

CUSTOMS OF THE UNITED STATES.

LETTERS OF LILIAN CHING, TO HIS BRETHREN IN THE ISLAND OF LOO-CHOO; WRITTEN DURING HIS RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.

LETTER VII.

Mount Discovery, 3d month, 1826.

Among the Christians, there are many who are much engaged to spread their religion throughout the world. They think it to be by far the best religion that ever was known on earth—a religion suited to the wants of every people; and some of them suppose that without a belief in this religion, no people can be happy in a future state. Missionary Societies, are formed in this country, in Great Britain, and in several other countries for sending the gospel to such nations as ours, which they denominate heathen nations. Several hundred missionaries have been sent from Christendom, to Asia, Africa, and the Isles of the Pacific Ocean.

In commending their religion, the Christians venture to speak of it as distinguished from all other religions, by its benevolent and pacific character, and its tendency to produce love and peace wherever it is embraced. This I say, they venture to do, while they must know that for a long period of time the Christians have been the most warring people in the world!

I hope I shall go through my examination of the New Testament and send you a true account of it before any of the Christian missionaries shall reach our peaceful isle. But should they arrive among you before you hear from me again, I would recommend that you receive and treat them with the same hospitality and kindness that you showed to the Britons who visited you in ships of war. In this way you may convince them that the way of love and peace is not unknown to you, and you may also make them ashamed of the warring spirit of the Christian nations. You will forbear to treat them with any disrespect, or to prejudge their religion or their motives.—But should they attempt to introduce among our people the principles of war, or to recommend preparations for war as a means of preserving peace, I hope you will state to them clearly how long you have lived in love and peace without any resort to such principles or such preparations; and that you cannot think of changing your religion for one that permits its votaries to teach war as a science, to murder men for fame, or to employ the time of peace, in preparing to fight.

The Hindoo customs of offering human sacrifices by falling before the car of their idol to be crushed by its wheels,—throwing children in alive into the Ganges to be devoured by sharks or other monsters, and the burning of widows with their deceased husbands, are urged by the Christians as powerful reasons for sending missionaries to India, to teach the poor Hindoos a more excellent religion—a religion which is adapted to “save men’s lives,” and to prepare them for future happiness. But what are the deplored sacrifices of the Hindoos when compared with the popular sacrifices of Christians in war? Which are the more calamitous, the more inhuman, or the more criminal? How small the number of human sacrifices offered to their idols by the Hindoos, compared with the hundreds of millions which Christians have offered to their own idols.—Ambition, Avarice, and Revenge. In the Hindoo sacrifices, we see nothing of the malignant passions of revenge or hatred; but the Christian sacrifices are offered in the indulgence of the worst passions of human nature; and they are associated with the practice of almost every crime of which man is capable.

In the Sacred Book of the Christians I observed this proverb—“Physician heal thyself;” and I have been inclined to apply it in this case. Indeed, so far as the abolition of human sacrifices is a proper motive to missionary exertions, I verily think there is a louder call for such exertions to abolish the war sacrifices of Christians than to abolish the superstitious sacrifices of the Hindoos.

If in excuse for the human sacrifices of Christians, it shall be pleaded that their religion requires them, the same excuse may be made for the Hindoos.

Were it not for the self-sufficiency of Christians, I might propose that some of our meek and benevolent priests should be sent as missionaries to this land to teach the way of peace. I have thought much on this subject since I have been among the Christians. But on mature reflection, I cannot advise any of our priests to come here as missionaries. For the Christians, like other religionists, are very sure that their own religion is the best, and their priests think themselves more learned than the priests of any other religion. This, in some respects, is undoubtedly true, though as yet many of them seem to be very ignorant of the laws of love and the way of peace. While such shall be the facts, should some of our most pious and learned priests come here as missionaries, they would probably not be treated with any more respect than the Christian missionaries received from the learned Bramins of Hindostan.

The principle of our religion, “that a meek temper, soft words, and beneficent actions, prevent insults and turn away wrath,” is but little understood among Christians. The rulers of Christian nations have generally acted on opposite principles. They have appeared to think that a haughty tone and an attitude of menace and defiance are the best means of security against aggression, violence, and war.

If our Islanders had acted on this principle when the Britons visited us, I have little doubt that war and bloodshed would have been the consequence. But our friendly attitude and pacific feelings, disarmed them of their usual haughtiness, and thus prevented even private quarrels between our men and theirs. This was a useful lesson to such of the Britons as were capable of much reflection, and it might be useful to the rulers of Christian nations.

L. C.

LETTER VIII.

Mount Hope, 4th month, 1826.

My dear brethren,

I am now to inform you that I have faithfully examined the Gospel or the New Testament,—from which I have learned the character of that God whom the Christians professedly adore. After what I have said of the wars of Christian nations, you may be surprised to hear that the moral character of their God is the reverse of what might naturally have been expected from the fighting character of his professed worshippers. He has revealed himself to Christians in their Sacred Book, as possessing every amiable and adorable attribute. In him there is nothing of the hateful military character, which delights in violence and bloodshed, or which kills for fame. He is exhibited as the Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Immutable, and Invisible Being, from whom all other beings have their existence, their life, their powers, and all their enjoyments; as just and merciful, slow to anger, long suffering, and ready to pardon the greatest offenders, if they repent and seek his favor. He also reveals himself to the Christians as the only true God, and as a Father, who is more ready to bestow favors on his offspring than earthly parents are to give good things to their children. In approaching him, his creatures are required to believe not only that he is, but that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. To express the benevolence of his nature, the Sacred Book says, “God is LOVE.”

I am inclined to believe that the God of the Christians is indeed the God of the Loo Choo, and that it was he who impressed on the minds of our ancestors, those precepts of love, hospitality, justice, and mercy, which have been handed down from age to age—which are still inculcated by our priests,—and by obedience to which we are so distinguished from warring nations. We, indeed, have not had the Sacred Books of the Christians; but God may have other methods of communicating to men than by books. I think it must have been so, for there doubtless was a time when there were no books in the world.

You will wonder, as I have done, how a people believing in such a benevolent God, could ever glory in war, or imagine that he can be pleased with their works of hatred one towards another. To account for these extraordinary facts, you may be led to suspect, that the Messiah, the Founder of the Christian religion was, like Mahomet, of a character opposite to that of the God whose Ambassador he professed to be, and that through his influence the Christians became a fighting people. But, my brethren, no supposition could be farther from the truth than this. No character was ever exhibited on earth more perfectly the reverse of the military character, than that of the Messiah. Instead of possessing a disposition opposite to that of the God whose Ambassador he professed to be, he appeared as the Son of God, the image of the invisible God, and the brightness of his glory. God gave to him his spirit not by measure—in him dwelt the fulness of Deity, and by him was manifested in the clearest manner the love of God to mankind. He came to save sinful men, to open to them the way of pardon, and to persuade them to become reconciled unto God. He possessed miraculous or divine powers; these he employed for the most benevolent purposes. He healed the sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf, the dumb, and in several instances, raised the dead. He literally went about doing good. He preached the gospel to the poor as well as to the rich. He was many times reviled, insulted, and maltreated; but he never rendered evil for evil, nor reviling for reviling. He was the friend of all, and ready to do good to all. Yet as he was faithful in reproving the hypocritical rulers of the Jews, among whom he lived, and explained the Divine laws in a manner different from what they had done, their prejudices were excited against him. Besides, they had expected in him a military Prince, who would lead them to war and to conquest—and deliver them from their subjection to the Roman government. Finding him of a meek, pacific character, not answering to their martial dispositions, they rejected him, conspired against his life, and finally procured a decree from the Roman governor for his crucifixion. While he hung in agony on the cross, they reviled and insulted him in a manner most injurious; but he answered their insults by this prayer:—“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” After he was dead, his body was embalmed and entombed; but God raised him from the dead. He appeared again to his disciples, gave them further instructions,—and in their presence, he ascended up to heaven, and was seated on the right hand of God.—For God hath highly exalted him—given him a name which is above every name—made him to be both Lord and Christ—a Prince and a Savior, and the Judge of the living and the dead:

L. C.

DEATH’S DOINGS.—“I am now worth one hundred thousand pounds,” said old Gregory, as he ascended a hill, which commanded a full prospect of an estate he had just purchased. “I am now worth one hundred thousand pounds, and here,” said he, “I’ll plant an orchard; and on that spot I’ll have a pinery.—Your farm-house shall come down,” said old Gregory, “they interrupt my view.”—“Then what will become of the farmers?”—asked the steward who attended him.—“That’s their business,” answered old Gregory. “And that mill must not stand up the stream,” said old Gregory.—“Then, how will the villagers grind their corn?” asked the steward.—“That’s not my business,” answered old Gregory. So old Gregory returned home—ate a hearty supper—drank a bottle of port—smoked two pipes of tobacco—and fell into a profound slumber—and awoke no more; and the farmers reside on their lands—and the mill stands upon the stream—and the villagers rejoice that death did “business with old Gregory.”

A GOOD PARLIAMENT MAN.—“I think,” said a farmer, “I should make a good parliament man, for I use their language. I received two bills the other day, with requests for immediate payment: the one I ordered to be laid on the table—the other to be read that day six months!”

In the churchyard of Clackmannan, there is a tombstone with the initials C. G. engraved upon it, and an inscription that is nearly obliterated, from which it appears, that the poor man interred there, having one day gone to the castle to ask charity, the lord of the mansion, who happened to be at an open window, upon hearing the supplicant’s petition, called out to him:—“Go to hell! you shall na come in here.”—“I need na go there,” replied the poor man; “having just come from that.”—“What’s doing there?” said the chief.—“Why, my lord,” answered the applicant, “they are playing the same game there as here, they are taking in the rich and holding out the poor.” This reply cost the poor man his life; the tyrant of the castle having caused him to be tortured to death.

W. G. C.

A laughable circumstance took place upon a trial in Lancashire, when Mr. Wood, sen., father of one of the present members for Preston, was examined as a Witness. Upon giving his name, Otwell Wood, the Judge asked him how he spelt it? The old gentleman replied—

O double T,
I double U,
E double L,
D double U,
D double O D.”

The law giver said it was the most extraordinary name he ever met with.

THE FOOL’S REPROOF.—A certain nobleman kept a fool, to whom he one day gave a staff, with a charge to keep it till he should meet with one who was a greater fool than himself. Not many years after, the nobleman fell sick, even unto death. The fool came to see him: his sick Lord said unto him, “I must shortly leave you.” “And whither are you going?” said the fool, “Into another world,” replied his Lordship. “And when will you come again? within a month?” “No.” “Within a year?” “No.” “When then?” “Never!” “Never!” replied the fool; “and what provisions hast thou made for thy entertainment there, whither thou goest?” “None at all!”—“No!” said the fool, “none at all! there, then take my staff; for with all my folly, I am not guilty of such folly as this.”

A MUSICAL DOG.—An amateur flute-player had a terrier dog that would sit listening to his master’s performance for an hour together; but if he played “Drops of Brandy” rather rapidly, the animal would jump upon his knees, and push the flute from his mouth. The Temperance Society ought to have presented this sober dog with a silver collar.

DEFERRED SENSIBILITY.—A client once burst into a flood of tears after he had heard the statement of his counsel, exclaiming, “I did not think I suffered half so much till I heard it this day.”

THE COLONIAL PEARL,

Is published every Friday Evening, at seventeen shillings and sixpence per annum, in all cases, one half to be paid in advance. It is forwarded by the earliest mails to subscribers residing out of Halifax but no paper will be sent to a distance without payment being made in advance. No subscription will be taken for a less term than six months, and no discontinuance permitted but at the regular period of six months from the date of subscription. All letters and communications must be post paid to insure attendance and addressed to Thomas Taylor, Pearl Office, Halifax, N. S.

AGENTS.

Halifax, A. & W. McKinlay,
Windsor, James L. Dewolf, Esq.
Lower Horton, Chs. Brown, Esq.
Wolfville, Hon. T. A. S. De Wolfe,
Kentville, J. F. Hutchinson, Esq.
Bridgetown, Thomas Spurr, Esq.
Annapolis, Samuel Cowling, Esq.
Digby, Henry Stewart, Esq.
Yarmouth, H. G. Farish, Esq.
Amherst, John Smith, Esq.
Parrsboro’, C. E. Rutchford, Esq.
Fort Lawrence, M. Gordon, Esq.
Economy, Silas H. Crane, Esq.
Pictou, Dr. W. J. Anderson.
Turo, John Ross, Esq.
Antigonish R. N. Henry, Esq.
River John, William Blair, Esq.
Charlton Town, T. Desbrisay, Esq.
St. John, N. B., G. A. Lockhart, Esq.
Sussex Vale, J. A. Reeve, Esq.
Dorchester, C. Milner, Esq.
Sackville, Joseph Allison, and
J. C. Black, Esqs.
Fredericton, Wm. Grigor, Esq.
Woodstock, John Bebell, Jr. Esq.
New Castle, Henry Allison, Esq.
Chatham, James Cain, Esq.
Carlton, &c., Jos. Menzies, Esq.
Bathurst, William End, Esq.
St. Andrews, R. M. Andrews, Esq.
St. Stephens, Messrs. Pengree & Chipman.