

## ENQUIRIES FROM JAPAN.

Part of a letter dated Shanghai, Dec. 6, 1856, from the Rev. W. Muirhead, successor of Dr. Medhurst, as Correspondent of the Bible Society:

"I may mention a circumstance that took place yesterday. A person called on me and enquired for three volumes of a serial that was published some time ago at Hong Kong. He said he was directed to call here by the Chinese interpreter at Japan, who had received orders from the Emperor of that country to procure the work through the medium of the Chinese junks trading between China and Japan. About ten years ago the same person paid a visit to Dr. Medhurst, and obtained several books from him, one of which was of a religious nature. The whole was handed over to the above Chinese interpreter, who, at first, objected to the religious work, but afterwards expressed his appreciation of it. As the serial in question was intended for the Emperor and two mandarins in high authority, I gave the man a number of copies, together with a long size New Testament, handsomely bound, and various other works, which were addressed to the interpreter, to whom also I enclosed a letter to the Emperor. The bearer of the message was perfectly aware of the aversion of the Japanese to Christianity, but from the manner in which the subject came up, he was quite willing to take the whole set of books to Japan, and promised to reply by the fifth or sixth month of next year. As other publications of the kind wanted are intended to be sent on by another opportunity, I asked the man if he had any objection to take a present of Japanese to the native officials, and he answered that he had none. I write, therefore, to inquire if you have any portion of the Christian Scriptures in Japanese that you could send me. It is possible that some copies of the Sacred volume might obtain access into that hitherto closed country by means of the junks trading thither. These go and come generally once a year, leaving in December and returning in June or July.

"The work of publication and Bible distribution in China is going on with vigour. Several interesting journeys have been taken by missionary brethren into the surrounding country, where the Word always meets with a welcome reception."

**NOTE.**—The Bishop of Victoria has written to Hong Kong about sending a supply of Japanese Gospels to Shanghai, to be forwarded to Japan.—*Look and its Missions.*

## THE WAR IN CHINA.

*From the News of the Churches.*

It is now reported that the mission premises and hospital of Dr. Hobson, medical missionary in connexion with the London Missionary Society, which were stated to have been destroyed in the late bombardment, have been saved. Dr. Hobson has proceeded to Shanghai, in order to take charge of the mission hospital there, in the absence of Dr. Lockhart, who intends to return in a short time to this country.

The following extract from a letter of Dr. Hobson, exhibits the bitter sorrow which he had experienced in the supposed destruction of his hospital. He refers also to the arrival of his son and Dr. Wong, in the midst of the confusion:—

"It took years of anxious and laborious effort to raise that missionary hospital to the position it occupied in Canton, and it is with no little pain and discouragement that I have now to record it exists no longer. The admiral was sorry that the hospital was involved in the general conflagration; but it seems to have been an unavoidable contingency of war, provoked by

attacks made upon his fleet, day and night, and to deter the Chinese from injuring this place. . . . Since I wrote, my son and Dr. Wong have reached us. To aid Dr. Wong to open a dispensary here, I have handed over from the hospital donations, 200 dollars to Dr. Legge, to provide for medicines on the spot, £15 worth from England, and to pay the wages of a coolie. It is a great disappointment to Dr. Wong to find affairs here in so unsettled a state; and my perplexities have been increased by the arrival of my son. They reached us on the very day when a diabolical attempt was made to poison 400 to 500 persons by arsenic. My youngest child, and several others, were in imminent danger, but no one died from it. This may perhaps be accounted for by a chemical change taking place after this arsenic was mixed with the yeast, and during the processes of fermentation and baking. We all ought to recognise a superintending Providence, and be thankful for it."

Dr. Parker, of the Chinese Evangelization Society, in a letter from Ningpo, describes the imminent peril in which the Europeans had been placed in that city, the conferences of the missionaries for prayer, and the deliverance which had been vouchsafed:—"A native Christian discovered that a plot was talked of among the Cantonese here to destroy all the foreigners, who are few, undefended, and almost without the means of escape. The missionaries met for prayer and consultation, and although several believed in both the possibility and probability of such a plot, yet we did not see our way to do more than watch and pray. A few days later, at our third general meeting, it was reported from three different sources that a body of Canton men called on the Tautai (the highest Chinese authority here), requesting permission to kill the foreigners, and that he said, 'Kill them if you can. But the officer who conducts foreign business succeeded, by representing the consequences, in getting the Tautai to refuse, or withdraw his consent. This alarmed most of us, and the American Consul requested a private interview with the officer for foreign affairs, who confessed that on the said day a number of Cantonese waited on the Tautai, and requested permission to destroy the Portuguese, against whom and the English, he said they were very much exasperated, because of the large number of their vessels (piratical vessels) they had destroyed. It was reported that our houses were to be set on fire. It is remarkable that on the same day, and probably at the same hour in which the Tautai withdrew his consent, we had met for special prayer."

Mr. Muirhead writes from Shanghai, that in that city all is quite, and there is no reason to fear anything. The people are quiet and peaceable, and few seem to be acquainted with, or to take any interest in the proceedings going on at the south. . . . I am gratified at the attention and number of the audiences from day to day, and especially on the Sabbath. On these latter occasions, we have from 300 to 400 regularly gathered together in our large chapel, who listen with a degree of interest to the word of life.

Mr. Burns, who is now at Swatow, in the province of Canton itself, writes at the end of January, that up to that time the foreigners had been permitted to enjoy as much peace as if among a different nation. They were on such friendly terms with the authorities, that they even obtained from them news of the progress of the war.

Prayers should be earnestly put forth that in all these districts God would be pleased to continue to protect the lives of his servants. His providential care of them has undoubtedly been very remarkable hitherto, as may be surely seen, when the reflect upon the treacherous and cruel character in war of the people among whom they sojourn.

## Miscellaneous Extracts.

## THE TESTIMONY OF ANTIQUITY ON THE SUBJECT OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

*From Tract by Presb. Board.*

If the early Fathers are appealed to, we shrink not from the scrutiny. It is true we would not voluntarily cite them, for various reasons. They are inconsistent with themselves and stuffed with puerile conceits. Take an example or two, if not the most apposite, at least such as now most readily occur to mind.

There is Clement of Alexandria, who discovers the mystery of Christ's rectitude in the upright letter which commences the name Jesus: the initials of the same name he finds accompanied with the sign of the cross in the number of Abraham's servants; the ten commandments he detects in David's instruments of ten strings. And there is Augustine, too, playing on the letters of Christ's name; and deducing a strong recommendation of the Sybil's verses from their amounting to twenty-seven, which make a true fully quadrate and solid, for three times three are nine, and three times nine are twenty seven. Again, he finds a mysterious analogy between the proportions of Noah's ark and Christ's human body; and to perfect the type, he regards the window in the ark as marvellously corresponding to the wound in the Saviour's side. He tells, moreover, with the utmost gravity, amazing stories of miracles performed in his own time in the various churches, which constituted in his opinion the most crowning and unanswerable evidence to the pagan world of truth of the Christian religion.

So much for the puerile conceits of the fathers. Of their discrepancies, which render their testimony very unsafe as to plan matters of fact, the following may suffice. Origen represents Peter to have been Bishop of Antioch; Epiphanius, of Rome, conjointly with Paul. Eusebius and Jerome both affirm in one place that Peter first occupied the See of Rome, yet elsewhere each contradicts himself by placing Peter in the See of Antioch. Tertullian affirms that Clement was the first bishop of Rome after Peter, while Irenaeus is equally positive that Linus was the first, Anaclethus next, and Clement not till third in order. Eusebius makes Ignatius the immediate successor of Peter at Antioch; Jerome describes him as the third. Eusebius again contradicts himself by stating in another place that Eudodius immediately succeeded Peter. Here we have Origen contradicting Epiphanius; Tertullian contradicting Irenaeus; Eusebius contradicting Jerome; and Eusebius and Jerome both contradicting themselves. Which of all these discrepant statements are we to adopt! On whom shall we rely to learn the unbroken line of succession? And lastly, (a question by no means the least important of all that might be asked,) how can we depend on the subsequent links as unexceptionable, when so much uncertainty rests upon the first, the very starting point?

In truth, we may not unreasonably endorse the strong language of Milton, when he said, "Whatsoever time, or the heedless hand of blind chance, hath drawn down from old to this present, in her huge drag-net, whether fish or sea-weed, shells or shrubs, unpicked, unchosen, those are the fathers."

But the testimony of the apostolic fathers is far from condemning us, whatever else may be said of it. Even Ignatius, whom our opponents placed on the witness-stand with such shouts of triumph, seems to us to speak very much like a Presbyterian. When he insists on the presence of the bishop as necessary in every case of baptism and the Lord's supper; on nothing being done without his knowledge and consent; on his inquiring into all the church members by