

THE
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THE EAST OF ASIA AND CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

IT is probably the case that a truer estimate of the progress or retardation of the work of the Church of Christ in non-Christian lands can be formed by those who stand back a little from the front fighting line than by those who are in that line, and whose eyes and judgment are blinded or warped sometimes by the dust and noise of the conflict.

Yet ever and anon a wind seems to blow, driving away the storm-dust and lifting the clouds awhile, and giving such a glimpse of the reality of the progress of the kingdom as those in the great centre and rearguard at home cannot without some such "war news" perceive.

I venture to offer, roughly written and with such unpolished periods as are permitted, perhaps, to correspondents in the field, three or four scenes in our Eastern campaign. The readers of the CHURCHMAN will be able, without many words of mine in the way of exposition, to form their own conclusions; but I shall venture at the close to add a few explanatory comments.

I have just returned from a visit to Shanghai, the great metropolis of these far Eastern lands. One of my duties was to attend and move a resolution at the annual meeting of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge amongst the Chinese. The meeting, though inadequately advertised, was well attended, and by a most significantly representative gathering. The chair was taken by an American gentleman, the Statistical Commissioner of Customs. I arrived just as the meeting commenced, and I took my seat below the platform, having close to me, though I knew it not at the time, two Chinese gentlemen of the high rank of Taotai—one a prominent manager and director of the

Shanghai-Nankin Railway now under construction ; the other the saviour, under God, of many missionary and civilian lives at the time of the Boxer troubles by his kindly and timely warning. The meeting began with prayer, offered by a veteran missionary from Foochow. These Chinese gentlemen did not appear surprised by this commencement. Near to me on the left sat the Japanese Consul-General with his Japanese interpreter. They also stayed for the prayer. The chairman spoke first, moving a resolution, and describing the work and aims and needs of the society. He was seconded by a missionary on the staff of the society.

Then came my resolution, in moving which I advocated as earnestly as I could the paramount importance of giving to the Chinese Christian literature, urging the great truth that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and that the truths of the Christian religion and the treasures of Bible knowledge enlarge and enlighten the mind and create a thirst for all true wisdom. Do not let us offend the Chinese by offering to them the agnostic's "affectation of supernatural ignorance," nor the latest critic's assumption of knowledge more profound than that of any scholar-saint before him. But give them the solid facts and profound philosophy of the scheme and plan of salvation—apologetics, such as, *e.g.*, the Victoria Institute offers. Give them Christian biographies, from St. Augustine of Hippo down to Sir James Simpson ; lives of the saints which guide the reader to the "dynamics" by which the ethics of Christianity become electrified electrons. Give them books of devotion, for even the Buddhist priests round Ningpo have prayer-books now modelled after our Book of Common Prayer, to meet the want the people feel of prayers which they can understand ; and a Buddhist priest near Shanghai is known to attend regularly the services of the American Church Mission for the mere pleasure of praying in a known tongue, though for the while a Buddhist still.

I suggested also the composition, with special care and Christian tact and faithfulness combined, of a Christian "Sacred Edict," a declaration of the call to faith in Christ, as an edict from heaven, not from the West—a kind of imitation of the remarkable edict of the Emperor Yoong-ching 180 years ago, consisting of the sermons on texts selected by his father, the great N'ang-hsi, and read by Imperial order periodically in public. I mentioned also, as an example, the Soldier's Pocket-Book in the possession of every Japanese soldier, containing exhortations to be read daily, written by the Emperor, and upholding integrity of conduct and moral uprightness, even above that which has been called the

insanity; but if so, it is the sanest and noblest of delusions—the Japanese devotion to Emperor and country.

My resolution was seconded by the Japanese Consul-General—a man of singular dignity of manner. He spoke through a Japanese interpreter, whose English was free and correct. His speech was a significant one, in no sense advocating my views, but in no sense controverting them. It was an elaborate defence of the intention and action of Japan in the endeavour to enlighten China by imparting to her the enlightenment she has received so largely from the West. Five thousand Chinese scholars are now studying in Japan, and Japan has sent already seventy of her “professors” to teach in China. “I contend,” said the Consul-General, “that our work is ancillary to yours of this Diffusion Society.” “We do not teach religion,” he went on to say, “we do not advocate Christianity; but we in no sense hinder it or discountenance it. We rather wish it all success. But every one must choose his own religion. Our desire is to give the best we possess of literature, science, and discovery to China. Confucianism” (and here the speaker stepped down out of his depth) “is much like Christianity, only that Confucius did not speak of God”—a damaging admission from one of Japan’s scholars, who all have studied, and all admire, Confucius. “We in Japan,” he went on to say, “are all for peace, not for war. And China’s stability and integrity form the great guarantee for peace, while China’s enlightenment affords the best hope of her stability.”

The speech was long and discursive, but full of interest. Japan has yet to learn what England (or are our Eastern eyes blurred and misleading?) seems to be unlearning to her peril—that education derived from, or carefully set apart from, religion is doomed to failure; and some true friends of China and Japan to whom I alluded in my speech have yet to learn that the true regeneration and enlightenment and reform of the nations cannot be attained by the mere emancipation of thought, and the reinvigoration of education, and the imparting of knowledge. “Facisti nos ad TE; et inquietum est cor nostrum donec quiescat in TE.”

The third and last resolution was moved by a Baptist minister from London, the Rev. J. Cumming-Brown, who is honorary secretary of the Diffusion Society in London, and has come out at his own charges to see the East for himself. He gave us a graphic account of what he had heard and observed of intellectual life and spiritual progress in Japan, Corea, and in Northern China; and he urged the Society, in the name of Christian England, to go forward. To him succeeded the last speaker, the Taotai, mentioned above,

reading his speech, doubtless his own composition, and expressed in clear and idiomatic English. He spoke of the Society's work in terms of hearty appreciation, but he warned some of his fellow-countrymen of the danger of presuming to teach science and Western literature with only a smattering of such learning at their command, and to the disparagement of teachers far better qualified.

The meeting closed with the Benediction, pronounced by the veteran missionary Dr. Edkins, now passed his eightieth year, and after more than fifty years' work in China, vigorous in intellect, and keen in the desire for the supreme good of China.

I have been careful to describe this meeting at some length, because in its company of hearers, in its speakers, and in its object, it seemed to me to exhibit and sum up the complications, and mistakes, and the noblest hopes of work for the reform and salvation of China. I shall refer to this subject again at the close of this article.

One of the speakers at this meeting mentioned to me in private conversation an incident in the work of Christian missions in Corea, which I record here without the names of places or individuals. I relate only what my memory retains, and I have not official documents, and may possibly err in detail. But the story is true, and even in a brief outline full of significance.

Some Corean Christians seemed doubtful as to the origin of Christianity. "Was not the Church a foreign Church, and the Creed a Western Creed?" "The Gospel, and the command to believe it," replied their missionary friends, "come from heaven. You make it foreign only by depending continually on the money of foreign Churches, and by declining or delaying self-support, with self-government and self-extension in due course. We bring you the glad tidings freely and without price. We help you gladly in the initiatory stages of your Church life, but you must make it a Corean Church, deriving all its true life from God alone." Upon this they decided with much enthusiasm to build a church, and for this purpose they raised a sum of 250 dollars. To their dismay, however, this sum was speedily exhausted by the purchase of land and laying the foundations of the building. But they were not discouraged. "God will help us to raise more money," they said. The plague visited their city and neighbourhood, and a hospital and separation buildings were provided by the mission. They appealed to the Native Church for volunteer nurses and attendants. Some quailed at first before the grave risk of life. But the next day, with shame and sorrow at their cowardice, they "repented and went."

God so blessed the hospital that the percentage of deaths was strangely small; and the King hearing of it, entreated his people to live and not die, by taking advantage of the mission's help. When the cloud had lifted and the plague had abated, the King wished to repay to the mission the expenses incurred. He was respectfully informed that the missionary doctors desired no personal remuneration, but they would thankfully accept payment for the medicines used. This was immediately arranged, and then inquiry was made as to the payment of the nurses and assistants. "That, your Majesty, was a work of love, and offered in the fear of God. They desire no reward." "That may be all very well," replied the King, "and very grateful we are to them; but paid they must be, whatever they please to do with the money." The King had his way, and the Christians theirs; for the whole of the royal bounty was devoted at once to church-building, and the church was finished. This happened in the "Hermit Kingdom," so long shut up in ignorance, darkness, and sin; so slow to move, and so distracted—though with some far-off memories of its conquering prowess in ancient days—now with internal revolution, now by the suzerain hand of China, now by the stronger and nearer power of Japan, and more recently by the aggression of Russia. Has not the darkness passed here too? Has not the dawn come, and is not the uprising near of the true Light in this far Eastern land?

I cannot but think, from the visits I have paid recently to Japan, once just before the war broke out, and once in the very height of the war excitement, that that country and people, whom I used, in company with most would-be critics, to describe as quicksilvers, fickle, unreliable, and with but surface polish, have strengthened, and deepened, and steadied in character, and almost in nature, marvellously within the past few years. I witnessed the jubilant celebration after the great victory of Liao-yang, and I met with some of the wounded heroes from the fierce storming of Nan-shan. There was no unsteady excitement in their enthusiasm, no drunkenness or disorder in the crowded lantern-lit streets. The loyalty of the nation moving as one man; the rally round the throne; the love and defence of country and of the country's very life—these, and not conquest or the mere flush of glory, seemed to stir them to the very depths, and these depths are deep indeed. Education and the thirst for knowledge are not checked by the war. I saw plenty of labourers ready to reap the abnormally abundant harvest. The "insanity" of enthusiasm to which I allude above is, though self-reliant, yet under sober control.

When fathers and mothers weep and lament, not that their

sons are summoned to the front, but if they are *not* called; when army doctors complain that their calling seems sometimes at an end, for they cannot find a soldier who will confess that he is ill, though he may be struck for death, nor a man to admit that he is wounded, though he has four rifle bullets in him, and his life is fast ebbing away; when the Emperor and his advisers consent gladly—though “departments” may raise vexatious delays—to Christian chaplains as well as Buddhist being sent to the front; when facilities are afforded for the free and wide distribution of the New Testament and portions to the troops ordered to the front; and when, most of all, Japanese Christians wish to repay the debt, long owing to China, for their civilization and education and literature, and the acquirement of useful and fine arts, by coming over to China, if China will have them, as Christian missionaries to their friends and near neighbours, our attention is arrested not merely by the spectacle of a nation born in a day, but by the persuasion that, far more than either Emperor or his advisers or the people know it, or care to confess Christian teaching and lofty Christian standards of integrity, truthfulness and justice have guided and are swaying the nation.

It is not now, as part of Europe would have us believe, a conflict between the civilized white Christian and the barbarous or semi-civilized pagan yellow race. It is, alas!—and I think I express the view of the large majority of observers here on the very verge of the conflict—it is the Christian un-Christian for the nonce, against the Pagan, most Christian in forbearance before the war, and in high nobility of action (if war can ever find room in its terrible embrace for such) in war.

And when, through God's mercy, justice triumphs and peace returns, it is difficult to doubt the magic influence which Japan will then exert over China, as, indeed, she wields it not ineffectually now—influence for good we earnestly believe, if Japan receives honourable recognition from Western nations; influence, it may be, electric and destructive, by energizing for evil every latent anti-foreign element in Chinese traditions and secret ambitions.

There in Japan, as here in China, the proclamation and acceptance of the Gospel forms the one and the effective hope. It is significant, once more to come back to the mighty empire of China, as showing the growing recognition of Christianity as the chief exponent of Christendom's goodwill to China (distinguished thus from Christendom's un-Christian opium trade, aggression, and greed of conquest) that the great officer first appointed Viceroy of the Lower Yangtze provinces, when in power in Shantung, requested to have 100 copies of the

New Testament sent to him for distribution amongst the mandarins, great and small, under his superintendence. They were duly forwarded to him by the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society with, I believe, the fly-leaf ordinarily distributed, describing the fact of the inspiration, and origin, and authorship, and plan of the great Book of God, its composition stretching over 1,400 years, and yet remaining

“One clear harp with divers tones.”

Not many months ago I made the acquaintance on board the steamer running between Ningpo and Shanghai, of a gentleman residing in this neighbourhood. He came to the saloon table and sat down with the English-speaking officers and passengers. He took no part in the conversation, as he had not learned English, but he entered eagerly into conversation in Chinese, and we talked together till nearly midnight. He is an astronomical observer, and possesses two telescopes. He was going to Shanghai to purchase a microscope. He is an inventor of a patent travelling-chair. He is widely read in history and political science. He deplors the low estate of his country, and earnestly asked what remedy could be suggested for the evils and deficiencies and ignorance in the land, utterly repudiating revolutionary ideas or plans of violence. He greatly admires the Japanese, extolling especially their cleanly habits. He possesses a Bible, and has read it. He wishes much to possess the “*Encyclopædia Britannica*” (not “*Biblica*”!), and begs us to translate the best work into Chinese. And with serious attention he listened to my solution, namely, that the individuals of the nation—he himself, for instance, and the nation at large—come back to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, and recover thus the communication of the Divine life, lost by sin, with its “promise and potency” of all good. I am told that this man is only one of a class more numerous than we imagine, “quiet in the land,” but a growing power. Who will guide them aright?

Is it a bathos to which I guide my readers, when I relate what we hope to witness in our Chinese Church on Christmas Day? “One borne of four,” carried to the Church to be baptized there by the Chinese pastor; a man, a fair scholar, but crippled, and lying helpless on his back for twenty-four years, supporting himself, and with great difficulty, by keeping a little school, and by writing deeds, or “marriage lines,” or charms, with “many curious arts,” then gradually awakened by the Holy Spirit’s power, and now studying and rejoicing in the Bible, and in the Saviour revealed to him there; and gathering his books together in which he learnt his magic arts, he has given them to me to burn, and he desires now publicly to confess the faith of Christ Crucified.

Close by our mission house in the northern suburb of Ningpo, we have a little day-school for the children of our non-Christian neighbours. Two of these little girls, children of about seven or eight years of age, have not learnt in vain the "first principles of the doctrine of Christ." They insist with child-like entreaty on having prayer to the true God when they wake and when they go to sleep, and they ask for grace to be said before "rice." At the same time they beseech their mothers no longer to worship "dumb idols," but the Living God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We think we see through these rifts in the clouds signs that the time is hastening on when "the Son of God shall be glorified." "The Greeks are coming to see Jesus," and the stir affects all classes. Then the cloud falls again; the storm and the smoke of battle gather round us. And in the gloom we see this vast nation; its multitudes crowding the broad way—the way of death, the by-paths of sin and superstition and unbelief. We mark its uprising as from long sleep and semi-death, its ambition, its gathering patriotism, its forming taste for knowledge and "all that is new."

Are we mistaken, then, in our methods—our plan of evangelization first, and evangelization last; of the Book of God as our one sword, the Person and salvation of Our Lord the one only object of desire and trust; the Spirit of the Lord, and "not might, not power," not even enlightenment, information, education, reform; this Divine Power alone our reliance, bringing with it the emancipation of the mind, the effulgence of all true wisdom and knowledge, and the noblest freedom ever accompanied by order, obedience, salvation, and peace? There are many well-wishers to China who say, if not *no* to all this, yet would counsel caution and judicious delay in the proclamation of Christ's Gospel. Some advocate importunately the spread of education first; the formation and information of the reasoning and thinking powers before, at some indefinite period in the curriculum, the Chinese mind is introduced to the mysteries of the Faith.

Some sympathize almost exclusively with the exhibition of Christian philanthropy in medical missions, both advocates giving the impression that they identify Christianity with education and with the healing of the sick, forgetting that neither one nor the other constitutes our object and our goal. Ancillary?—yes. But alternative or superior?—no, a thousand times no! Forces potent in persuasion and kindness to bring sinners to the Gospel, but in no sense themselves the Gospel.

A third party of well-wishers to China, recognising the existence, as we all do, of excellent ethical teaching in the religions of China and Japan, deems it necessary to rest the appeal

for faith in Christianity on the material prosperity and intellectual advance and widespread rule possessed by Christian nations—glorifying, in fact, the material, the temporal, the tangible, the visible, to the obscuration of the unseen, but most real and eternal spiritual truths and methods and future of the Faith.

It is a dangerous and unconvincing plea in these days. These Eastern nations can see that Might is too often Right, and that the "wrongful rights" of, *e.g.*, a trade, protested against and forbidden by the conscience of a nation, were forced—is there any other word that can be used?—forced on the nation and are maintained in India as a Government monopoly—which must be made remunerative—of the mighty conqueror. But they cannot see that Right originally gave this Might to the mighty, and that England's early transactions and the forceful wrongs wrought by France, Germany and Russia in recent times, were the beneficent reward granted by Heaven for the integrity and righteousness of Christendom! It will be a day of triumph and renown for England if she is able, and that soon, to lift from her fair fame—and that fame is in other respects brightening—this grave blot on her great escutcheon.

The truth that it shall be well with the righteous, and that "righteousness exalteth a nation," can still be confidently preached, but the appeal to the material forces of Christian Powers as a proof of the power of this great spiritual creed is delusive and wrong. The Chinese and Japanese, on their side, are very prone to forget that their early supercilious contempt for barbarians from the West, their exclusive policy, and abusive language, their claim, especially on China's part, for the suzerainty, if not the sovereignty, over all nations, scarcely corresponded with their claim for polish and good manners, and enlightenment for ages past. But retort and counter-charges will not aid us in the present crisis of the story of the great East.

Earnestly and continuously as we desire to let our Christian light shine before men, and to be in some true sense the glory of Christ, it is after all not Christendom, not this or that Christian Church or individual, that we "lift up" for the admiration and trust of the people. We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, His person, His birth, His work, His death, His rising, His salvation. Faith seated there, by the power of the Holy Ghost, will bring the East and the West to God, to life, and to salvation. This, and nothing less or more.

Mencius, 2,200 years ago, seems to lament the teachers' inability to impart the power to his scholars by which they

can act out his teachings. "You may give a man the compass and the square, but that gift does not of itself impart the skill to use them." Confucius and Mencius could speak well, and call loudly with voices sounding still to the nation drowning in sin and alienation from God, and sinking deep down in the slough of ignorance and superstition. But not even the sacred words of "the old time before them" could save the perishing and draw them out. And this double grace and energy—the teacher's grace, the Saviour's power—plunging in to save, and saving from death by His own death, and bringing, as He rose, safe to shore the lost: this, which alone satisfies the awakened conscience of the nation and of the individual—salvation, which Buddha repudiated the very thought of, save as coming from the lost himself, and that for men or women only after countless transferences of existence till the consciousness of being is lost; salvation, which Laotsu does not teach as by a Saviour, and China's greatest sage knew nothing of. This, with all its accompanying wealth of uplifting, regenerating, and purifying blessing—this is the light of Asia, the light of the world, the dawning of the morning star, the full sun seen in his strength. We cannot offer anything higher; we dare not stop short with any other message of glad tidings for the Farthest East.

ARTHUR E. MOULE.



THE BATTLE OF THE CRITICS: A WORD FROM THE RANKS.

IN the numbers of the *Contemporary* for February and March Dr. Emil Reich and Canon Cheyne have crossed swords, or rather, as it would seem, have thrown distant brickbats at one another, to the enlightenment of all those who are concerned with the words and history of the Bible. The phrase "crossed swords" would be out of place in this connection. On the part of the attacker there is no slashing, no sudden lunge at a vital spot; on the part of the defender there is no defence; only on each side brickbats, and yet more brickbats, which, falling, make a dust, but no more. Canon Cheyne suggests that Dr. Reich's article was written in haste: to a thoughtful reader of both articles there does not seem in this respect to be much to choose between the two; both bear evident traces of haste and of, what is probably worse, temper. And yet on such a matter as an inquiry into the origins of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures there would appear to be no room for such trivialities as jests on the per-