

# Canadian Presbyterian Magazine

Especially devoted to the interests of the United Presbyterian Church.

"SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THAT THEY GO FORWARD."—Exodus xiv., 16.

VOL. III.—No. 7

TORONTO, AUGUST, 1853.

PRICE: \$1 PER ANNUM,  
Paid in advance.

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## Religious Intelligence.

### CHINA—HONG KONG.

Hong Kong is a small island off the coast of China—so small that a man may walk around it in a day. It is covered with hills rough and craggy in the extreme, and on this account very difficult to build on—yet it contains many fine houses, erected chiefly by the English.

Twelve years ago England wrested this little island from the Chinese. A war was then raging between the two governments. When a treaty of peace was concluded in 1843, Hong Kong was ceded to the Queen Victoria and her successors for ever.

The island now belongs to Great Britain by conquest and treaty, as it formerly belong to China by proximity and long possession. Its harbour is one of the finest in the world, and being but a mile or two from a populous coast, and near to some important cities, it affords its present owners many commercial advantages.

Before the war with the English, foreigners were not permitted to enter China. Of course the missionaries could not carry the gospel among the millions of people composing that immense empire. The single fact that the Chinese prohibited strangers from visiting them, is of itself evidence that they needed the gospel. Christianity makes a brotherhood of nations. It teaches that "God that made the world, hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth," and though "He hath determined on the bounds of their habitation," yet those bounds are consistent with the interchanges of commerce and mutual intercourse for the general good.

In his beneficent providence those exclusive barriers which selfishness and pride have set up, will gradually be broken down. Already several breaches have been made in China. By the treaty of peace with England, five important cities were opened to other nations, and a free toleration permitted in them to the services of the Christian religion. There, as also at Hong Kong, missionaries have gone, and churches, comprised in part of native converts, have been organized.

It is a notable fact that for several years before any door of entrance was open, the church stood prepared for the Chinese mission. In 1837, The American Board sent forth her men, and told them to find some resting-place without the limits of the empire, until such time as in the providence of God the door should be open for their admission. These brethren were sent out in Faith, and they went, not knowing whither they went. Journeying from place to place along that extended coast, they sent home the following report: "How long the Lord in his inscrutable providence will permit the Chinese government to exclude the missionaries of the cross, is known only to Him who seeth the end from the beginning. If prayer once opened the windows of heaven, the fervent and believing prayer will open the walls of China. It is our place to stand ready and prepared to enter in and reap the harvest." And thus they stood waiting the hour when God should overrule the wrath of man and turn it to his praise. Ten years have elapsed since these brethren were

permitted to engage in their work in their chosen field. And now the church is impatient for new fields for missionary effort. We would not only have five cities open to the free toleration of the services of our holy religion, but the whole empire, with its 300,000,000 of heathen idolaters. And God in his own good time will answer the prayers of his people. Again there are wars and rumors of war. The nation is divided against itself, and however it may surmount the internal conflict, yet it is evident that its exclusive policy must soon come to an end. It is contrary to the great laws of nature, and contrary to the gracious designs of our blessed Master, who will ere long make all nations, like kindred drops, mingle into one family and brotherhood in Him.—*Foreign Missionary.*

### THE COVENANTERS OF MADAGASCAR.

The Rev. Thomas Binney, at the late meeting of the London Missionary Society, said—

"Let me now just recall to you a little about Madagascar. It has been referred to as a noble island. I confess that, lying as it does, to the east of Africa, it appears to me the Great Britain of the African continent—a fine island, having in it a great abundance of raw material, natural and social—raw material that may be wrought up into beautiful forms of commercial prosperity, and virtue and advancement; the principal tribe, the Ovah, being reputed to be rather above the European standard in height—robust, athletic, of noble bearing, having about them a great deal of the raw material of man, which may be wrought up, by God's blessing on the instrumentality of the gospel, into fine forms of humanity. The religion of these people, you know, was a gross and debasing superstition. They were under the influence of their necromancers, the wise men, who appear to have understood priestcraft quite as well as many of a similar type in other lands. It appears that polygamy was allowed on a very extensive scale. There was slavery, and a slave-trade. Well, among these people, some forty years ago, or it may be a little more, there appeared a noble, great minded man—a man of great talents, and I think, of large ambition. He conquered and subdued the best part of the land. He used to collect into large meetings his conquered or submitting subjects. He used to take from them their oath of fidelity. He used to explain to them his laws; and he greatly reformed the laws that had previously existed, and showed great sagacity and political discernment; and thus he united under him a great mass of the population, the finest in the land; and he was the first that took the title of King of Madagascar. He abolished the slave trade, both internal and external. He punished with death either the bringing a slave into the kingdom, or the sending a slave out of it. He did not, however, abolish slavery itself; but I must say, from all that I can learn about the matter, that I think in Madagascar slavery seems to have existed in about the mildest form of that ancient institution. Now, Radama did a great deal previous to any of our missionaries going there. He was, I tell you, a large minded man, and had in view the improvement and elevation of his people; and he sent some of the native youth both to Paris and to England, that they might be instructed, and go back to be useful as reformers and elevators of society. It was quite to be expected that such a man (he looks to me like what we may call the Alfred of Madagascar) should have sagacity enough to discover the value of missionaries, when he came to understand their purpose and aim—And he did so; and I have no doubt that, previous to his own mind being enlightened, and his heart coming under the influence of the gospel, he had sagacity enough to discover that the missionaries were bringing the means of elevating and improving the people, and assisting him in the great political object which he had in view. Well, I must go into all the particulars of the Madagascar mission; and yet do I think it is right that we should have the minds of men stirred up by way of remembrance, that we may pass with intelligence such a resolution as this. Besides, it does appear to me, that what was done in Madagascar by our missionaries during the few years that they were there is perfectly marvellous. From 1818 and up to 1828, six missionary artisans, and two missionary printers, were sent; and during that time they continued their labors under the auspices and with the encouragement of Radama. In 1828 he died, or was poisoned, but if he was poisoned he died, and the Queen succeeding to his power, but under a bad influence, be