

Such, I am sure, is the vengeance for which those martyred spirits would call could they speak to us from that peaceful shore "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

A. E. M.

August 5.

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## ART. II.—REUNION.<sup>1</sup>

THE chief difficulties and perplexities of life arise when two principles, both of them good, come, or seem to come, in conflict with each other. When that which is plainly right is confronted with wrong, when moral and immoral action are set one against the other, our decision is quickly arrived at, and we pass on; but when one principle leads us forward, and another which seems equally admirable thrusts us back, our interest is at once awakened. We ask ourselves which of the two is to prevail, which should be predominant, and which should give way.

The two principles of truth and unity seem thus to come into conflict. They do not really do so, for where truth is not present unity becomes only conspiracy in error, but they seem to conflict in many particular cases. Now, when this occurs, each man is bound to strike for truth, and, if it must be, to let unity go. *Stet veritas, ruat cælum.* Belief of a truth is one thing; acceptance of a truth which we do not believe for the

<sup>1</sup> Paper read at a meeting of the South-Eastern Church and Lay Alliance, June 19, 1895.