

# CHRISTIAN LITERATURE IN THE EAST

## I. IN JAPAN

THE Christianization of Japan is an enterprise the magnitude of which probably no one adequately appreciates. It involves not only the presentation of the Gospel to the forty or fifty millions who have not as yet heard it—that were a relatively easy thing to do—it involves in addition the thorough-going discussion of the respective postulates of Buddhist, Confucian, Shinto, and Christian faiths. Convincing evidence must be offered of the superiority of Christianity in providing rational foundations for moral and spiritual life. As yet it cannot be said that the great debate between Christianity and the other faiths in regard to fundamentals has more than begun. The thoughtful men of the nation, its university professors and political leaders, are saying with practical unanimity that, while Christian morality is excellent in the daily life, Christian philosophy and metaphysics are weak and Christian ethical theory is insufficiently grounded.

Although it is beyond question that western democratic civilization has influenced Japan profoundly and brought her into harmony with Christian principles in many important respects, yet it is also true that the Christian view of the universe and of man is either unknown to or consciously rejected by the vast majority of her educated men. They profess either agnosticism, like so many in the West, or Buddhism, which means usually a vague, pantheistic philosophy. To christianize Japan, her thoughtful leaders must be brought to see the rational and moral weakness inherent in Buddhism and the superiority of Christianity, and also to accept personally the moral and spiritual leadership of Jesus.

In the divine providence Japan has been brought to a unique place among the non-Christian nations. She first of them all is attempting to establish a civilization practically Christian. But she is attempting this without accepting either the underlying postulates or the conscious faith on which that civilization has been built. The Christianization of this land is by no means a foregone conclusion. Mighty forces are still in opposition. And if we cannot bring Japan to Christ—so open-minded and ready to learn the best which the West has to teach—what hope have we of christianizing China or India? Japan is ready now to study more carefully than hitherto the deeper spiritual life of the West, and to appropriate that which commands her intellect and her heart. This unique situation gives the Christian cause in Japan a rare opportunity, but in order to make full use of it Christendom must awake. We must see the vision of the Kingdom and set before ourselves a comprehensive, statesman-like program for its effective proclamation.

In this program are many essential elements, and wide co-operation is needed. But among all the agencies to be employed none is more important and none will bring larger returns than the Christian Press.

The christianization of Japan depends primarily on the work and direct personal influence of living Christians. Nothing can be a substitute for this. But next to the transmission of life by living Christians comes the work of the printed page. In the nurture of those who have come into the Kingdom, suitable literature is of the highest importance, for it imparts knowledge of the Christian world, provides contact with the spiritual movements of the times, gives a sense of unity with Christians throughout the world, and inspires individual thought and act. This soul-culture for those who have already entered the Christian life is perhaps the greatest function of Christian literature.

Only second to it, however, is the function of meeting the needs of those not yet Christian, removing misunder-

standing, overcoming objections, and in general preparing the heart for the reception of the Christian life. For in Japan, where Christianity was for two hundred and fifty years universally regarded as the 'Evil Way,' teaching sorcery, disobedience to parents, cruel torture, irreverence to the dead, and all manner of wickedness, many misunderstandings must be removed and objections answered before the truth presented will be listened to with open mind, and the life offered will even be considered.

Still another fact shows the need of Christian literature in Japan, namely, the wide circulation of anti-Christian thought imported from the West. Many books inculcating agnostic, materialistic, and pantheistic doctrines have been translated. The irreligious spirit and immoral life of much of non-Christian Christendom, and its revolt against all that is highest and best in the West, are widely known in Japan, being proclaimed by the daily press and monthly magazines, by hundreds of Japanese who have studied in the West, and by the lives of thousands of Occidentals who have either passed through or settled in Japan.

Moreover, Japan has already become a reading nation. Newspapers and magazines, pamphlets and books, are pouring from the press at a prodigious rate. While much of this reading matter is of course unobjectionable and some of it highly commendable, a considerable portion is unwholesome and demoralizing. The impurity of popular novels, with a few notable exceptions, is an evil widely recognized and deplored by many Japanese patriots. Practically all scholarly scientific, ethical, and philosophical works are frankly either materialistic, agnostic, or pantheistic, and almost invariably hostile to Christian thought and faith.

This has been the moral and religious situation in Japan for nearly two generations. With the introduction of western civilization and the establishment of a system of universal education, religion and the ethics based thereon have been officially discarded, the attempt having been

made to found morality on patriotism and imperial apotheosis. As a result of this policy, the increased education has served to undermine moral and spiritual life, although it has of course added to the general fund of intelligence and scientific knowledge—a result which has been increasingly disquieting to those in positions of responsibility.

At the same time, modern industrial civilization has been making rapid headway in all parts of the country. Wealth has been rapidly accumulating in the hands of manufacturers and merchants, and ominous results are already visible in the way of increasing licentiousness and luxury in all the great centres. The problems of labour and capital, with all that they mean, are definitely taking shape.

This condition of the industrial, moral, and spiritual life of Japan has within the past few years become the subject of keen solicitude to many of Japan's educational and political leaders. Articles have appeared in the press bearing upon it; societies have even been formed to study the situation; and there is a distinct turning of responsible thinkers toward the spiritual life as the only solution. Among the conspicuous signs of this turning was the so-called 'Conference of the Three Religions,' held in February, 1912.

Japan's moral and religious problems, then, do not differ in principle from those of any land that enters heartily into the modern cosmopolitan civilization. Her life is characterized by increasing spiritual perplexity and moral peril, for to many of the educated class, trained in science and history and relatively familiar with various religions, the religious faiths inherited from the past have lost their meaning, value, and power, while their motives for moral conduct and sanctions for social life have become ineffective. Now, unless some new religious faith is found able to maintain itself in the presence of modern civilization, the universe comes to be regarded as a great, irresponsible

machine (material or psychic), mercilessly working out its inevitable results, regardless of man's nature and needs. But this means that man is helpless and hopeless in his conflict with the physical evils of nature, the moral corruption of society, and the inherent weakness of his own heart ; and even more—it means also that life is worthless, and existence at bottom irrational and non-moral. But without the postulates of the thoroughly moral and rational character of the universe and an absolute value for human life, the foundations of society and of noble manhood and womanhood are destroyed. Faith in a good and holy God, in the essential goodness of the world, and in the possibility of attainment of the noble, the true, and the good vanishes. Man's whole life is reduced to a superficial, ephemeral, aimless round of meaningless activities, of degrading selfishness, and of more or less disguised animalism. But when these are the leading features of life, civilization itself is undermined. Just this is what a considerable section of educated Japan begins to feel.

The development and permanent maintenance of high and noble civilization in Japan, as in other lands, depends on the one hand on the rejection of the superstitious and relatively immoral faiths of the past, and on the other on the establishment of a vital religious faith which, while making full room for the progress of science, philosophy, and history, can still hold fast to a world thoroughly rational, moral, and spiritual, to God absolutely good, and to man having infinite moral worth and destiny. Only thus can an absolute meaning for life and an adequate goal for individual and social endeavour be maintained.

Japan's fundamental moral problem, then, as indeed that of every land, stated in its most concrete form, is how to transform selfish and sinful men into unselfish, loving, faithful workers for social welfare ; and her fundamental religious problem is how to enable men who see in the universe nothing but natural processes and impersonal laws, working under bare necessity, to recognize, believe

in, and trust a universal spiritual Being supremely interested in man, by loving and obedient relation to whom an eternal and blessed destiny is assured. By the solution of these two problems, men and women will be produced thoroughly trustworthy in all the relations of life, reverencing all that is noble, good, and true, and openly seeking the more complete realization of these ideals in their own lives and those of others.

The attainment of these results, however, is not a matter of mere intellectual knowledge. No man by his own unaided endeavour can change his moral nature and religious or irreligious convictions. Only as he comes into contact with mighty moral and spiritual forces which grip and command him can the deepest elements of his nature be transformed, and a moral life and effective religious convictions become possible. Christians believe that in Jesus Christ we come into contact with just such transforming power. They believe that the faith which springs from loyal affection for Jesus Christ, regarding Him as Lord, and the God whom He revealed as Father, meets the moral and spiritual needs of every land and every man. They believe that the Christian faith makes full room for modern science, provides an adequate goal and effective sanction for all high endeavour, and these in turn guarantee the meaning and value of life. It is their universal experience that the Christian gospel is the supreme source of comfort, hope, and joy, and of strength in the conflict for righteousness in individual and national life.

The type of Christian literature needed in Japan is determined by the situation thus briefly sketched above. What, then, have Christians done to meet the needs of the nation along these lines? Very early in the Christian movement—in the seventies—a Christian weekly was established in Osaka. In the course of time, as the various denominations developed, weekly papers were published by all the principal Churches, such as the *Kirisuto Kyo Sekai* (The Christian World), *Fukuin Shimpō* (The Gospel

News), *Kirisutokyo Shuho* (The Christian Weekly), and *Gokyo* (The Christian Advocate). These, however, circulate chiefly among Christians. Several monthly magazines have also been established and carried on for many years, such as *Rikugo Zasshi* (The Universe), *Shinjin* (The New Man), *Seisho no Kenkyu* (Bible Study), *Shingaku Kenkyu* (Theological Study), and *Osaka Kodan* (The Osaka Pulpit), which have exerted wide influence, being read by many outside the ranks of professed Christians. In recent years many local churches have taken to publishing each its own little monthly paper. There are also several monthlies publishing exclusively evangelistic material. Thus the number of weekly and monthly publications issued by Christians is already large, and it may be questioned if anything more is needed in this line.

For the publication and circulation of Christian books several publishing houses have been established, such as the *Kyobunkwan* (Methodist Publishing House), *Keiseisha* (The Warning and Awakening Company), *Fukuinsha* (The Gospel Publishing Company), and the Japan Book and Tract Society. By these and other denominational publishing agencies many hundred books and booklets have been issued during the past two score years, rendering invaluable service to the Churches and the Christian cause. Some of these publications have had wide inter-denominational circulation, such as certain tracts and especially the union hymn book. As a rule, however, the books issued by one publishing house have their circulation limited to the denomination to which the house belongs.

The Conference of Federated Missions, organized in 1901 as the association of the co-operating Christian missions, early appointed among its annual committees one on Christian literature. This committee sought to review the output of the year, in order to give information to all of the best work of each. It soon became evident that, although the various missions were expending considerable sums for

publication, yet the results did not meet the needs of the situation. Each body was hampered by insufficient financial resources ; it did not have command of a sufficient number of skilled literary workers ; there was also lack of connexion between the various bodies and of correlation in the work. Moreover, examination of the books published and current criticism by Japanese readers disclosed the fact that much of the output was of an inferior quality. Many splendid works were translated, but so poorly that the translation was sometimes quite unreadable and not infrequently only partially intelligible.

It was to meet this general situation that a plan was proposed in 1908 for the organization of an adequately supported Christian Literature Society, which should be the organ of the entire missionary body. It was not proposed that the society should displace existing agencies, nor itself undertake the work of publication or distribution, but its purpose was to formulate a comprehensive program, secure adequate funds, co-ordinate the work of all the bodies, and draw forth the latent talent in all the Churches. To use a recent phrase, its aim was to introduce 'scientific management' into the work of providing literature for the Christian movement in Japan. The type of literature it should seek to produce was defined 'as at once scholarly and popular, fitted to overcome agnostic, materialistic, and pantheistic modes of thought, by presenting in attractive form and with cogent logic the theistic philosophy and fundamental truths of historical and evangelical Christianity.'

The specific forms of work proposed were : the production of translations of a high grade of excellence ; the securing and publishing of original works by Japanese writers ; the creation of a board of literary examiners ; the offering of prizes for specific works ; the establishment of a biblical and theological magazine ; the utilization of the daily press for Christian news and evangelization.

The plan of organization proposed and finally carried

out was that the society should consist of nine members elected annually by the Federated Mission Conference, in groups of three for three years of service. The support of the society should come from those missions which approved the plan and whose supporting boards or societies authorized the payment to the Christian Literature Society of a sum amounting to ten yen (£1) per missionary in Japan. This plan, however, was not to go into operation until enough pledges had been made to bring up the total annual sum to not less than Y.4000 (£400).

The financial conditions were fulfilled in December, 1911, by the generous action of the United Brethren Mission, who were ready to pay more than their share that year in order that the Christian Literature Society might be started promptly. The Conference of the Federated Missions elected the required members at its annual meeting, and the society was fully organized immediately thereafter, January 5, 1912.

In December, 1911, as a result of several years of planning and consultation, the Japanese Church Federation was organized, and as it was an essential part of the original plan that the Christian Literature Society should work in closest co-operation with Japanese leaders, the Conference of the Federated Missions early in 1912 invited this Church Federation to appoint nine members as its committee on Christian literature and to provide for the support of a Japanese secretary who should give his entire time to the work. It also proposed that the two committees of nine members each should sit as a single body and carry on the work of the Christian Literature Society jointly. For financial reasons, however, the Church Federation did not see its way to the adoption of the proposed plan, but in place appointed three advisors, later increased by mission request to five.

The chief work accomplished by the Christian Literature Society during the year 1912 was the finding of someone to serve as its permanent executive secretary. Decision

was reached in July, and in December the Rev. S. H. Wainright, M.D., D.D., arrived in Japan to take up this work. As a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, he had spent twenty years in Japan, becoming well acquainted with the people and language. His broad scholarship, wide sympathies, and forceful personality also fit him peculiarly for this work.

During the year 1912, additional missions approved the general plan of the Christian Literature Society, bringing the number up to twenty-two out of the thirty missions connected with the Conference of Federated Missions.

The income of the society varies according to the variation in the number of missionaries in each mission, about £460 being expected for the current year (1913). This does not include Dr. Wainright's salary, which is provided by his mission board, nor that of Miss Dimmit (who has come as his private secretary), whose support is provided by friends. The funds thus at the disposal of the society will enable it to do a valuable service, but hardly warrant a very large program as yet. We naturally look at the Christian Literature Society for China and note that it had a budget of about £2500 for 1912, in addition to the salary of nine missionaries giving full time and two more giving part time to its work, whose salaries are provided by the various mission boards by which they were sent to China. The Christian Literature Society of Japan will evidently have to provide for a substantial increase both in its regular income and in its corps of workers before it can do the important work to which it is called.

The policy of the Christian Literature Society is naturally determined by the situation, and may be briefly stated in the following propositions.

1. The first need is a comprehensive survey and classification of existing Christian literature, for before planning for new translations and original work we need to know exactly what there is, and its quality and fitness in relation

to the present situation. There is at present no single catalogue combining the religious publications of the Christian and secular publishing houses (for it is an interesting fact that quite a number of important religious works have been published by non-Christian publishing houses). In view of the results of this investigation, the society should then lay out a program for the translation or production of works demanded by the situation.

2. The society proposes to set up a new standard of excellence in its translations. Only first-class work should be published under its name.

3. However valuable English or German books may be for the countries in which they are prepared, none of them fully meets the situation in Japan, for here occidental and oriental streams of thought are in contrast and often in collision. No apologetic work of occidental origin, however effective in the West, is fully intelligible and satisfactory to the oriental reader, nor is it sufficient to meet all his needs. For these reasons, one of the important duties of the society is to stimulate the production of able works prepared to meet the actual situation in Japan to-day. We must remember that Japan is rapidly growing intellectually as well as politically and industrially, and that consequently she needs a constant stream of new books adapted to the ever changing needs of students.

4. All this means, however, that this society must do its work in the closest and most cordial co-operation with the leaders of the Churches. The original works must largely come from their pens.

5. In view of the large work that needs to be done, it is evident that one important item in the work of the society is the raising of a more adequate income, and to that end every missionary body at work in Japan should become a regular supporter of the society. Now that we are actually under way, since every mission, large or small, receives the benefit of its work, should not each assume a share of the financial responsibility? And are there not individual

well-wishers of Japan in England and America who, recognizing the important place taken by effective Christian literature in the Christianization of a people, would be glad to promote this work by either annual subscriptions or single gifts of substantial sums ?

6. Inasmuch as this society is organized by the authority of many different denominations and is supported by them, it is evident that we have here a new manifestation of Christian union, and it is correspondingly clear that the policy governing the character of the books issued must be broadly catholic. The society as such stands for no particular form of Christianity ; it may issue books advocating various views. ' Neither its members nor those supporting it are to be regarded as necessarily holding all the views presented in the books issued.' But every work issued must come within the general provision under which the society was organized, namely, it must be fitted to overcome agnostic, materialistic, and pantheistic modes of thought, and must be scholarly in form, cogent in logic, theistic in its fundamental philosophical postulates, and in harmony with historical and evangelical Christianity.

We in Japan feel that with the organization of this society a new day has dawned on our Christian work. It is indeed only the dawn, but in its light we can now unitedly front the non-Christian world as never before. We can plan for a more masterful program than has hitherto been possible. In the long and arduous campaign that lies before the Christian forces ere Japan be won for Christ, it is becoming possible for us to co-operate as a single army having its many regiments. Many of us are earnestly praying that each branch of the Christian Church may see this vision of practical unity in service and may become a supporter of this forward movement of the Christian forces in Japan.

SIDNEY L. GULICK

## II. IN CHINA

By Christian literature we mean Christian treatises and the like written in the literary or journalistic language of any given land. There are certain features belonging to, and almost peculiar to, Christian literature in China which call for introductory remark.

The prominent place which letters have held in the Chinese imagination may be illustrated by the fact that, from of old, literary ability has been as closely associated with wisdom as, in the Hebrew mind, wisdom was associated with goodness. The position of the literary man has been a commanding one. Literary talent has been the accredited passport to spheres of counsellorship, magistracy, and statesmanship.

In general, the old literature of China is a collection of exhortations toward righteousness and good manners, with a practical tendency to encourage the student's faculties of moral discernment—until, in the case of the abler scholar, the struggle for official posts and perquisites robs him of his moral outlook and defeats his moral aspirations.

In particular, and for our present purpose, the whole literature of China may be classified as follows :

1. Standard exhortations (toward righteousness and good manners) for the right ordering of the realm : in classical works either (*a*) prior to Confucius and edited by him ; (*b*) containing his own sayings ; or (*c*) the sayings of his ancient followers.

2. Memorials to rulers for the right ordering of the realm : from the fourth century B.C. to the beginning of the seventeenth century A.D.

3. Hortative comments and speculations by philosophers outside the standard schools : mostly of the later centuries B.C.

4. *Belles-lettres*, in prose and poetry : of various epochs.

5. Historical records : from of old until the end of the Ming dynasty (1643 A.D.).

6. Treatises on arts and sciences, and cyclopaedias : from the eleventh to the eighteenth century A.D.

The two first mentioned are of closest importance to our subject : the Classics, as fixing the moral conceptions of the nation and forming the standard of literary composition ; and the Memorials, as affording models of writing for any public suasive purpose. In the former, we have the well of Chinese undefiled ; in the latter, the rushing stream turned to dynamic uses. For many reasons these two classes of Chinese literature must come under the full cognizance of the aspirant to Chinese literary composition.

In a non-Christian literary land it is important to ascertain whether the existing literature is to be regarded as a possible aid or a positive hindrance to the Christian missionary task. And of China it may be affirmed that its ancient literature is hardly at all inimical to Christian teaching ; at first a powerful rival, it has become more and more a useful ally to those Christian teachers who have familiarized themselves with its contents. But, on the other hand, the literary vehicle by which that subject-matter is conveyed tends to delimit the sphere of the Christian literary appeal.

The literary language of China was anciently formed in a region where slabs of stone and, later, slips of bamboo were the only convenient materials for permanent records. The writing instrument was a graver, first drawing slender lines, curved and rounded, upon the stone, and, later but still anciently, producing angular gashes upon the bamboo tablets, which gash-like strokes have been imitated by the brush-pen to this day. Both ancient methods being expensive, the utmost economy was used in the choice of words, and in process of time a language within a language was stately evolved for graving purposes. Discarding the extreme terseness of earliest days, this inner language, unfolded in the later Classics and expanded in the

Memorials, has latterly been adapted, by skilful combination, to meet all the needs of Chinese journalism.

But it has thus developed, as the one literary language for all China, in such sturdy aloofness from all local dialects that, from the earliest popular ode edited by Confucius to the latest leader on woman suffrage in a Chinese newspaper, the whole is set forth in a language that has never been spoken, in sentences addressed to the eye of the initiated, and (if read aloud) of no value to the ear unless translated by the reader into the vernacular.

Yet all Christian writings in Chinese aspiring to the name of literature, whether in books or magazines, must perforce be composed in this unique literary style known as Wen-li. For any message to the scholarly classes, the leaders of public opinion, to be presented in anything short of rhythmic Wen-li would be as suggestive of intentional insult as the case of the man who appeared at the royal feast (Matt. xxii. 11) without a court robe; or else as great a breach of manners as a sermon in a church would be if preached in bare shirt-sleeves.

Of late years, in certain churches, the once rigid requirements of manners have somewhat relaxed; and in some recent Chinese literature there is a certain amount of elasticity of style; but in both true morals are still associated with decorous manners, and will be for years to come.

The Christian message, then, delivered by means of literature in China is delimited (like the message of ancient classics or modern newspaper articles, official documents or business advertisements), as regards its direct influence, to the understanding of the more educated classes. And, on the other hand, such literature has been the only means of direct appeal to those classes at large. There is no caste in China, but there has been a very real aristocracy of letters which the new Republic will hardly at once abolish. And the members of that aristocracy, in taking their places above the masses, have taken their places beyond

the range of the more ordinary missionary methods which have the masses for their direct objective.

Yet the scholarly, as responsible gentry or officials, might not be left out of the plan of campaign. The evangelization of China's masses, apart from the scholarly classes, by citizens of European or American Powers planting themselves in every city and inland region, gave rise to grave suspicions, and produced a lack of equilibrium that was sufficiently emphasized in the grim object-lessons of officially-incited riots (from 1870 onwards), and the perilous insecurity of all mission workers throughout the land. Thus the production of Christian literature for the scholarly classes became an imperative necessity, in order to secure the continued possibility of any general evangelization of China.

Happily, this necessity was recognized by a few men of statesmanlike vision; and in the end, the success of the Christian literary campaign in dispelling official prejudice, and thus removing the cause of the riots, has been as conspicuous as was the failure of forcible reprisals from western Powers, which culminated in the great Boxer outbreak. Thus has Christian literature, delimited indeed in its immediate influence to the minds and hearts of the scholarly classes, begun to prove the wide range of its ultimate influence on the enterprise of Christian missions in China.

From a spiritual point of view, a motive and an achievement such as that of disarming prejudice may seem but a side issue. Is not the one object of Christian enterprise to bring men to the point of spiritual conversion, and active church membership: to life in Christ, and the prayer-life for the cause of Christ? Truly it is so. And a missionary has forgotten his commission itself when he forgets this one supreme object. But, in the prayerful pursuance of this object, much preliminary work may be required, in the face of deep-rooted habits of thought and complications of hindrance. And in this preliminary objective of Christian literature, that literature was brought into

line with the highest objective of old Chinese literature—the true ‘pacification of all below the skies.’

It had been ingrained in the Chinese mind that the great purpose of literature must be the right ordering of the realm; and for Christian treatises to be recognized as literature at all, in substance as well as form, it was required that they should point the way to national, as well as personal, salvation. The readers must find there what they knew China needed, if they were to accept what the writers were persuaded that these scholars themselves needed. Not indeed from that reason so much as from the dire needs of China at large, in its ignorance of the necessary laws of nature, of public health, of internal administration, and of international relations, the Christian literary men, in their mission to Chinese literary men, were constrained to set forth the best wisdom which the West had gained on these subjects.

The relief of a small percentage of famine-stricken ones being a Christian task, the prevention of famines was seen to be *a fortiori* a Christian task also. The healing of a small percentage of disease among the poverty-stricken being a Christian task, the prevention of avoidable epidemics was seen to be also a Christian task. There were yet more widely national problems calling for their aid, and we remember that the apostolic evangel, proclaimed in the midst of states rotting to dissolution, was almost exclusively spiritual and other-worldly. But, away beyond the impending chaos, the latest survivor of the apostolic band saw, in assured vision, the heavenly realm becoming God’s city-state upon earth, the type of the renovated earth-realms of the far future. And the eyes of the far-seeing in China, among the missionary writers and translators, were filled with that vision also.

As in the West a measure of social service has been included in the full Christian programme, so in the East the task of national uplift has been included in the full mission programme. And this is guarded by a further consideration.

Schemes for the prevention of epidemics and famines, plans of social amelioration and the like, might have been, perhaps would have been, introduced into China in the course of years apart from any pioneer work by missionary writers. And now China, with the aid of that pioneer work, may be on the eve of great reforms in these directions; although the unkempt condition of towns and cities a few miles from the more progressive centres, in this second year of the Republic, forcibly belies the anticipation. But out of the Christian programme of national reform springs a most definite task for Christian literature, namely: to enforce the fact that a nation cannot live by material and social progress alone; to explain the insufficiency of all social improvements short of the highest and most inward of all; to proclaim (as Confucius did, but in clearer strain) that national exaltation depends on righteousness; to define that righteousness by Christian philosophy, to declare the sovereignty of the God of righteousness, to expose the inward disease of unrighteousness, to expound the work and magnify the grace of Jesus Christ the righteous.

It is for Christian literature in China to add the true spiritual horizon to minds of materialistic outlook, and to bring into focus the one source of spiritual aid. And this is the more necessary from the fact that, soon after literary missionaries began to awaken the demand for works bearing on social progress, certain Japanese translators, working together with Chinese scholars in Japan, took advantage of the new demand to flood the Chinese book-market with cheap literature of a rationalistic sort, which, in utopian guise, had a marked tendency toward the disintegration of all things that build up a nation.<sup>1</sup>

At the start, the Christian literary producer had the

<sup>1</sup> One result of such literature has been the formation of a Chinese League of Urgent Socialists, now boasting a membership of some tens of thousands and reporting daily additions, with a monthly magazine on which are displayed, as radiating from the name of the League, the mottoes: *No Family. No Religion. No Government. Freedom. Equality. Unrestrained Love. Each putting forth his entire faculties. Each taking what he needs. Individual self-rule. The world homogeneous.*

Chinese market in his own hands. Now, he is one of a crowd of producers, in some danger of being crowded out from his chosen sphere. A while before the Revolution he was less popular among students than free-lance writers, from his aversion to political upset. And now that the officials of the older régime have retired from power, he has lost his best supporters. Young China prefers, at present, to write and read its own thoughts.

The problem of how to gain readers for those books which are 'the precious life-blood of a master spirit,' rather than for books which most reflect the reader's own passions and fancies, is a problem in most civilized countries. It would be strange if no such problem arose in New China. And at the present moment, the demand for Christian books among non-Christian readers by no means exceeds the supply.

But as, apart from novels, the literature which sells most in the West is issued largely in magazine form, so in China magazines are publications whose sales far exceed any book-sales except those of the Scriptures. And the magazines of general contents issued by Christian societies, being either of monthly or weekly issue and bound as fully as Chinese books are bound, are not cast aside after hurried reading as are the Chinese daily papers, but are cherished or passed on to others as much as any complete volumes would be. The immediate future, then, of the Christian output for general reading lies with the magazine editors. And a more or less satisfactory demand for standard books themselves is to be hoped for in time.

Meanwhile, there is an increasing demand for Christian literature among the growing number of educated Chinese preachers. These worthy men are engaged in pouring forth Christian thought and argument, in a conversational and genial fashion, for several hours of each week-day; and many of them have also to fill the pulpit on Sundays. No human mind, certainly no Chinese mind, can retain its freshness of output without some freshness of intake. And while it

is recognized that a preacher's chief place of receptiveness is the Mercy Seat, and his chief literature the Scriptures themselves, yet, if a western preacher needs his library, it is manifest that a newly-fledged Chinese preacher (in regions where missions are but of yesterday) may need Bible study books to aid his understanding, and a supply of new Christian treatises to stimulate his powers of thought.

Western producers of Chinese literature are, of course, working for their own ultimate extinction. As things are, there is much native work in the material they publish. No western producer, even though he write in Wen-li (and the common method is to dictate to a Chinese scribe in colloquial, for him to translate into Wen-li), can hope to prepare literature for print without the retouching of a skilled Chinese stylist.<sup>1</sup> And by association with his western colleague in producing, the Chinese scribe may perchance be learning to produce by himself. Here and there, also, an educated Chinese preacher of a thoughtful turn of mind may be training himself to write his own thoughts for some church magazine where the requirements of literary style are not very rigid.

Indeed, of the dozen church magazines in China, issued expressly for members, the contents at present are either half or mostly or entirely from Chinese pens. This is a mark of progress which has its cheering side. But in as far as those Chinese contributions are personal ones and not based on translations, they cease to embody fresh thought from the West. And in place of that import of new material, perfervid exhortations to patriotism have come into vogue. In one church magazine some anti-foreign blemishes have been detected; and in another

<sup>1</sup> The requirements of Chinese literary style are such that, in English literature, only such compositions as the *Letters of Junius* and Gray's *Elegy* would pass muster. In general, our clauses are lacking in crispness and our sentences too long for exact translation. And to become a Chinese Junius or Gray requires an unusual degree of talent among Chinese scholars themselves—hence the high rewards which, from of old, have been given for attainment.

Christian periodical, managed by Chinese, a blatant jingoism has been urged as a duty that over-rides all questions of principle. Such defects, however, may be regarded as passing symptoms of the hysteria that lingers awhile after 'the inauguration of the world's most populous and greatest Republic.'

When all has been said, then, the task of the western producer of Christian literature is by no means yet at an end.

The term Christian literature is sometimes stretched to include the whole of the printed matter issued in China for Christian purposes. And while some of the older tract societies (following the example of Morrison and Milne) publish volumes of Christian literature properly so called, it is the special province of those societies in general to issue a popular series of booklets and folders and sheet-tracts in easy language for those of slight education, thus following up the appeals in the preaching halls, and becoming 'a voice in the wilderness' where the voice of the preacher is unheard.

Happily, for this purpose, there is in China everywhere, side by side with the Wen-li, an easier written language little removed from the spoken dialect; a language which, if mostly devoid of literary grace, is fairly intelligible to the listener when read aloud. For three-fourths of China this popular script follows the Mandarin dialect, in the south the Cantonese dialect, in other parts a local *patois*. The Scriptures have long been translated into Mandarin and other Chinese dialects as well as into Wen-li. And the great bulk of the buyers of Christian letter-press are, naturally, found among the masses.

Supplemented by an army of faithful colporteurs, and fortified with grants-in-aid, the three Bible societies and nine tract societies are carrying their low-priced yet priceless booklets into the towns and villages everywhere. Their total output is enormous, and the only policy they

need to hold is that of keeping pace with the ever-increasing demand.

W. ARTHUR CORNABY

*Postscript.* A word should be added on the future of Wen-li. With centuries of literary traditions behind them, the Chinese will not cease to be literary. But 'art for art's sake' in writing will be modified by utilitarian considerations. Strictly classical Wen-li will cease to be current, for the Classics are no longer included in any modern curriculum. They will be studied by scholars of classical taste, as the Latin classics are studied in Italy. The new generation, now in the junior schools, will be able to read modern Wen-li with little pains, but will be unable to write it as written at present. And so the Wen-li of modern journalism must, in turn, cease to be current. In its place there will be evolved a new literary medium, akin to that already adopted in some of the novels, of Mandarin construction with an added vocabulary from Wen-li sources. But this will be the work of a generation or two, for the Mandarin dialect must first become the standard language in the south and south-eastern provinces, before it becomes the ruling element in Chinese literature.

### III. IN INDIA

CHRISTIAN literature, whether in English or in the vernaculars, forms one of the most valuable channels of missionary work in India. As an auxiliary agency it renders indispensable service to every missionary society both in the task of making known the message of the Gospel and defending it from misrepresentation, and also in the even more important task of building up the faith and character of the Christian Church. One of the most alert of observers in India—Mr. Andrews of Delhi—in a recent publication, speaking specially of the evangelization of the educated classes, emphasizes two directions in which extension is necessary: the training of Christian teachers and the publication of Christian literature. These two needs are no less urgent from the point of view of the future of the Indian Christian Church. Whether we are wielding the sword or the trowel, whether presenting the Gospel to those who are without or seeking to unfold its meaning more fully to those who are within the Church,

the service that Christian literature may render is of the greatest importance. While that is unquestionably the case, we find at the same time that perhaps no department of Christian effort in India suffers so greatly from lack of system and co-operation between the workers as does this. Though few fields afford better opportunity for united effort, and though here a lack of co-ordination and organization is peculiarly wasteful, as a matter of fact these evils are present in this department of missionary work more perhaps than anywhere else. Several men in different parts of India may be giving all the strength and time that they can spare to the preparation of books of the same kind and addressed to the same audience, when a general editor might have co-ordinated their work and guided their energies into more useful channels. Dictionaries of the Bible and commentaries are being, in all probability, prepared independently in various vernaculars, whereas unity of plan would greatly economize the effort expended and produce better results in all the languages. Magazines and newspapers compete with each other, and are only able to maintain a struggling existence, when amalgamation would secure a far wider audience and far higher efficiency. These are only a few of the more obvious ways in which in this department of missionary work there is under present conditions serious and unnecessary waste.

If we consider the literature that is needed in India from the point of view of its character, we may say that it is mainly of two kinds, the literature of evangelization on the one hand and that which seeks to strengthen and upbuild the Christian Church on the other. If we consider it from the point of view of the language in which it is written, we may say that while for the former type of literature both English and the vernaculars are required, yet on the whole the most important medium for literature addressed to a non-Christian audience is English. For the Christian Church, on the other hand, a special literature

in English is hardly necessary. Practically all the resources of the Christian experience of the world are at the disposal of those in the Christian Church who can make use of the English language. The need in this case is for a vernacular Christian literature. The Church in India must, we recognize, be a truly Indian Church, rooted in the soil and nourishing its spiritual life through its vernacular speech. The general standard of vernacular literacy within the Christian Church is considerably higher than it is outside, so that, given a love for reading such as the Church must assiduously cultivate in her members, practically the whole of the Christian community in India can be reached through vernacular books, and by that means can be greatly deepened and strengthened in their faith. At the same time, if this vernacular literature is of the high literary quality of which it ought to be, it should deepen as well the love that the Christians feel for their own land and their own language. Christianity will do nothing certainly to weaken this affection, and the religious experience that it conveys will find natural expression in the common speech of the people. In the case of non-Christians the larger proportion of the population that read with enjoyment read English, and therefore the main—though not by any means the only—avenue of apologetic approach to India is the English language. To this large section of the population Christianity presents itself alongside of other invaders from the West—science, philosophy, religion—and in every comparison of it with them English is the natural medium that is employed. Not only so, but the more philosophical Hinduism, in claiming, as it does, a place beside and even above these doctrines, has nowadays assumed an English garb and makes free use of English in its discussions. The *Bhagavadgita*, for example, has perhaps a wider circulation among Indians in English than in Sanscrit. As a result it is especially in English that the battle of ideas is being and will be fought in Indian religion.

In their broadest outlines these are the chief needs of India in the sphere of Christian literature to-day, and whichever we consider they appear to be urgent with an urgency that has as yet been very insufficiently recognized. The religious unsettlement of the present time gives, it is obvious, a special and critical importance to the production of authoritative apologies addressed to the Indian mind and taking account of the Indian point of view. There is movement and questioning and the awakening of thought on every side, and in such an hour Christian literature, especially that which is addressed to the most thoughtful classes, has its opportunity. The struggle of old and new, the strain of heart and brain that the new ideas are producing, the restlessness and ferment of young India, bring to us a call and challenge that can find in Christian literature a peculiarly fitting response. Many of those in whose spirits there is deep disquietude and questioning are likely to be reached by the quiet study of a book where other influences would never touch them. Christian literature produced in English should present the public defence and exposition of the Christian religion, seeking to meet and overthrow current objections and to satisfy prevailing hopes and longings. Its defence of the Christian message will be largely an endeavour to re-state it in language which to the Indian reader will be fresh and living. It should move in the region of Indian ideas and reveal Christ as purifying and controlling and fulfilling them. Surely that is a great task, and a task at present urgent. We have come in India to a corresponding period to that of the Christian apologists in the early Church, and we need great interpreters of the faith to India of the type of Origen on the one hand and of the type no less of Tertullian on the other.

We must remember that there are others seeking, some perhaps more assiduously than we, to win their way by this avenue to the ear and heart of India. Each one of the theistic samajes has its newspaper; the organ of the

Central Hindu College spreads the influence of theosophy far and wide over India; scarcely a sect but has its magazine. In the opinion of Mr. Andrews the present stage of Indian reading is 'the pamphlet stage, in some way like the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England.' Again it is significant to see in the shop of one of the leading booksellers in Bombay great cases filled with the publications of the Rationalist Press Association, and still more sadly significant to know that far from reputable English and French novels go off from his shelves, as he says 'like hot cakes,' depraving an appetite that must find something upon which to feed. The whole tendency of a large portion of that literature—both of what is produced in India and of what is imported—is strongly anti-Christian. It is operating continually to make dull and dead that quick religious sense that from immemorial time has been India's glory and that still to-day is India's hope. And further, apart from the need for a defence of Christian truth against these misrepresentations of it, it has to be remembered, as Mr. Farquhar has pointed out,<sup>1</sup> that Christianity requires a literary presentation far more than any of the Indian sects that are often so active in this field, for the reason that its principles and its whole atmosphere are often as strange to the Indian mind as those of these indigenous doctrines are congenial.

By the last census the number of those literate in English is given as 1,670,387, and that is a number that is growing with continually increasing rapidity. The colleges in existence all over India are over-crowded, and demands are being made on every side for new colleges and universities. Those who are literate in the vernaculars number eighteen and a half millions, and here a still greater proportional increase is certain within the next few years. A vigorous effort is being made by the Government to remove to some extent the reproach that seems to be

<sup>1</sup> *Young Men of India*, Feb. 1913, p. 85.

involved in the very high proportion of illiteracy that still remains in India after all its years of western government. But when we are considering the possible extent of influence exercised by vernacular literature in this country, we have to remember that that need not by any means be limited to the actual readers of the printed page. One could see at the height of the political unrest how in remote villages all the leading inhabitants would gather round the one among them who could read, to listen to the political news of the day. That is why editors have been exercising so great an influence in recent Indian history. So Mr. Clayton tells how in South India the cheap vernacular newspaper passes from hand to hand till it falls to pieces.<sup>1</sup>

But in the production of vernacular literature the first aim is the edification of the Church, and the main source of inspiration the religious experience of the Christian believer. It is in this region especially that we must look for really creative work and work of inspiration. And in the measure in which these appear they will find an immensely wider audience than the Christian community itself and will carry a convincing witness far beyond its borders. If the Christian Church is alive and if the faith of Christ has sunk deep into Indian hearts it will, if there is any truth in the analogy of the past, break forth in spontaneous literary expression. It must express itself and it will grow in depth and self-comprehension just as it so expresses itself. That is what the history of religious revival in the past in India teaches us. Vaishnavism in Bengal, Shiva Bhakti in South India, the religious revival of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Maharashtra — each one of these expressed itself in a great literary efflorescence which was at once the evidence of a spiritual quickening and a great means of its spread and growth. As the songs of the Maratha and Tamil and Bengali poet saints carried all over the land their message, so should

<sup>1</sup> *Year Book of Missions in India*, 1912, p. 331.

the records of the experience of the Indian Christian saints of to-day and their testimonies to the meaning of their faith. In India hitherto such experience has always expressed itself spontaneously, to an even greater extent than is the case in religious awakenings in western lands, in song which passes from lip to lip and is treasured, as are the songs of Tukaram in the Maratha country, in the hearts of millions who have no skill to read or write. So even to-day the songs of the living Bengali poet, Rabindranath Tagore, are said to be widely known through all Bengal among the common people, so that, in the words of W. B. Yeats, 'travellers hum them on the highway and men rowing upon rivers.' It is noticeable that the samaj movements have been as yet comparatively barren in vernacular religious literature, and especially in literature of this class. It is because they have not touched the Indian heart. But that assuredly is not the case with the Christian message and we ought to have ever increasing evidence of it. No means could be more effective for the bringing of the Kingdom to India.

It may be said that such a literary renaissance will come spontaneously and cannot be artificially produced, and that of course is true. What we can see to, however, is that hindrances are taken out of the way, that all who feel the call to literary expression shall be encouraged, and that facilities shall be given for the publication and for the dissemination as widely as possible of such literature. To take a single example, the Maratha country has one outstanding poet at present, who is at the same time a Christian whose gift is entirely dedicated to the service of his Master. Mr. N. V. Tilak's poems have a wide influence and circulation, but these might be wider were they not sometimes published by obscure presses and were it not that it is often difficult to procure them. Mr. Tilak is at present completing a long and important poem on the life of Christ—a 'Christayana,' as he calls it—which has occupied him for a number of years. It is greatly to be

desired that this work should be published under proper auspices, so that it may exercise as widely as possible the influence that in this land of religious poetry it is capable of exercising. This is only a single instance of the attitude that should be adopted to every living expression of our faith in the language of the people, such as is likely to win a way to men's hearts. There should be someone to whom those who feel moved to such expression would naturally turn for help and guidance.

We have to remember that the standard of literacy within the Christian community is already high and is steadily rising. It is the part of the Church to cultivate in its members a love of reading. No doubt the love of books grows only slowly and many are content with their Bible and hymn book and prayer book. But there are others, and an increasing number, who read, and if there are few Christian books in their own language, or if these are dull and unattractive in style, they will read such other books as they can find, bad as likely as good. Western novels are appearing now in Marathi as in other vernaculars, but they are adapted to Indian circumstances and are given, in place of whatever Christian atmosphere they may have originally possessed, a Hindu tone and setting. The list of books for the exposition of the Bible and for the nourishment of the spiritual life that are to be found in some at least of the great Indian vernaculars is a pitifully brief one. What has been said by Mr. Clayton of Tamil Christian literature is an enormous understatement of the case when applied to most other vernaculars, that 'the amount of reading matter inspired by Christian ideals likely to interest a man and claim from him attention that he would otherwise give to less healthy and even utterly depraved books is by no means adequate.'<sup>1</sup>

When we consider the means that are at present in existence to supply this great and varied need, we find

<sup>1</sup> *Year Book of Missions in India*, 1912, p. 333.

that in the department of literature in English by far the largest part of the work is being done by the Christian Literature Society of Madras. One can scarcely exaggerate the importance and the value of the service that this society has rendered by the work done by Dr. Murdoch in the past, and by the work that is being done in the very different circumstances of to-day. To the literature addressed to Mohammedans a peculiarly valuable contribution is being made under the guidance of Canon Sell, and for this not India alone but all Mohammedan lands are the debtors of this society. There is an energy and alertness in the management of this society's affairs which show that heavy as is its task its promoters are not dismayed. Here we have already an admirable nucleus round which the new efforts which are called for should be gathered. But no one will suggest that such new efforts are not required. One man in a single centre cannot appreciate all the variety of need that a whole continent such as India is presents and cannot direct and advise in the supplying of these needs. But while this work must be multiplied and must have more than one focus point, it must not cease to be co-ordinated and systematized. This department of Christian literature, for the reason that it has been mainly concentrated in one place and under one control, has at least preserved some elements of order in its production. When we turn to the vernaculars, however, it seems in the case of many of them as if chaos had come again. There are often three societies carrying on with the slenderest resources unrelated and haphazard effort side by side—the Tract and Book Society, the vernacular branch of the Christian Literature Society, and the S.P.C.K. The result is that not nearly what needs to be done or what might be done is being accomplished. Every one of these societies is inevitably hampered by lack of funds, and scarcely less so by a lack of those who can give time and thought to the encouragement and guidance of this work. Everything is done at haphazard

and by those who can only afford to give odds and ends of their time to the important questions that arise. Manuscripts cannot be examined as promptly and as carefully as is desirable, and if, for lack of time to consider them or of money for their publication, that publication is long delayed, authors cannot be expected to feel encouraged to further effort.

To remedy what is unsatisfactory in the present position of Christian literature both in English and in the vernaculars, it is evident that what is needed first and last is that order and system should take the place of the present unorganized and discordant methods. At almost all the Continuation Committee conferences held in India, and especially at the national conference at Calcutta, the need of clear thinking in this direction was earnestly urged and in that connexion two suggestions were made that are of primary importance. These suggestions aim at securing for this work first men and secondly money. The men that are needed are of various types and for various purposes. In the first place there should be in every language area a missionary specially set apart for the purpose 'of stimulating and guiding writers of vernacular literature.' It should also be possible that 'individual Indians and Europeans, who are fitted for the task, should be set free for definite periods to prepare literature.' Further, by means of fellowships and in other ways, an effort should be made to turn missionary colleges and theological institutions into centres of literary activity. But to set apart men for this work without money to enable the work to be done would only be to break their hearts. Therefore it was resolved 'that the home committees of the various societies engaged in the production and distribution of Christian literature in India and also those missions in India that print and publish literature, should be invited to provide such liberal grants for the work as would render it less dependent on its success from a purely business point of view.'

If these things are done then a new era may be looked

for in Indian Christian literature. The great apology that the hour demands will, we hope, be produced. In the Indian Church the hungry sheep will no longer look up and not be fed. But only common action by the various missionary societies can accomplish what is aimed at. That such common action is possible is shown by the fact that a Tamil literary missionary jointly supported by the missions in the Tamil area has been doing most valuable work in this direction for a number of years. When we remember how much certain books have done for the Church through all the centuries, books that have entered into men's hearts and passed into their blood and come down to us as an inheritance of life and strength and inspiration, we should surely feel compelled to do all we can to place this means of enrichment at the disposal of the growing Indian Christian community.

NICOL MACNICOL