

CHRISTIANITY IN AWAKENED CHINA.

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Through more than three millenniums of authentic history the Chinese race remained almost stationary in the chief elements of its civilization. An extended inquiry into the explanation of this unique phenomenon would be full of interest. But the purpose of this paper is to attempt a partial analysis of the present unparalleled transformation of one-fourth of the earth's population, and especially to show something of the past and present relation of Christianity to this change.

The Chinese have been grossly caricatured. Individual peculiarities have been overdrawn and called characteristics. No people have been more thoroughly misrepresented by too hasty generalization. Chinese differ from other races, but in many respects only superficially. They are sons of Adam and thoroughly human. A Chinese gentleman, who was surprised when told that all foreigners were not alike in appearance, was greatly amused when told that in America most people thought that all Chinese were alike. These people are of a distinct general type, but the important fact to seize upon, if we are to understand them, is that they are essentially like us, of one blood with us.

The important racial characteristics, products of centuries of isolation, are not easily segregated. The Chinese, as compared with other races, are pre-eminently patient, unemotional, peaceable and industrious. There are, however, impatient, quarrelsome and lazy Chinese, millions of them. Confucianism, especially its veneration of elders and worship of ancestors, is sometimes said to be the cause of China's "arrested development". It has been rather the preserving element in her civilization. Respect for authority, submission of younger to elder, the desire to preserve inviolate the ancestral inheritance, and other things inculcated by the great sage, have naturally developed the special Chinese traits. While Confucianism has,

in some respects, cursed, it has also conserved China. In so far as ancestral worship has usurped God's place and opposed the truth, it has stood in the way of China's progress, but in so far as it has prevented the ingress of baser forces, it has been a power for good and should not be hastily condemned wholesale. China's "arrested development" is to be explained more by the absence of certain forces, or a certain force, than by the presence of any particular cult.

The fact is that China's civilization for millenniums remained static because she was hemmed in by inferior races; she was thrown back upon herself, and settled down for her long period of national contentment, with justifiable contempt for the inferior races that surrounded her.

I.

The nineteenth century saw many breaks made in the cordon of darkness that surrounded China at the end of the eighteenth century. The events of recent years have been scarcely less than cataclysmic. China's erstwhile pupils and dependents are becoming her teachers. Chinese institutions and customs, products of the day of haughty exclusiveness, are giving way to those more in keeping with the new day. There is evidence, not merely of the fact that China is awake, but that she realizes some of her new responsibilities and opportunities.

The haughty Confucian scholar, at the top of China's social scale, is now willing to join hands with the merchant, who is at the bottom of the scale, and even with the soldier, who formerly was reckoned unworthy of classification. Members of the Hanlin Academy, China's choicest scholars, are put upon various boards whose special duties are to develop the country's resources. The first railway was torn up and transported to an island in the Yellow Sea, and there left to rot and rust. The 200 miles of China's railways of fifteen years ago are now more than 5,000. The Imperial and Provincial governments are fostering commercial enterprises of all kinds. Hankow-Hanyang-Wuchang, really one city, divided only by the waters of

the Yangtze and Han rivers, is rapidly becoming one of the greatest manufacturing centers of the world. The Hanyang Iron Works together with associated mines, employs over 20,000 men. In the city of Canton, half a dozen tall chimneys have recently risen over the great semi-government cement and brick works, that cost half a million dollars. A mere catalogue of similar establishments, and plans for the development of China's untold resources, would take us far beyond the limits of this paper.

The buildings of the Government Normal School in this city would rank high even when compared with those of our great American and English educational centers. Only five years ago on their site stood 7,500 old examination stalls. The Imperial edict of September, 1905, was the signal for the destruction of these, as well as of many tens of thousands in other parts of China. Was there ever a more revolutionary edict? It was potentially the intellectual awakening of four hundred millions of people. For one-half of the four hundred millions it was creative rather than revolutionary. Schools for Chinese women and girls! "*Mirabile dictu! Mirabilissima actu!*"

The people are coming to have a voice in the government of China. Unlike the movement in Japan, reform here commenced with the masses. Like a tide it rose and would have swept away the Manchu throne if the astute old Empress Dowager had not, in the eleventh hour, realized the futility of further resistance. She lived to sanction edicts more radical than those of the ill-fated Kwang Su, which precipitated the *coup d' état* of 1898. Provincial assemblies have already been held. A national Assembly was convened last month (October, 1910). A parliament has been promised. The danger is not from the reactionary party, but from the ultra-progressive. The Manchus have crossed their Rubicon, not willingly, but forced over by the clamoring throngs whom they claim to rule. With the changed attitude of the Confucianist towards the soldier, due to the stress of circumstances, and with awakening patriotism, due to the enforced changed attitude of the foreign Manchu dynasty, the Chinese are preparing to give a good account of

themselves as soldiers. Alas that a revival of militarism must follow the impact of Western civilization!

Probably no country on earth, no race of people since the creation of man, has changed so much, so rapidly, or so radically, in the same length of time, as China and the Chinese have changed during the last decade. No phase of life remains unaffected. Means of communication and transportation, social relations, politics and religion, all already bear the impress of the new order. There are many crudities in this rapid transformation, but it is scarcely possible to exaggerate the significance of one-quarter of the human race coming suddenly into possession of the products of the ages, wholesale, good, bad and indifferent, without having to pursue the slow and painful paths of invention and discovery. One often compares these people to children with toys. But although they have many traits of childhood, they are virile, and intellectually not to be despised by even Anglo-Saxons. They are awake. They are emerging from the darkness of age-long isolation. Their country, in natural resources, is probably the richest on the globe. Whither now? Will the Chinese get, are they getting, the civilization of the West without its throbbing, vitalizing heart? Are they embracing Christianity? Will China become a Christian country?

II.

What aroused China? Why has she cut loose from her age-long moorings? Why is she turning her back upon customs and institutions, the origin of which lies back of authentic history? The China-Japan and Russo-Japanese wars, and the Boxer movement, synchronized with and accelerated China's awakening. But we must get back further and go down deeper to find the cause of the awakening of this great nation. A most alert, intelligent Chinese scholar recently said with the emphasis of profound conviction: "All the transformation of China is due to Christianity." Secondary causes of China's transformation are legion. As one would explain the progress of the West so he would explain the awakening of China.

China's awakening and the impact of the West upon her civilization are contemporaneous. Do certain conditions in China and America, in old China and new China, vary with the knowledge of the true God? The situation is far too complex to admit of a mathematical demonstration, but the things that are apparent form a cumulative argument in favor of a positive answer to the question.

There is something about every man from so-called (alas!) Christian lands that marks him as in some respects superior, and this superiority is felt by the Chinese, with mingled contempt. It is easy to point out how evil lives have made missionary work more difficult, but it should not be forgotten that much of what even wicked men do counts on the right side. Sewing machines and railways, spool cotton and cotton cloth, clocks and condensed milk, wire nails and kerosene, telephones and rubber shoes, all have indirect relation to the missionary's work, as well as a direct relation to his comfort. Christian civilization produced these things. Some business men in China have done, and others are doing aggressive Christian work, and some have also contributed liberally to mission work. Many foreigners in China are adventurers. Almost all came here with no higher purpose than that of making money. Military and naval men, diplomats and other government officials, represent a less selfish type of motive. Some foreigners in the employ of the Chinese government have wielded exceptional influence for good. All foreigners have contributed to the awakening of this country. But the special points to be emphasized are, (1) that the element of enlightenment brought by non-missionary foreigners is distinctly Christian, and (2) that few, if any, have come here with the purpose to help China.

Morrison came to China to bring Christianity to the Chinese, and his successors have constantly aimed to make China a Christian nation. Probably not one missionary of the appointees of regular missionary boards has come to China with even the secret purpose of making money. Some who have made considerable money here, have spent it freely as they have

spent their lives for the enlightenment of these people. All the substrata of this nation's life are being affected by Christian ideas. Only a few of the outward manifestations may be mentioned.

Since the coming of Christian missionaries, many purely native societies have been organized, to run hospitals, and various eleemosynary institutions, and to care for distressed people in times of fire, flood, famine and pestilence, and much valuable work has been done by them. The Chinese assistant editor of our Baptist magazine, "True Light", secured a copy of the constitution of each such society in Canton, and traced the origin of all, step by step, back to a semi-Christian organization in Hong Kong, and to another society in Shanghai, the organization of which was due directly to missionary influence. There were no such organizations prior to the coming of missionaries.

The Anti-Foot-Binding Society, organized and fostered by the Christian wife of a business man, largely successful mainly because encouraged by missionaries throughout China, may be put down as a by-product of Christian work. Likewise, too, we may speak of the anti-opium movement, for it is most indebted to the Anti-Opium League which was organized by missionaries.

As Paul elevated and ennobled the Greek language—witness what he did for one word *ἀγάπη* in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians—so here the missionaries from Morrison down, the Chinese preachers and native Christians, have put a new spirit into many degenerate words of this language. The Chinese words for love, faith, truth, and righteousness, and many others, mean more because of the preaching of Christianity and the circulation of Christian literature. Of all the foreigners in China only the missionaries have purposely pursued a course that must inevitably produce such a result. The "Peking Gazette" is probably the oldest periodical in the world, but modern Chinese periodical literature, both a product and a factor of the new order, owes most to missionaries.

The great Viceroy, Chang Chi-tung, became acquainted with the work of women missionaries at Canton, Nanking, and

Wuchang, and when Viceroy at the latter place, about ten years ago, he expressed to his secretary the wish that the Chinese government might engage large numbers of foreign women to teach Chinese girls and women, but it was agreed that it was not then expedient. It is significant that soon after Chang Chi-tung is found at Peking as a close adviser to the Regent, an edict is issued ordering the establishing of schools for women and girls throughout the Empire. Here is a tangible connection between missionary work and one of the most radical reforms in China.

The introduction of Western medicine and surgery into China is due almost entirely to Christian missionaries. Hundreds of hospitals have been built. The parent one of all was established in Canton in 1838. Unnumbered sufferers have been relieved and many thousands of lives have been saved. The virtue of quinine is appreciated probably in almost every hamlet of the Empire. Vaccination is very generally practiced. Much has been done and is being done independent of missionaries but almost all has come as the result of missionary work. Preaching and healing were united by Jesus. Both are works of salvation. The preacher in China has no more powerful ally than the doctor-surgeon, whose work is quickly appreciated by the practical Chinese. This is still the greatest field for medical missionary work in the world.

The church and the school are closely related here as everywhere else. Christian schools, ranging from primary to the beginnings of universities, have been established in many parts of the Empire, and the total number of pupils must now be written in six figures. Some missionaries hold that mission schools should aim primarily to serve the Christian constituency; others that they should aim chiefly to influence non-Christians. The two opinions shade into each other. The writer's growing conviction is that Christian schools can most effectively influence non-Christians by aiming primarily to serve the Christian constituency. They can be, and should be, the best in China. They cannot be their best without being openly and distinctly Christian. Some missionaries and mis-

sion advocates in America deplore the fact that the Chinese government refuses to recognize graduates from Christian schools. But is this an unmixed evil, if an evil at all? The highest service for Christian educators here, as in America, is not in government schools, but in Christian schools. Our special concern should be to provide sufficient teachers for our own schools. We should press direct evangelistic work among government students, rather than aim to educate men for government positions. The missionary educational situation in China demands, and offers, unsurpassed opportunities to Christian educators of the best type—the best type, both of Christian and educator.

It would be difficult to overestimate the value of the great volume of literature that has been prepared and circulated by missionaries in China. The titles of tracts and books now go into thousands, and include, besides the Scriptures, which, of course, lead, evangelistic tracts, commentaries, theological and educational treatises, books for Christians, and numerous textbooks for schools, translations, adaptations and original productions. The influence of the swelling streams of literature has flowed and is flowing from mission presses, breaking up into innumerable rivulets and brooks, flowing not as water, but up and into every town, village, hamlet, high up into hidden mountain homes, penetrating where neither missionary nor native evangelist could enter, even into the palace of the emperor, into studies of the haughty "*litterati*", and into the huts of the humblest students, into monastery and nunnery, into the inner courts of women, and into official yamen, everywhere silent, everywhere efficient. These streams have probably done more than anything else to stir in the Chinese the discontent that makes for progress. Probably most of the Christian literature in China is transient, but the sum total of that which will abide is already considerable. The influence of the whole is greater today than ever. One definite influence of Christian literature is that books in the language of the common people are coming to be held in honor. The exigencies of the present call for much new Christian literature.

Agnostic and anti-Christian books are pouring into China, especially by the way of Japan. Chinese, driven out of the trenches of superstition and idolatry, will retire into the fortifications of Confucian agnosticism. Western materialism will serve to strengthen them in their new position. Confucius was not a materialist. Christianity in China needs a new apologetic literature. It must ultimately come from Chinese. But there is a large place here for consecrated foreign talent of the highest order to prepare, and for consecrated money to print, the needed literature.

The foolishness of preaching has demonstrated in China, as elsewhere, the wisdom of Him who ordained it to be *the* method of extending His Kingdom. There are probably ten thousand buildings in China set apart for the preaching of the gospel. Most of them are small, ill-built structures, many of them are rented stores, but, even at that, they are usually the cleanest and most attractive houses in the villages and towns. A service of some kind is held almost daily—often several services a day—in every one of these buildings, and the audiences vary from a half-dozen or so up to hundreds, occasionally a thousand and more. The living Word, throbbing with the living faith of the speaker, comes to Chinese hearers with the same peculiar effectiveness that it does to American hearers, and did to Paul's hearers. Think of the streams of people that flow through these chapels in a day! Multiply the 10,000 by the 100 souls, on an average, and then by 300 days, and what is your total for the year? Not only in the 10,000 buildings set apart for that purpose, but under the trees, outside countless villages, in front of temples, in the market places, from the deck of native house-boats, to throngs on shore, at rest-sheds on pedestrian thoroughfares, to fisher folk mending their nets, to farmers in their fields, the message has been delivered by foreign missionaries and native evangelists. Christianity in China, as in Palestine, is much out of doors, as it should be everywhere. All this preaching means information, inspiration, agitation and stimulation. It is an unspeakable delight to see souls, often even upon the first hearing, respond to God's message.

The direct aim of all Christian missionary work here is to win Chinese to Christ. Mark the words, "to win", and "to Christ". No Protestant missionary wants unwilling or insincere converts. Probably a quarter of a million Chinese are now members of Protestant churches. At least a million more are so related to these that they may be called adherents. They are scattered unevenly all over the Empire. The Christian leaven in this land is now of no mean proportions. The majority of the members are poor. Most of them are farmers, tradesmen and laborers, but almost every class and condition is represented. The large majority are men, though more and more women are joining the church in recent years. The curve of increase of the Christian membership in China has risen rapidly during the last two decades. We are entering the reaping stage of missionary work here. There is a spirit of expectancy everywhere. The dynamic condition of civilization has taken the place of the static and opens wide the door of opportunity. A momentous work of preparation has been done through the past one hundred years. It is probably safe to say that a score of million people are familiar with the simple facts of the gospel and are favorably impressed by the spirit of Christianity.

The special situation for Baptists in China can be sketched only very briefly in this paper. (1) Conservative missionaries agree that probably half of the non-Catholic Chinese converts have been immersed. This includes the great majority of converts connected with the China Inland Mission and Christian Missionary Alliance Missions, all converts of the Disciples' Mission and of several other societies that practice only immersion, and many converts of other denominations. Missionaries seem to be of a type of mind that makes them more loyal to the natural meaning of God's Word. The victory for immersion will probably be consummated on the mission field. (2) Baptists have stressed the direct study of God's Word. They have done less than other denominations to give God's Word to the heathen, but they have done relatively more than others to make their converts familiar with its teachings. This and

their insistence upon a regenerated church membership accounts in the main for the fact that the piety of Chinese Baptists averages high as compared with the membership of other denominations. (3) Baptists allowed other denominations to get ahead of them in medical missionary work, and we are still behind. But we now have some well equipped hospitals. We need more. (4) Some denominations have gone to an extreme in establishing schools far beyond the needs of the Christian constituency. Baptists seem to have swung sometimes to the other extreme. We have lost some of the fruits of our work on account of the superior school advantages of other denominations working in the same centers with us. (5) Baptists have done less than other denominations in the preparation and circulation of literature, including the Scriptures, and have lost much thereby. Non-Baptist denominations have worked mainly through the great Bible societies and tract societies, and hence the disparity on our side. But on the whole Baptist missionaries probably have made the best use of the means placed at their disposal. Preaching to the unevangelized and teaching the converts have made up by far the major part of their program. The results are distinctly a justification of these methods. Our work needs strengthening at the points indicated, namely and in order, as to literature, schools, and medical missions.

Baptists seem to have some special opportunities in China, and these confer special obligations. (1) We gain much and lose nothing by the growth of the spirit of Chinese independence. We aim to increase the self-respect of the individual. The Baptist type of Christian is individualistic and independent. This means an opportunity for the other person as well as for oneself. China is a peculiarly inviting field for just such a doctrine. (2) China, especially because of her long isolation and resulting divergence from other races, needs the living spirit of Christianity, and not set forms of words fashioned by men. Baptists have an advantage in coming to the Chinese with the Bible which they are invited to study for themselves. (3) Buddhism, the very name for whose priests is a term of

reproach, Taoism, which has degenerated into demonology, and Confucianism, which consists of ineffective precepts, have all failed to bring the race into right relations with God. The immediateness of the religion of Jesus Christ, set forth in universal terms, and with such skill, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, is its supreme excellence as compared with other religions. It brings men into direct relation with God through the man Christ Jesus, who is Himself God. Baptists stand, and almost alone, for this immediateness in its scriptural simplicity. These things give us advantages which we are under obligation to use. They should stimulate us to greater activity. They must determine our attitude to the much talked of union movement. Our message, faithfully delivered, will do much to establish New Testament Christianity in China. Denominations with intricate forms of church government, hampered by sacerdotalism, or involved in the inconsistencies of the union of church and state, meet peculiar difficulties in China. The day of the people is the day of Baptists. Baptists are hastening, must continue to hasten, the full meridian splendor of that day.

China is awake. Christianity is here. Idolatry and superstition, creatures of darkness, must die in even the imperfect light of Western material civilization. Confucianism, tested through the most extended and stupendous experiment in the history of the human race, is struggling with renewed energy to obtain a verdict in its favor. The deduction from the experiment must be the condemnation of Confucianism so far as its adherents claim that it is a vital religion. With unchallenged opportunity it failed to uplift China. The urgent call of the hour is to every follower of Christ to do his duty. We should covet these millions and their country for our Christ, and be irresistably jealous for Him as opposed to Confucius. Christianity will win one of its greatest victories here. This is Christian optimism, the optimism of the New Testament, and it is supported rather than challenged by the situation for Christianity in China today.

China needs Christ, not Americanized or Anglicized Christianity. China needs Christ, the living Christ, not formal,

lifeless creeds. China needs Christ, the crucified, risen Christ, in all His marvelous sufficiency for humanity's failings and frailties. Every individual in China needs Christ to take away sin and death. He is life, and brings life. He is light and beauty. He shall touch, yea is touching, the "hills of Tang" with His countless rays of infinite hue. The beauty of the Celestial City shall rest upon the Celestial Empire. Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!