

Chinaman ; and the whole sentence, if it is understood at all, suggests many perplexing questions, which the most intelligent Chinese scholar has no means of unravelling."

For this reason the missionaries of China have for many years urged the Bible societies in China to print the Scriptures in Chinese with short explanatory notes. At the Shanghai Conference of 1877 the following resolution was passed :

" Since in the opinion of the General Conference it is highly desirable that the Scriptures designed for circulation in China should be accompanied with a short preface, captions, and brief unsectarian notes, therefore we do most earnestly request the various Bible societies in Europe and America to secure, if possible, a change in their rules and constitution so as to permit these to be added to their future editions, subject to the supervision of their respective committees in China."

The General Conference of 1890 made a similar request.

There are three Bible societies at work in China—the American, the British and Foreign, and the Scotch. Each of these has a clause in its constitution to the effect that Scriptures are to be circulated " without note or comment." This clause each society disregards systematically at home in its marginal notes, the only justification being usage. In reply to the 1877 conference appeal, the societies either answered with silence or thought the change " inadmissible" or " inexpedient." The Scotch society did, however, as some one expressed it, " after a great deal of consideration, come to the conclusion that there might be maps, chapter headings, and tables of weights and measures, so that the Chinese might know the length of a cubit and the value of a shekel."

It may be well to touch briefly on the *pros* and *cons* of the question. Against the use of notes it has been urged that the Scriptures without notes can be brought home to the heart and conscience of the reader. In Christian lands, where the desired information is already well diffused, the opinion may hold good. Surely it is a different thing in a land like China. Rev. J. Hudson Taylor declares that " of all Christian effort, the putting of a whole Bible or Testament into the hands of an unconverted, uninstructed heathen, without note or comment, is the most unsuccessful and, so far as my experience goes, sometimes even hurtful."

It is said that cases have been found where the Gospel without note or comment has been the means of the conversion of a Chinaman. This may be true ; but, so far as statistics go, the occurrence is very rare, both because of the almost incredible difficulties, and because such cases are unknown until after the persons have been brought into contact with Christians. Curiosity may be aroused and a desire for further knowledge awakened, but it is only after much light and help that these result in a change of heart. We doubt if the missionaries of China would yield to any one in their faith in the power and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures. The truth is that the missionaries only wish the means to convey the mind