

border of the empire for 1,300 miles (some authorities say 1,500), passing through the valleys and over lofty mountain ranges. The wall varies from fifteen to thirty feet in height, and is about as thick as it is high, while at intervals there are large square towers, some of them being fifty feet high. It is said that six horsemen could ride abreast on the top of the wall. What energy and patience the Chinese must have had to build this enormous structure, which has lasted now for over two thousand years!

There are said to be three religions in China. One originated with Confucius, a sage who lived about six hundred years before Christ. All the Chinese reverence him, and yet a large portion of them follow another religion than the one he taught. Some are Taoists, and some are Buddhists. But while these three forms of religion are professed, the people care little about any one of them. Once or twice a year each Chinaman bows and worships heaven and earth, but every day of the year and in every house in the land, worship is offered to departed ancestors. The universal religion of China is the worship of ancestors. Each family keeps what are called ancestral tablets. These are boards, usually about twelve inches long by three wide, on which are written the name, rank, titles, birth and death days of each deceased member of the household. Every day, morning and evening, incense is burned and worship offered before these tablets.

One of the saddest things about the religions of China is that none of them seem to have it for their object to make men better. A priest once said to a missionary, "Your religion does not give what the people want. When they worship they wish to know whether they can grow rich and recover from disease. In the case of believing in Jesus, there are no benefits of this kind." The people have no idea of a religion whose aim is to free from sin and make men pure.

Though the Chinese are good scholars and have many books, they are as superstitious as the lowest savages. They believe in ghosts and evil spirits, and one of their singular notions is that these evil spirits go in straight lines, and hence they make their streets crooked, so as to confuse and keep off the bad spirits. They also believe in an oracle by which they can foretell their fate. While incense is burning and crackers are fired off, to keep god awake and attentive, the inquirer shakes a cup in which are placed strips of wood with some written words upon them, and from the strips that fall upon the ground he learns his fate.

Another singular notion of the Chinese is that they can convey to any spirit, whether human or divine, whatever they please, by simply burning the article, or an image of it, in the flames. Hence as they think that a friend, after his spirit leaves the body, will need just what he needed here, they burn paper images of these subjects, and so fancy that they reach the departed soul. A missionary describes a paper house which he once saw built for a person who had died. "It was about ten feet high and twelve deep. It contained a sleeping room, library, reception-room, hall, and treasury. It was furnished with paper chairs and tables. Boxes of paper money were carried in. There was a sedan-chair, with bearers, and also a boat and boatman, for the use of the deceased in the unseen world. A table spread with food was placed in front of the house." This whole paper establishment was suddenly set fire to, and in the midst of a fusillade of crackers it quickly vanished in the flames. What a pitiable notion this is as to what human souls will need in the future!

This idea that whatever is burned in the sacred flame is thus conveyed to unseen spirits is applied to prayers. The Chinaman always writes his prayers and then burns them. So he fancies they go up to the god or spirit he would address. The priests fill up blank prayers, according to the wishes of their customers who come with their various wants. People come to buy prayers for themselves and for others, and having had them filled out, they go away to burn them.

The Mission of Boys.

BY L. A. OBEAL.

From out the ranks of noble men,
Who firm for Truth and Right have stood,
They are being called, as years go by,
To "come up higher" and dwell with God.

Their vacant places who shall fill?
With wealth, and tongue, and pen, who'll stand,
And bid the tides of ill roll back,
That hasten to engulf the land?

We are pressing on to fill the ranks,
The world needs brave men for the fight
That is waging still from age to age,
For evermore 'twixt Wrong and Right.

With purpose true and courage high,
Where they have fallen we will stand,
Till Righteousness and Truth prevail,
And earth become Immanuel's land.

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Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. WITHROW, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, JANUARY 16, 1892.

LETTER FROM A JUNIOR LEAGUER.

The following communication is from a member of one of our junior leagues. The young writer says:—"This is my first attempt at anything of this kind, and I do not suppose it will be fit for publication, but I thought I would send it. We have quite a flourishing junior league in our church. I will send you a report soon if you care to have it."

By all means send the report; we want to hear from every league in the Conference.

Dear Sir,—No church should be without an Epworth League, for the young need special care to train them spiritually and bind them to the Church.

Will not the girls and boys of to-day become, in the future, our leading men and women? Will not the boys become the leading statesmen of our country, and fill other positions of honour? It is therefore necessary that they should be so trained that their unfolding from boyhood to manhood, and from girlhood to womanhood, will find them with sanguine hopes, high inspirations, and lofty ideas. The world is at best full of sorrow and sin, but a brave heart can do a great deal.

There is so much to do, so much good seed to sow, and ill weeds to root up, that it is impossible for the present generation to accomplish all, and it must be left to the coming men and women.

It is the Epworth League that will train them to perform their duty faithfully, and teach them the higher lessons of life.

Pastors, see that you organize a league immediately, if one has not already been formed. It will arouse the church, it will set the young people to work, make them sociable, and teach them to lead noble and true lives. Do so at once, and you will never regret having taken the step. It may give

you extra work, but then remember you are the "Shepherd of your flock."

Now, a word to the young Epworth Leaguer. Do you, my dear young friend, look out upon the world as it is, and not as it should be? Are you satisfied that greed, and hunger, want and despair, sin and sorrow are everywhere? "No," you reply. Well then, if you desire to do your share in the great work that remains to be done, first yield your heart to God, and with his help overcome yourself. This is of prime importance. "He who overcometh himself, is greater than he who taketh a city." Then having done this and putting on the whole armour of God, you will be equipped for life's journey in every way. You will be sure to succeed if the Lord is on your side, for success always crowns the efforts of those who live life as it should be lived.

Tennyson very beautifully says:

"'Tis only noble to be good,
True hearts are more than coronets."

Or in prose it would be: Goodness is true nobility; faithful hearts are greater than crowns or sceptres.

Show all your golden shield of life, and like the ripple of an ever widening circle, it will bless and hallow all the world.—Wesleyan.

LISTEN!

BY J. B. DOUGLASS.

An English gentleman in New York said to me, "You can't do anything in England. Look at the immense amount of money invested in breweries!" "Look at the immense wealth of the brewers!" I said to him. "My friend, do you forget what God has done for our country? There was more money invested in slaves here than there is in beer there. There were one thousand million pounds sterling invested in the United States in slaves; and you have not as much as that invested in beer, that I know of. But when God saw fit to move, what were millions to him!

"At the loss of 300,000 lives, and at the sacrifice of hundreds of millions of treasure—in blood, and fire, and smoke, he swept away the awful degradation.

"And I tell you as I look upon the slaves of drink, I feel sometimes as if American slavery could only be exceeded by the voluntary slavery of the votaries of drink. Why, £140,000,000 they tell us are annually spent in Great Britain for drink. For what? Not for bread, but for that which makes every loaf of bread dearer to every consumer. Not for meat, but for that which decreases the business in all healthful food. Not for that which prolongs life, but for that which notoriously shortens it. Not for that which supports schools and colleges, but for that which cripples them. Not for that which lessens taxation, but for that which disheartening result, the enlargement of prisons and reformatories, and lunatic asylums, and places for the helplessness and the sickness that might be prevented, and for the abominable vagrancy and brutal crime: all the property you possess is levied on to pay for these.

"Drink scatters no beauty or blessing in a single home, for it menaces and blights all things lovely and beautiful that it touches. It gives no cool brain or just judgment, but is an admitted foe to all this. It remedies no legislative wrongs, but is a factor in most of them. It holds back no murderer's hand, but nerves it. It helps no one in paying honest debts, but everywhere is a hindrance to all upright endeavour.

"Fancy the building of gaols, and lunatic asylums, and reformatories, for the results of any other business in the world but this! Fancy keeping a staff of men at the public expense to take care of the refuse of any other business than this! And I do look with pity at your policemen. Oh, what a work, poor fellows, they have to do—bruised, and battered, and cut, and maimed; and in every case it is drink! drink!

Mrs. Jason—"When they tie up a railroad they don't actually use a rope, do they?" Mr. Jason—"No; it is generally done with a string of resolutions."