

Our Weekly Sermon.

TEMPER

By Rev. Dr. Cummings.

The very word at the head of this chapter reminds us of an unending conflict, in which calm reflection on the one hand labors to preserve harmony among the passions and affections, while on the other hand the heated brain strives to excite and confound them.

Some persons are certainly born with weak and irritable nerves and many more are sick and suffering for want of proper physical training. The hasty passion of these unfortunate is more of a disease than a moral delinquency, and they stand in need rather of a physician than of a spiritual director, to effect a permanent cure.

We should all be firmly persuaded of the truth that there is no more certain source of misery to ourselves and those around us than an undisciplined temper. The soul of the irritable man is a soil in which every weed of vice takes root and flourishes.

Equality of mind, on the contrary that is a sweet and uniform temper, prepares one for fulfilling with ease every duty and acquiring the practice of every choice and beautiful virtue. Now a person may be born stupid and sluggish enough to be ineffectual almost to what another of more delicate organization will feel keenly, yet it is nevertheless certain that a calm and easy temper may be acquired by practice and perseverance.

A temper which is easily ruffled renders one a victim of every outward circumstance of a disagreeable kind. His senses become the constant channel of unpleasant impressions. A grating sound or a sudden noise excites the unhappy sufferer and contradiction drives him to furious anger.

He is liable to fits of despondency and weariness, causing the wine of life to grow stale and flat and making him wish for his own death. Or again, he is roused to fits of spleen which he vents on innocent persons; visiting upon them the perversity which is purely his own.

His visitors and friends never know how they are to find him or how to take him when they come into his presence. He is ready, unless humored like a sick child or a mild lunatic, to indulge in unpleasant and injurious outbreaks of scorn and contempt. He is fitful and untruthful in his talk. He forms rash and unjust judgments, hasty likes and dislikes and is neglectful, inconstant and ungrateful. Always ready to tax the patience of others and never willing to put up with any demands on his own forbearance, he easily loses his old friends and seldom makes any new ones.

All these circumstances in the outward life of a Christian man go to show that his inward life is weak and sickly and that he has made no progress in the practice of virtue. The kindness and affability which depend upon warm affections are never united to the soul. Look to your conduct and acquire more solid virtue or you will become a nuisance to yourself and a thorn in the side of everyone who has the misfortune to be under your charge. He who does not know how to govern himself is altogether unfit to govern a family or community of any kind. The pleasure presented in this chapter is not a pleasant one, but it is a faithful one; the appearance we present to others if not to ourselves, when we allow our temper to run riot unchecked by Reason and Religion.

HOW CHINA WAS LOST TO THE GURUH

The eyes of the civilized world are now on China. We are probably witnessing the greatest crisis in the modern history of that nation. It may mean the dismemberment of the Chinese empire and its partition among the powers. If not it means the government of a new dynasty and an entire reorganization of the Chinese government.

The first missionaries in China were Catholic Jesuits. China was probably by a Catholic country to-day but for the famous controversy over Chinese rites which largely resulted in the breaking up of the missions. The history of the introductory of Christianity to China is an interesting one.

In the year 1280 the father and the brother of Marco Polo returned to Europe from China after a long stay in the Orient. They were merchants, but their advice and their counsel had been sought by the Grand Khan of Tartary in his capital city of Cambaluc (Pekin).

Kublai Khan was a grandson of the fierce Jenghiz Khan and had elected to remain in China as Emperor, while his brothers, nephews and cousins divided the vast territory that had been overrun by the Tartar hordes between the Arctic Ocean and the Persian Gulf.

The Tartar tribesmen had conquered people of far higher civilization than their own. The Chinese of those days were masters of many arts and of much learning. The problem of Kublai Khan was to consolidate the huge empire of which he was master and to complete the conquest of southern China. Like a great statesman, as he was, he saw the importance of a state religion and he had many conversations with the Poles in this regard.

He heard what they had to say of Christianity and approved it. When they returned to Europe they were the bearers of a letter from the Khan to the Pope of Rome in which the Khan begged the Pope to send to China, under the guidance of the Poles, some scores of priests and missionaries and educated men. It was the Khan's intention to proclaim Christianity a state religion, and the priests were to be its expounders. These pioneers would soon have been followed by others, and if this plan had been carried out, there is little doubt that Christianity would have made its way throughout the Empire and that, China, with its 400,000,000 inhabitants would to-day be a Christian country.

How the project failed is well known. The brothers Polo arrived at Acre in the year 1289. The Pope was just dead and there was an unusually long interregnum. Only two Dominican priests could be found to accompany them to China, and these two were soon afflicted with the perils of the journey and turned back. Europe sent no missionaries, and the Emperor had recourse to India, Buddhism, which had been in the field for twelve centuries, took the place that Christianity failed to occupy, and its hold in China is to-day as strong as ever. Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, or a mixture of them, are the doctrines by which all Chinese, high and low, live and die.

of the court, and the Emperor himself, protected them. Whoever read the annals of the time must fall to conclude that the Jesuits were ten of the way to evangelize all China. The example of the court and of Pekin would have soon been followed by the great provincial noblemen and cities. It may fairly be said that China was once more in the way of becoming a Christian country.

FATHER RICCI. Father Ricci's mathematical knowledge secured the favor of the Imperial court. He devoted himself to the mission twenty seven years (1582-1619) and left behind him 800 churches, one of which was in the capital, Pekin. A German Jesuit, Schall, who came on the field in 1602, was also a distinguished mathematician. Shortly afterwards a great change occurred in the fortunes of the Chinese mission. It had been just entered in Jesuit lands, Gregory XIII. had in 1585 forbidden the members of other orders to enter China. But this restriction was removed, and in 1611 the first Dominican missionaries appeared, who were followed in 1633 by another Dominican, Morales, and by Franciscans. The new missionaries, and especially Morales, accused the Jesuits of gaining pleasure with Chinese idolatry and superstition and the famous controversy on the Chinese rites began.

Ricci and his successors, Pray tells us, considered the offerings of food and the marks of homage given to the dead in general, and to Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher, in particular, as certainly free from idolatry, and probably even from superstition. Further, the Jesuits allowed their converts to use as the name of God the Chinese words signifying "Lord of Heaven," or "Lord of the Sky," or even the single word "Heaven," or "heaven," and they exhibited in their churches tablets with the inscription "King tien," "adore the sky." These were the practices known as the Chinese rites or usages.

In 1618 the Dominicans sent Morales to Rome, and he submitted to the Congregation of Propaganda seven-teen propositions on the Chinese usages tolerated by the Jesuits. These usages after consultation with theologians and the Roman Inquisition, were prohibited by Innocent X., till the Holy See should otherwise determine. Meanwhile, the Jesuit Martini tried to convince the authorities at Rome that the impugned customs had nothing to do with religion, and that the success of the Catholic Church in China depended on their being permitted. He obtained from the Inquisition a decree confirmed in 1656 by Alexander VII. This edict allowed the practice of the Chinese rites, provided they possessed a merely civil character, were free from all admixture of idolatry, and could not be omitted without grave loss to the Chinese Christians.

The complaints, however, were renewed by three Lazarists whom Alexander VII. had made vicars-apostolic, and Clement IX. in 1689 renewed the decrees of 1615 and 1656, with a significant addition in which the regulars were ordered to obey the vicars-apostolic. While these disputes were dividing the missionaries into two hostile camps, the Jesuits were doing in the favor of the court, and in 1692 the emperor, Khang Hli, publicly announced that the Jesuits had full leave to preach, and his own subjects to embrace Christianity. Still the opposition of the other missionaries lasted.

The Lazarist vicar-apostolic forbade the rites in 1693, and sent a priest to demand that a tutor to justify the step which had been taken. Innocent XII. died before the commission he had appointed had settled the question, but his successor Clement XI. took the matter vigorously in hand, and desired full information sent Tournon, patriarch of Antioch, to China as apostolic legate in 1703. After examination of the points at issue, Tournon in 1707 condemned the Chinese rites as idolatrous, and in consequence of his evangelized country was imprisoned by the Chinese emperor. The Jesuits and bishops who thought with them appealed against the legate's decision to Rome; but they found less favor there than at Pekin. The court of full information sent Tournon, patriarch of Antioch, to China as apostolic legate in 1703. After examination of the points at issue, Tournon in 1707 condemned the Chinese rites as idolatrous, and in consequence of his evangelized country was imprisoned by the Chinese emperor.

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THE CHURCH IN PARIS

Writing from Paris to the West-ern Watchman: Father Pichon, says: The churches are supported by the State, but only as to the material structure. At the beginning of every fiscal year the Council de Fabrique, which would mean with us a board of trustees makes out its requisitions for the year to the Minister of Public Worship, and he incorporates the requests, or as much of them as he thinks fit, in his budget. These requisitions cover repairs and improvements to the building, and equipment, such as altar panels, vestments and the like. This Council de Fabrique is theoretically elected by the parishioners, but practically named by the curé. One result of this arrangement is that the churches have all grand vestments, splendid cloths and are kept scrupulously clean. The singers and organists, the sacristans and priests are paid by the State, all but the priests are pretty well paid, those get only a beggarly pittance, which they generally lose on the ground of outspoken hostility to the government. The first curés of France are allowed only 1,500 francs, or \$300. But the priests of Paris have no reason to complain of insufficiency of support, as the people are generous and the voluntary offerings are very large. The income of the curé of the Madeleine is established at 100,000 francs, or \$20,000, and there are a dozen other churches whose revenues are equally large. The church services are conducted with the greatest punctuality and exactitude. The priests are all day in and about the churches and the confessionals are never entirely empty. Masses are said from 5 to 11.30 without intermission and when a grand High Mass is going on at the main altar Low Masses are being said at the side altars to accommodate those who have not the time to stay for the longer function. There are a great many priests attached to each church, and there seems to be work for all. Most of them have schools taught by the Christian Brothers, but they are small compared with the number of children in those numerous parishes. The Brothers are clad in their usual habit, but they wear very heavy, coarse shoes. During the Festival of St. John the Baptist de la Salle, all the priests emphasized the law of the founder of the Christian Brothers' schools, that they should be dressed like the common people, should not pretend to scholarship, but rather show in their bearing humility, poverty, simplicity and ignorance. This last word opened my eyes. Thought I to myself, that would never do for America.

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