

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

THE AWAKENING OF CHINA.

And the Crisis which it involves in the relations of the Christian nations with that country.

We have enabled our readers, says the Belfast Witness, to pursue the interesting letters upon "Missions in China" of Rev. Wm. Cecil, who was one of the deputation to that country appointed by the China Missions Emergency Committee. We now subjoin a letter addressed to "The Times" by the chairman and hon. secretaries of that committee, in which the present duty of Christian countries towards China is very forcibly stated. It will be read with much interest. The writers say The Awakening of China, following on the rise of Japan, is, perhaps, the greatest event of the last few years in the history of the world. Not long ago those two nations, and especially China, were regarded by the Western nations as fields for exploitation to their own profit. Today they rank as equals; they hold their own independence, they take their place in the conference of the nations: the East has, to a large extent, come into line with the West; the centre of gravity of world politics has shifted, and the relations between the European peoples and the United States on the one hand, and the Far East on the other, are entirely altered.

China, however, is very new at development. For ages she has remained stationary. It has required the sharp touch of war to rouse her to a consideration of her own future. The awakening, however, has come, and it is of the utmost importance, both to herself and to the West—indeed to all mankind—to consider what the line of her progress is to be, and how it can best be influenced for good. She naturally looks to Japan as a forerunner, and as an example of success. Her own civilization is strongly materialistic, and the present influence of Japan is of the same character. The issue, so far as can be foreseen, is between Materialism and Christianity; and it is for our own country to face this issue, and to reflect that her duty to China as well as her interest requires her to consider and revise her attitude and her action towards China, and to revise it in the Christian sense.

The task laid upon us is twofold. First, it is necessary that our policy of insisting on free intercourse and open trade receives the close attention of Christians at home who must confine the public promotion of trade interests within the limit of her fair dealing and must maintain at least as high a standard of international conduct in regard to China as prevails in regard to the powerful nations of Europe. Trade privileges must be obtained by fair negotiation without force or threat, and we must endeavor by the integrity of our commercial relations to recommend our Christian civilization.

The second part of our task concerns the benevolent missionary agencies which we have so long kept up for the benefit of China. These great missions have now a much wider and more open field before them.

China has always been a country where education has held a very high place. Now, by a sudden—perhaps too sudden—change, she has transformed her entire system, and proposes to establish in all the provinces of her vast Empire, universities, colleges and schools, devoted to the introduction of Western learning. Here is an opportunity which the Christians of this country, if they are wise, will seize and use to the very utmost of their power.

The great missionaries in China press this policy upon us. The Chinese Government needs thousands of teachers; and they must be first-rate teachers. Japanese instructors are pressing in. Is the teaching to be based on Christian or Agnostic foundations? This is one great question for the missionary societies.

The situation, as a whole, calls for a reconsideration of missionary policy to be followed by a rearrangement of missionary effort. In this view, the missionaries in China itself are at one. They have resolved, in their recent conference in Shanghai, that preparations should be made for a self-governing native Church in China, responding to the national cry, "China for Chinese;" and that the missionaries, whose influence on that native Church must for a long time be very penetrating, should themselves federate, with a view to unity of aims, economy of work, and the large spirit which would inform a universal and combined effort.

It is of perhaps equal importance that this proposed concentration of Christian effort in China should be sustained by a similar combination at home, not necessarily by fusion, but certainly by co-operation. And not by combination alone. It is obvious that for producing at this critical period the utmost effect, for the gigantic task of rapidly influencing the course of a sudden rush of a nation of hundreds of millions, the present scale of effort and expenditure is absurdly low. If ever Christians were called to a supreme effort in the cause of their Master, it is now. They have to "think in continents." They are dealing, not with individuals, but with provinces, with Governments, with educational systems. A public movement is demanded which will carry with it not only the ordinary missionary workers, but the men of business, the traders, the officials, the statesmen. Since the ages when Christianity had to effect the conversion of the conquering hordes of half-savage pagans who overrun Europe and to transform them into civilized and Christian Powers, there has been no such task laid upon the Western Churches. Is there to be a Christian or a non-Christian China? If this issue be evaded, can we hope to make our own Christianity effective in our national career, or to stem the current of materialism in our own land?

THE VALUE OF REBUFFS.

It is painful to be knocked down, but it may be a great blessing. The brakeman, walking along in the dark on the top of his train of box-cars, may not like the warning slap in the face he receives from the cords arranged over the track for that purpose; but he knows he must either throw himself down or be swept to death in passing under the bridge or through the tunnel. In a good-sized town a young man was just beginning to prosper in business on a side street, when a fire completely destroyed his premises. This was a disaster; and in looking about for a suitable property, he found that the only building he could get was on much larger and costing more than he felt that his business would justify. In great fear and with sad heart he took possession. To-day he has the leading business in his town—made possible by his enforced move. It is man's plan, to try to escape from sorrow; God's plan, to save through sorrow.

Love is the only power of the human heart that grows absolutely by giving itself away.

OPIUM SHOPS CLOSED AT
FOOCHOW.

The following letter from the pen of the Principal of the S. I. Baldwin Theological School, Foochow, shows what the Chinese can do and are doing to carry out the Anti-Opium Edict. It is:

"Intense interest is taken by the people of Foochow at this time in the abolition of the opium traffic. When last year the Government announced its purpose of banishing opium from China many were incredulous, some doubting the sincerity of the Government in making this announcement, and some doubting its ability to carry out such a project. With every city, town, and village full of opium dens and patronized by millions of opium smokers, the probability of being able to uproot this deep and widespread evil certainly did not present a very hopeful prospect, and it is not surprising that many should doubt and question. A more gigantic undertaking has probably never been attempted by any country or nation. But to the surprise of nearly everyone, the authorities are taking hold of the matter in such a determined and undaunted manner, that notwithstanding the greatness of the task, it is the general opinion now that the traffic will be suppressed in a very short time. The date fixed for the closing of the opium shops in Foochow was the twelfth day of May. Those who were engaged in the opium business did all they could to resist the enforcement of the law. Several days previous to the time appointed for closing their shops, over a thousand of them came together in mass meeting in one of the heathen temples, passed resolutions against closing, and drafted a remonstrance to the Viceroy. A large sum of money was subscribed to fight the anti-opium crusade. But it was all in vain. The man who presented their petition was arrested and locked up in prison. More positive and stringent orders than ever were issued for closing, and on this single day three thousand opium shops in Foochow City and suburbs went out of business, not considering it wise to offer further resistance. One man who was related to some of the officials, presumed to trust to his influence with them for protection, and so did not close his shop. He was summarily arrested, lodged in jail and his property confiscated. Two or three others who defied the law were loaded with chains, and in this way marched through the streets, an example or warning to any who might be inclined to treat lightly the decree. It is now one week since the law went into effect, and so far as is known there does not exist in Foochow City a single opium den, so completely has the law been enforced.

"Strong anti-opium societies, composed of many of the most influential men in Foochow, have taken an active part in helping to enforce these new regulations. They have vigilance committees at work night and day to detect anyone who may be trying to evade the law. The day the opium shops were closed was made a day of general rejoicing throughout the city. Flags were hoisted from hundreds of business houses and private dwellings; processions of students paraded the streets with banners; great public demonstrations were held in the different parts of the city, and in various other ways the people sought to give expression to their unbounded joy over the victory that had been won."