

The Rev. Charles Gutzlaff speaks of an old Chinese work, the *Shin-seen-tung-keën*, a history of all religions, in which Christianity is set forth as the faith of a small and obscure sect. Arnobius, an African teacher of rhetoric, who became a convert to Christianity in the end of the 3rd or the beginning of the 4th century, and who wrote seven books against the gentiles or heathen, which display much Christian ignorance as well as secular erudition, mentions the Ceres as, at that time, a Christian people. These are supposed to be the Chinese, whom the ancients knew by the names Seres and Sinenses. It was at a later period, however, that anything like an extensive mission found its way to the Celestial Empire. This was sent out by the Nestorian Christians. Who were they?

Towards the close of the 4th century, while the great Theodosius, the emperor dear to the Christian Church, was on the throne of the East and West, while John Chrysostom was the great preacher of the former, and Ambrose of Milan the resolute disciplinarian of the latter, young Nestorius sat with Theodoret, afterwards the famous Church historian, in the theological school of Antioch, at the feet of Theodorus, who at last exchanged his professor's chair for the Bishopric of Mopsuestia in Cilicia. While Ulphilas, the Visigothic bishop, translated the Bible into the language of his barbarous countrymen, and taught them an Arian Christianity that denied the equality, and thus the divinity, of the Son; and while Martin of Tours, the apostle of the Gauls, inculcated monasticism and other species of will-worship, Nestorius drank in from the lips of Theodorus a theological system that was afterwards called by his name. The school of Alexandria had called the Virgin Mary *the Mother of God*, thus confounding the divine and human natures of our Lord; and the school of Antioch, in which Diodorus, of Tarsus, the city of Paul, had taught Theodorus, maintained the opposition to this doctrine which he had inaugurated. But the men of Antioch went too far in their opposition, and, instead of holding that "Jesus Christ was and is God and Man in two distinct natures and one person," they seemed to believe that He combined in himself two distinct persons as well as two distinct natures. Nestorius soon became the patriarch of Constantinople, a kind of Eastern pope, and in his new sphere promulgated the doctrines he had been taught in Antioch. This roused the ire of Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria, a fierce, turbulent man, who persecuted the Jews, and caused the death of the female philosopher Hypatia. He induced Theodosius the Second, the grandson of the great emperor, to call an œcumenical council (the third) at Ephesus, over which he himself presided, and by which Nestorius was condemned and deposed. The two great controversies that had occupied the minds of theologians in the East and West, and which were settled at this time, were those of Cyril with Nestorius, and of Augustine with Pelagius; but Cyril was a very different man from Augustine, and Pelagius from Nestorius, although the opinions of the two former triumphed and the two latter suffered together by the decrees of the same council. The unfortunate heretic, as he is called by all the Catholic historians, although in reality he seems to have been but an ardent controversialist, rash in his utterances, was, by a refinement of cruelty, banished to a desert of Egypt, within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of his enemy, Cyril, who never lacked the ability to collect a band of ruffians ready to perform his will. Such a band tore the deposed patriarch from his asylum, and so severely ill-treated him that he died in the year 440. The Syrians felt deeply the condemnation of their famous school, whose teachings, they said, came down