

the spread of the gospel in China. Of these, two received the most attention: "The Opium Habit" and "Ancestral Worship."

1. *The Opium Habit.* Such facts as the following were presented:

The introduction of the drug preceded that of Christianity by a short time, and it has become not only China's greatest curse, but one of the most serious obstacles to the gospel. It is impossible to exaggerate the evils resulting from the smoking of opium. It causes the rapid deterioration of health, especially the loss of muscular power, shortens life and undermines the whole constitution. The ease with which opium is everywhere procurable, and the facility and certainty with which it may be used for self-destruction, have largely increased the number of suicides. The Chinese, with their revengeful spirit, often for a trivial cause commit suicide, regarding this as the most awful revenge they can take, believing that the spirit of the dead person may continually injure the living.

Opium smoking is spreading more and more. It is no longer looked upon with shame. Legalization has increased its consumption. At first the Chinese made a tremendous effort to stamp out the vice, and refused revenue. Their want of success must be laid to the account of Great Britain. This gigantic evil now pervades all classes; high and low, rich and poor—Chinese, Manchus, Mongols and Koreans. The estimate for the whole empire is said to be, of the coolie class, four-tenths; of the merchant class, six-tenths; of the official class, three-tenths. The father of the present emperor has contracted the habit within the past two years. During an illness he was advised to try smoking the drug. The result is that the vice has become rooted, and although he bewails the bad example he is showing to the royal family, and especially to his son, the emperor, he thinks he cannot give it up.

This habit so blunts the moral sensibility that the Chinese themselves will not trust a smoker and will but rarely employ him. To satisfy his craving the habitué will steal, will sell his wife and children, and even starve himself. The will becomes weakened, if not paralyzed. The government and people, smokers and non-smokers alike, regard it as a vice and a curse, their greatest plague. Not a word is ever spoken in its defence. It would be next to impossible now for the Government to eradicate the evil even if England were to cease her own importation. The poppy is now extensively cultivated in China; the officials use it, and the smokers would get it in some way.

Of course such a habit is a stupendous obstacle to the spread of the gospel in China. The only way to reach the heart of an opium smoker is first to rid him of his pipe. Hence many opium refuges have been opened by missionaries, many cases have been treated in the hospitals, and the native Christians have done what they could to help. Much good has thus been accomplished. In connection with this subject, however, one serious fact was brought to light at the conference. Many physicians, missionaries and native Christians, have been unwittingly selling and distributing so-called anti-opium pills, containing morphia, which have often resulted in the substitution of one form of opium for another. This was regarded with such seriousness by the Medical Missionary Association that the matter was, at the recommendation of this Association, especially mentioned in the report of the Committee on Opium. The entire report is as follows:

"Whereas, this Conference regards the rapid extension of the growth of native opium in addition to the use of the imported drug with profound alarm; and whereas, the consequent vast increase of the opium habit demands our most serious and unremitting consideration, therefore we resolve:

"1. That we, as a Conference, re-affirm and maintain our attitude of unflinching opposition to the opium traffic.

"2. That we recommend all Christians in China to use every endeavor to arouse public opinion against the spread of this evil, and to devise means to secure, as far as may be, its final suppression.

"3. That we advise the formation of a Chinese Anti-Opium Society, with branches at all mission stations.

"4. That we find this increase is largely owing to the indiscriminate sale, and consequent abuse, of so-called anti-opium medicines, and that we now, on the suggestion of the Medical Missionary Association of China, urge all missionaries to discourage, and as far as possible to prevent, the sale of such anti-opium medicines as contain opium or any of its alkaloids.