

THE
CHURCHMAN

JANUARY, 1902.

ART. I.—CHINA: SOME CHARACTERISTICS AND
THEIR IMPORT.

CHINA is quieting down for a while—God grant that it may be for a long while—like the great ocean sighing and murmuring after the roar of the tempest just passed over. In so vast a territory, and with a people “numerous as the ocean sands,” many of them living far remote, prejudiced, and ill-informed, local disturbances and upheavals may occur; but with the signing of the agreement with the Western Powers, and the withdrawal to a great extent of coercion from Peking, the great Empire is free once more for wise or unwise action in the sight of the rest of the world.

The lull, or the lasting fair weather, enables us to turn our thoughts from possible war, and from the horrors and solemn sadness of massacre and truculent persecution, to the consideration of some of the characteristics of the Chinese, and their need of the Gospel of the grace of God, of Christianity in its essence and Divine efficacy, not merely in its accessories and accompanying philanthropic blessing.

I venture to draw attention in a few words—though after forty years’ acquaintance with the people I ought to have many words wherewith to draw such attention—to two or three main features in Chinese character and thought; side by side they remain in many a heart and life, divorced too often, independent, and apart, yet still near to one another, and in the light and life and sacred energy of God’s grace, capable of being blended together and made one to His glory.

The spiritual and the material, the sublunary and the heaven-soaring, the philosophic, the theoretic, with the practical, are found, if I mistake not, together in Chinese thought and life.

I am aware that the attempt to define and unfold the
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characteristics of a person or of a people is a somewhat perilous undertaking. There is a fascination about it, a temptation to imagine everyone peculiar except your own self or your own country. There is a strong tendency towards inventive imagination and excited exaggeration; a list towards clever but hasty generalizations from insufficient and isolated data. And I desire, therefore, to abjure all pretence to dogmatism. I think, nevertheless, that the features of character which I describe, though not wholly peculiar to the Chinese race, are yet strongly exhibited in Chinese life and thought.

I cannot do better than transcribe the apparently genuine, possibly apocryphal, utterances of the present Emperor of China in a letter to his brother; and that brother (Prince Chun's) reflections, extracted from his journal written when at Berlin. They are delightfully Chinese: grotesque and yet sublime, contemplative and yet practically to the point, almost in the same breath, and in the same paragraph. Prince Chun moralizes thus in his diary: "Fine rain is falling; and the wind blows cold and strong. There is no eternal happiness on earth. Everything is determined in Heaven. Why should we trouble? Let us wait what Heaven decrees. And then, what beautiful watches there are in Switzerland!" The Emperor, with reform and conservatism struggling together in his mind, and casting about for some reconciliation, writes thus to his brother the Prince, to whom he is said to be closely attached in affection and sympathy: "Our soldiers must be good in Mongolia [? Manchuria], so they will be able to protect us from the foreigners and Boxers. China must not go backward any more. China must go forward. Therefore the soldiers must exercise well! This is very important—very!"

In these two extracts we have a threefold revelation of Chinese character and thought.

First, the *careful observation of natural phenomena*. The driving rain from German skies, the keen, strong wind of the waning Western summer, are recorded. Chinese observation and description of nature differ very widely, for the most part, from the vague, generally selfish and subjective, oftentimes very incorrect weather sentence which so often sets *our* sluggish conversation going for a time. It is interesting to notice that in ancient Chinese annals this careful and minute record of natural phenomena appears. In the Chinese Book of Odes, which, as ancient literature in his ancient day—560 B.C.—received the unbounded love and admiration of Confucius; of which odes he was, in a sense, the Musical Editor; and which owe to his imprimatur probably their continued preservation; in one of these, nearly 3,000 years old, we read such careful notes as these:

“ The wind blows, and is fierce ;
He looks at me and smiles ”—

but with a false passing smile, sweeping past and leaving me chilled and parched, for

“ The wind blows with clouds of dust.”

In another ode we read :

“ Cold are the wind and rain ”—

the same under those ancient skies as now from modern European clouds

“ Ye withered leaves, how the wind
Is blowing you away !”

“ There stands a fox solitary and suspicious ” on those old Chinese hills, ages before the hue and halloo of the modern chase. And again :

“ The heavens overhead are one arch of clouds
Snowing in innumerable flakes,
Then comes the driving rain ”—

the same as that which fell from German skies a few weeks ago on Prince Chun's face.

And later down in Chinese annals we have these two minute observations of natural phenomena : “ In the Duke's sixteenth year, in the first month, it rained and the trees became incrustated in ice ” (a phenomenon not unknown in East and West, but unusual). And again : “ In the sixth moon, the first day of the moon the sun was eclipsed ”—an eclipse verified by modern astronomers, and occurring in the year 574 B.C. And further back in history we read : “ In his third year, in spring, the King's second month, the sun was eclipsed.” This occurred on February 14, 729 B.C., the most ancient recorded and verified eclipse.

Then, secondly, Prince Chun in his diary *lifts up his thoughts from this passing sublunary world*, and moralizes on the evanescent and uncertain nature of earthly happiness ; and with fatalism, but yet not atheistic fatalism, he dismisses care by the thought that Heaven decrees all, and that all must happen according to Heaven's behest.

We find such thoughts, only loftier sometimes and nobler, in ancient Chinese literature. In an ode 2,700 years old Heaven is invoked and looked up to as “ Our Mother, Heaven.” And in another poem of the same date “ Distant and azure Heaven ” is appealed to in time of trouble.

In the year 620 B.C. an ode, recording the death of some great and eminent men, and the consequent loss to the country, in passionate appeal ascribes this calamity to the will and act of Heaven.

“Thou azure Heaven, Thou art destroying our good men.”

And more presumptuous, an ode of the eighth century B.C. speaks in time of calamity of “Great unpitying Heaven.” And thus again in humbler tones:

“O Heaven, who gave us birth!

O vast and distant Heaven, who art called our Parent!”

How high soaring again and again is the moral tone of the utterances of China’s sages and leaders of thought: Lao-tsee, Confucius, Mencius, and later from Ceylon and India Buddhist teaching. “I love life,” said Mencius (371-288 B.C.), “and I also love righteousness. If I cannot keep the two together, I will let life go, and choose righteousness.”

“They who accord with Heaven are preserved,” he says, again, of rulers; “they who rebel against Heaven perish.” And Confucius himself lifts his thoughts heavenwards, expressing implicit trust in its decrees, but falling short of that which I shall notice immediately, personal trust in God. “If my doctrine is to prevail,” he says, “it is so ordered. If it is to fall to the ground, it is so fixed.” “I do not murmur against Heaven.” “There is Heaven, that knows me.” Noble, up-soaring words! but all impersonal and distant is the object of his trust.

Notice also that the reform and renovation of the Empire and people which, whenever he can make himself heard, is known to be before the young Emperor’s mind (“China must not go back any more; she must go forward”), the same thought and ideal—the renovation of the people, the reform of Government and of morals—formed the great objects of the lives of China’s ancient sages. In the ancient classic, “The Great Learning,” ascribed by some Chinese writers to Confucius himself in part, by others to his grandson, as embodying the sentiments of the great sage, we read in the first page that the “renovation of the people” was one of the great objects in the composition of this book. And further on we read of an ancient worthy named K’ang, who was called to assist the Emperor in *making the people new*.

But here, too, reform and the eradication of evil strive with the conservatism of the forms in the past; and profound reverence for antiquity and old custom struggle together with innovations and improvement and renewal, not so much (I think) for the mastery as for some possible union and amalgamation.

The mind of ancient China was thus exercised; and young China’s awaking is but the awaking of the old, though it was then more spasmodic perhaps and individual than now. “The country must not go back,” says the Emperor, “but forwards.”

And this is, in his opinion (wrongly ascribed to him one would trust, but Chinese all the same), one method of reform and advance: that "the soldiers exercise well." It will not surprise us to know that this good exercise means, as has actually taken place in one city known to the writer, the going back from European drill and the use of arms of precision to antiquated bows and arrows and shields and ancient drill and discipline.

And they seem to have no power to rise even in thought and imagination to the better reform, when they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. As though war was a necessity, and that distant method of Chinese ancient reform must be followed: "Let the people be educated for seven years; then also they *may be employed in war.*"

The true conservatism (not the mechanical survival of the fittest, but the preservation and the use of the good and noble in the past); the true Radicalism, the uprooting of all that is pernicious and unworthy in both ancient and more modern political and social life;—these two are not incompatible; they meet in Chinese aspiration. How are they to become harmonious?

Then thirdly, all of a sudden we *come back to earth again*, and from observing Nature's courses of grandeur and beauty, and from soaring heavenwards in faith however imperfect, and desire however feeble, we suddenly, with Prince Chung, are lost in admiration of "*Swiss watches*"! Beautiful pieces of mechanism some of them are; and the same may be said of watches made in other lands and by other firms. But is *this* the bourn of the contemplative philosopher and the reforming patriot?

In ancient times it was somewhat the same. The "Superior Man," Confucius himself, the model of excellence in Chinese eyes, "liked to have his rice finely cleaned, and his mincemeat cut up small"; (and here we seem able to follow the sage). "He was never without ginger when he ate. He did not eat much. When in bed he did not speak" (and here some of us must confess that we are "inferior," not "superior," individuals). "If his mat was not straight, he did not sit upon it. On a sudden clap of thunder or wind, he would change countenance." Confucius was not a petty character, but nobly the reverse; yet formality and pettiness follow largely in his wake.

And how can these three characteristics be harmonized and utilized and glorified: delight in the observation of natural phenomena; the spiritual turning to the unseen but real Power in the real spirit world, away from the vanity and evanescence of things visible; and the apparent bathos of precise and petty and prosaic details of daily life?

Surely thus, and thus alone: by the knowledge of the One True God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. In the case of this great and intellectual people (ancient, educated, civilized, enlightened to a great extent before light had dawned at all on England), for the Chinese, and for the most ignorant and degraded nations alike, the salvation of God through His dear Son, and by His Holy Spirit's grace, is not one out of many methods; it is the only effective method for salvation and renewal. It will be found that Christian Missions are not merely philanthropic enterprises, they are the very essence of the only true and worthy philanthropy.

But in order thus to influence the Chinese, and to bring to them this Saving Health of the Gospel, we must not go to them with the blustering air of self-satisfied superiority. "The superior man," says Confucius, to quote Dr. Legge's translation, "is distressed at his want of ability." "Yet he has dignified ease," conscious of his pursuit of the truth, "but without pride." "He wishes to be slow in his words, and earnest in his conduct." "In a high situation, he does not treat with contempt his inferiors."

To boast of our own scientific attainments and superior intelligence, with sneer and ridicule (scarcely suppressed), and levelled at Chinese ignorance, is one thing, and a very foolish and ignorant method indeed. To place our resources of scientific and ethical knowledge at their disposal, with the noble humility and courtesy of true wisdom, is another thing, and one worthy of Christian civilization and of a Christian heart:

"Knowledge is proud that she has learned so much;
Wisdom is humble that she knows no more."

And so recognising gladly Chinese guesses at truth, we shall be more ready to direct them to God's truth, and they the more willing to listen.

The careful observation and recording of natural phenomena will by such teaching and with such learners be more ready to rise higher, even to the Creator and Author of all, than in the case of ignorant and unobservant minds.

"The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein" (Ps. cxi. 2).

So with all boldness as the ministers of the Gospel of the grace of God and as ambassadors for Christ, yet with quick sympathy with the sighs and aspirations of the Chinese after that which they have not of themselves or in their old faiths, the more powerfully shall we be able to present to the people the glad promise of pardon and renewal and eternal life through Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit of God. No

fatalistic sigh over the lack of lasting happiness on earth, but the joyful assurance of a "hope laid up in heaven." The decrees of Heaven will be no longer to them merely the exhibition of the working of impersonal inflexible law, but the fruit of Divine wisdom, justice, and love, guided and enforced by Divine power and care. Now "vast and distant Heaven" will not seem any longer to soar further and further from them, but to be bending down as their Father's home; and the Great Supreme Ruler will be no longer inaccessible in the depths of eternity or of boundless space, unobservant, out of reach, but access to Him with confidence will be found through His dear Son, who has died to bring us back to God, and, by the gracious power of the Spirit of our God, our Father in Heaven, with a Mother's love and comfort, our Divine, all-glorious Parent, filling heaven and earth and our poor hearts as well. So the more readily shall teachers teach and scholars learn, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, to do all to the glory of God"; and that time spent thus to God, redeemed for Him, and for the highest good of man, will bear the fruit of blessing now—reform, improvement, renewal—and will pass into the timeless perfection of the life of eternity.

We were reminded by the Bishop of Ripon at the anniversary of the Church Missionary Society last May, that our ideas of some non-Christian nations have been much modified of later years. Instead of gross ignorance and savage manners, we meet with intellectual peoples like the Chinese, the Hindoos, the Japanese, with high-toned codes of morality in some cases, with law and order in noble theory at any rate, and with some ancient civilization and education and literature which excite our admiration. This is literally true; but on the one hand it by no means implies that dense ignorance and savagery and misery have vanished from the earth; and on the other hand the further knowledge of human kind in no sense modifies our persuasion that all nations and all individuals need absolutely and imperatively the *Gospel*. It cannot be too often repeated that what man needs, and has needed for 6,000 years, is not so much the knowledge of duty to God and man (though here, too, the light of nature is all too dim), but rather the knowledge of salvation from the sin of neglected duty and of the infraction of the laws of conscience and of Heaven—salvation from the power of sin, not by human effort and resolution and merit, but by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the sanctifying, regenerating power of the Holy Ghost. Not human exhortation to "propriety"; not even Divine enunciation of law and its penalties and rewards, save men; but that to which God's law in mercy leads us, the Divine strength of salvation, the life of God brought back once more in His dear Son and

by the Spirit of Life to our fast failing pulses. So yielding to God's grace, China and all lands will find true enlightenment, permanent and beneficent reform; the soldiers need "exercise" no longer, but under the eternal rule of the Prince of Peace "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "Oh! people of Sinim, loved and longed for, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord."

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ART. II.—THE WESTERN TEXT OF ST. LUKE.

OF the many questions in New Testament criticism which occupy the minds of scholars at the present day, one of the most interesting and important is that of the origin and history of what is called the Western text.

An examination of the MSS. quoted in cases where various readings occur, shows that in the main two leading groups may be distinguished, one of which centres round the Sinaitic and Vatican Codices \aleph and B, and the other round Codex Bezae, or D as it is called. When in the eighteenth century Griesbach (1745-1812) was classifying the evidence then known for the New Testament, he gave the name Western to the latter group, and assigned to it Codex Bezae and other Greek MSS. which contained a Latin translation, the Old Latin and the Vulgate Versions, and the Latin Fathers.

This title is still retained as a convenient designation, though it is much too narrow if taken in a geographical sense, for it is now found that this "Western" form of text is also attested by witnesses from the East. In fact, Westcott and Hort say¹ that "the text of all writers not connected with Alexandria, who have left considerable remains, is substantially Western"; and in view of this admission, Dr. Salmon suggests that non-Alexandrian would be a more suitable name.

The last twenty years have seen a vast change in the way in which the Western text is regarded; we may find in this partly a reaction from the contempt with which WH treated it, but it is also partly owing to the amount of fresh evidence which has lately been discovered for this form of text. Sixty years ago many of the best Western witnesses were inaccessible. Western readings were practically those of D only, supported by a few Latin versions (*a*, *b*, *c*) and quotations in Tertullian and Cyprian; the African Latin was unknown, except when it happened to be quoted by Cyprian and Tertullian, and the

¹ Introduction to Greek Text, p. 113. (For convenience Westcott and Hort are referred to as WH in this paper.)