

thousand who has any knowledge, worthy of the name, of Buddha, or Lao Tsi, or even the sages. And there is none in that vast assembly who has any conception of God, the soul, sin, heaven and hell, that is of the least moral and spiritual value. Yet, that there is a vague sense of sin is evident, and that there is a religious instinct is certain. The idea of goodness and benevolence is in some way associated with the worship of the gods. Beggars were stationed at intervals all the way up. There were there blind, maimed and halt; and of all sad specimens of mankind that I have seen, Chinese beggars are the saddest. They did not get very much, poor souls, though they begged hard. Some threw a crust of bread as if to a dog, —and a self-respecting dog would not eat it—others threw the counterfeit cash; others, and only a few, the large cash. Very likely these beggars will be surprised to find themselves so well off in the next world, while many of the silk-wearing literati will find themselves what they really are —poor, naked, and miserable.

It is an astonishing thing, this religious instinct! So useless and yet so persistent. Think of half a million people coming some seventy miles to burn a few sticks of incense on this hill! Think of old women, for whom every step up that ascent was a painful exertion, climbing to the top in order to burn some paper, let off a few fire-crackers, and bow the knee to gods and goddesses of wood and mud, often more like devils in aspect than men; think of them all confident in being right, yet having no idea of what right or wrong means; think of the generations that have lived and died this way, and of the generations that shall live and die in the future in the same way, without God, without Christ, and without hope; and the mind staggering under the thought can only say, "The Judge of all the earth shall do right." He has at last stirred up His church to make an effort to enlighten these benighted ones, and we can never do better than be co-workers with Him. The darkness of this land is woful, and becomes more dreadful the longer we live in China. No ideas are so ridiculous to a Chinaman as those that are to us most precious. Their unrealistic minds either doubt the great Christian truths and promises, or else rob them of their fullness. It seldom, if ever, seems wonderful to a Chinaman that God should have done so much for him. Why should not God do it? He is seldom moved deeply by the great hopes of the gospel. He can stand quite unmoved hearing a sermon which would be a treat to a people in lands where the conscience and the heart are more or less alive. He can doubt where the evidence is to us overwhelming. He can be as far removed as ever from any thought of acting upon conviction after he has acknowledged the truth of what you say and the error of his own doctrines and of his own life. Who can understand him aright, and who can make anything of him? Only God can.

K. MACLENNAN.