

that is pure and lofty in refinement and taste; it has given to art, poetry, and music their sublimest subjects. What would the Doré Gallery have been but for the Bible? Where but in its pages could Milton find a theme adequate to his genius? And what but its doctrine of the Messiah could furnish Handel with a subject grand enough for the full swell of his incomparable music? Millions have risen from the perusal of its pages with new light in their understanding and new joy in their heart, and have adored the matchless perfections of that glorious Being, whom it is its chief function to reveal. Who then can estimate the boon that is conferred when a book like this is given to a country like China? No version of the Bible was ever printed that opens its treasures to so many people as the Chinese version. The literary style is understood all over the empire, and in every Chinese colony. Though the people of different provinces cannot understand each other's speech, they can each other's writing. In this respect China has the advantage over India, where so many languages are employed. No other language can convey the Word of Life to so large a portion of the human race. Alexander conquered the world, but it could not understand his Greek. Rome laid her belt of 1,000 miles around the Mediterranean, but her empire was a Babel. England has thrown her arms around the globe, but her Bible cannot be read by a hundred million souls; nor can the French, or the German. But the Chinese version is intelligible to hundreds of millions. Happy the man and honoured the Society, who put the all-regenerating Bible, the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, the Gospels, the Epistles and the Apocalypse, into a language that can reach about eighty millions of homes, and four hundred millions of hearts. And what a people the Chinese are! They are not Hottentots or savages wandering about red-ochred and tattooed, whose first sight of their printed language is in the Bible given to them by the missionary. They are an ancient and ingenious people, living under the most venerable government on earth, with a literature nearly as old as Moses—a people who had their poets, sages, and philosophers centuries before English history began, and who are trained in many of the arts of civilized life. They may justly be described as a keen, inquisitive, and reading people, with mental capacity for almost anything. And their patience, perseverance and industry are proverbial. There is a beautiful story of a Chinese peasant boy, which illustrates their character. He was unable to study by day, and resolved to study by night, and not being able to buy a lamp, he carried home each night a glowworm to apply to his book. Give such men Jesus, and let them apply their glowworm to the Bible, and what a people! Make them familiar with the grand old patriarchs of Scripture and its inspired prophets, let them know its apostles and learn to adorn the majesty and love the goodness of that high and heavenly figure that fills its gospels; let its narratives charm them, and its pictured scenes delight their imagination; attune their minds to the music of its psalms, and engage their fancy with the parables; let its beatitudes and commandments control their life, its miracles awe their wonders, and its cross excite their gratitude and win their trust, and what may not the Chinese become? What nation may they not rival? What limit can be put to their power and progress? And among no people has the failure of every other system been so signal as among the Chinese. It might seem as if God had isolated them from the rest of the race for many centuries just to see whether human nature has in it any recuperative power, whether man—apart from God—can devise any system, social, political, or moral, sufficient for the suppression of vice, the exaltation of virtue, and the promotion of happiness. And certainly they have not been wanting in expedients. They have had three great national systems in full operation—two of them for twenty-five centuries and the other for twenty. These systems “occupy the three corners of a triangle—the moral, the metaphysical, and the material.” They appeal to the three chief faculties of the soul, the will, the sensibility, and the intellect; and they unite in ignoring God. They have had ample facility for developing every possible potentiality they may have had for elevating the