

istence, and affirmed that it was worse than useless to prepare for a state of which there was no absolute certainty. So that, theoretically and practically, the Chinese are atheists. A branch of Confucianism, of which Mencius was the author, begun 300 years a.c., is another source of difficulties to missionaries. It teaches that human nature of itself flows towards goodness, virtue and holiness. Another obstacle is the system of Choofoolzr, commenced during the 13th century. These are the chief false philosophies of China, and prove mighty impediments to the free course of the Gospel. Mr. W. stated that another barrier against which they have to contend is false religions. The first of these he mentioned was *state religion*, which comprises the worship of ancestors, of Confucius, of the god of Agriculture and of the patron deity of every city. The Emperor is not only the governor of China but also the high priest of the country. Annually he goes out in state to worship the material heavens, and at the same time the dust of the earth, both of which he supposes alive. Annually he prostrates himself before a tablet, on which is inscribed 'To the ancestors of the reigning dynasty,' and worships a long line of ancestry. The people also follow his example, and send to their ancestors houses, feasts, money, boats, &c. They do this by constructing them of paper, and, having burned them, imagine that thus the spirits of their ancestors will be supplied with the necessaries of life. In many instances this is done regularly on the 15th day of every month. But in the state religion there is more than the worship of ancestors. There is the worship of Confucius throughout the whole of the Chinese empire. In every school-room there is a tablet, before which the children prostrate themselves in the honour of Confucius every morning on commencing their duties. Students, magistrates, the Emperor and all classes of the people worship him as a god. Besides these is the worship of the god of Agriculture. He is worshipped as follows:—The Emperor having written out a prayer, the magistrates, who are men of education and polish, place it on an iron dish, and, having burned it, imagine that their god will thus hear and answer them. The patron deity of each city is also worshipped. State religion is not the only false system against which missionaries have to strive, for besides it there is Buddhism, adopted by the more ignorant classes of the people. Buddha is supposed to be above all—omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. The mass of the people think him too high for them, so they construct for themselves gods of different natures. There is the god of mercy in private houses, the god of riches to be found in every shop, the god of war and of the sea worshipped by soldiers and sailors. There is also *Tauism*, a system of religion which calls upon men to worship 'the Three Pure Ones,' a kind of trinity—the Stars, the Emperor of Heaven and the Emperor of Earth. Besides State Religion, *Adhism* and *Tauism* missionaries have to contend against many others, such as *Mohammedanism* and *Romanism*. The last obstacle which Mr. W. mentioned as being in the way of missionary success was false brethren. Englishmen and Americans, who go out to China under the name of Christians, and who indulge in the most wicked practices, have given the Chinese an idea of Christianity which it will prove most difficult to efface. Many of these so-called Christians engage in the opium and coolie trades, and, stealing from their homes the poor Chinese, carry them to the Indies, where they work as coolies on plantations. Mr. W. spoke strongly against such sinful practices, for the Chinese, seeing these things, sarcastically tell the missionaries

to go home and reform their own countrymen. The last point on which Mr. W. dwelt was the encouragements which missionaries have to persevere in their work. He said that the success which already has attended them encourages them still to go on. Upwards of 1-30 Chinese have been converted, 50 of whom are catechists, and have proved most efficient men in their work. Another ground of encouragement was the reception their books had received. These are widely disseminated through China, and, having been lately introduced into Japan, are there extensively read. This is extremely encouraging, for their success, at least for a time, depends chiefly on the books written by the missionaries, which are principally upon scientific subjects, proving from nature the existence of God. Another encouragement which cheers the hearts of missionaries is the interest which churches at Home are taking in the mission. Mr. W. said that missionaries would never attempt the work were they not assured that the churches at Home were praying for them. The knowledge of this cheers them in every difficulty and bears them up amid many trials. Another encouragement is that the churches are giving more than formerly. The last and chief reason why missionaries feel encouraged in their work is on account of the almighty power of the Gospel. While they were now labouring apparently without many good results, yet they were disseminating knowledge amongst the people, and, when they were ready for the blessing, the holy Spirit would be poured out from on high in such abundance that China would be converted, that the inhabitants of this vast empire would be brought into the kingdom, would acknowledge Christ as their Saviour, and bow the knee before the only living and true God as their father. In conclusion Mr. W. made a powerful appeal to Christian young men to come forward and engage in the glorious work of missionaries, and prayerfully to consider and obey the last injunction of our Saviour—'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel unto every creature'—Northern Ensign.

## NOTICE

An Overcoat and a Gold Shirt Snd were left in St. Andrew's Church, Kingston, during the late meeting of Synod. The owners are requested to apply at the Manse, Kingston.

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