

and will soon commence to disperse. It is an easy task getting hearers in China, but not so easy knowing how to keep them and interest them in the gospel message. The hearers have often less trouble in speaking than the missionary has. It does not seem so easy for them to speak Chinese. Who, face to face with such a company, would not wish for the bestowal of the gift of tongues in so far as speaking idiomatic Chinese, in such a way as to render it certain that the hearers could understand the substance of what was said, is concerned? The Chinese open the conversation with a series of questions concerning the "honourable name," country, age and occupation of their visitor. This may be followed by queries bearing on the customs, beliefs, industries and advantages (if there are any) of British subjects. This running fire once over an opportunity of selling some Christian books is presented. The missionary is now made practically aware of another sad fact. Not more than three or four in a hundred of his hearers can recognize the Chinese characters. I have been in some villages where none was found able to read a sentence. Interrogating the hearers as to the reason for this their reply is that they are too poor to pay for education. A question from their side as to educational matters in western lands may be turned to account in favour of Christianity. The fact that

so many can read and write there seems to surprise the Chinese. If there is a temple near at hand a question from the missionary as to its uses will draw out some amusing and often irrelevant answers. The temptation may be strong to turn aside and expose the idols, and that is perfectly legitimate, but wisdom is necessary in dealing with this matter. To the missionary the idol is nothing but mud, paint and wood. To the Chinese it is all he has for a god. He does not love it, and does not profess to have much faith in it, but nevertheless he stands somehow in awe of it, and will resort to the temple to do it homage. It was my aim as far as possible to put the character of the God in whom Christians believe in contrast with the images they worshipped, hoping by this means to shake their confidence in idolatry, and win them to the one true God regarding whom they know nothing.

There is some shadowy sort of Supreme Being in whom the Chinese believe in a general sort of way as *Lao Tien Yeh*, i. e., "the Old Lord of Heaven." Probably the popular conception of him comes nearer by the shadow of a shade of resemblance to the true God than any other of whom they speak. Taking care first to get some expression of opinion from them regarding this being, it was my aim afterwards to convey to their minds some elementary Biblical truths concerning the true