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## Intelligencers and Correspondents

### DR. FRASER EN ROUTE TO FORMOSA.

MY DEAR BROTHER,--We have been brought to you a few lines a day or two ago, that there were no many little things to attend to, and we were all so tired after a week of continuous railroad travel. I could give you a description of all that we saw by the way, but that is not the object. If I should write of the hundreds of miles of rich, flat prairie, and the flourishing towns and villages; of the hundreds of miles of rolling prairie, with here and there clumps and belts of stunted trees, and sluggish streams of muddy water; of long stretches of barren upland covered with sage-brush; of the bare, hard, cold Rocky Mountains; of the deep and ghastly gulches and gorges and canyons; of the beautiful snow and pine-covered Sierra Nevada; and of the charming and fertile valleys of California, you would require to fill a page, instead of a part of a column, for me. I will spare you and your readers the infliction. You will let me say, though, in a few words, that the trip is a very nice one, but that, notwithstanding all the comforts and conveniences of first-class travel, before such a journey is completed, one is very tired, and I would counsel any one to contemplate the crossing of the Continent, to arrange so as to make the journey in three or four instalments, and to bring with them a large and well-stocked lunch-basket. When we set out, it was with the intention of halting for a day or two at Chicago and at Salt Lake City--a plan which was abandoned when we found that the estimates we had made were too low to permit of such a thing, and that the steamer we expected to sail by left San Francisco on the 14th, instead of the 16th, as we had understood. Our lunch-basket was, however, well stocked, and we were comparatively independent of the eating-houses, where the train stopped but for a few minutes, and where we charge for a meal was from seventy-five cents to a dollar.

I am sorry we shall not be able to leave San Francisco by the first steamer, which sails on the 14th inst. Mrs. Fraser is so exceedingly wearied with the overland journey that we think it would be very imprudent to undertake a voyage of such length as she is quite herself again. In addition to this, our boxes will not arrive till the end of next week, and we may as well wait here for them as in Hong Kong; we could not very well go on to the Island without them. Besides, we are staying with the kindest of friends, and are exceedingly comfortable. Captain Henderson, whose wife is a sister of the late Rev. Dr. Goddie, a missionary for very many years of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces to the island of Amoy, in the South Seas, caught us out, as soon as he saw by the newspaper that we had reached the city, made us most welcome to his house, and as never since ceased to show us kindness. He is a sea-faring man of many years experience, and he insists that "Mrs. Fraser ought by no means to venture the fatigue of ocean travel, with her infant, till she is quite rested." We all hope that by the 28th inst. a day on which the "China" sails--we will be quite ready to set out on the last and biggest part of our long journey.

Our friends in Canada who were so much afraid that the children would never stand the journey, will be surprised and pleased to learn that they have proved themselves brave travellers, and are as well and full of life and merriment as the day we set out. To lessen the disappointment of our not getting through as soon as we expected, there are one or two considerations. I will be able to send letters before me to tell the missionaries on the Island when to expect me. I will also be able to see a good deal of the Mission work among the Chinese in this city, of whom there are several thousands, and in this way will very likely be able to gather some information that will be of service to me. I will try and write again before we sail, and tell you something about Formosa, San Francisco, and the Christian work among the Chinese on this coast.

Our kindest remembrances and regards to all our friends. We were almost ashamed to receive so many valuable tokens of esteem from them before we came away. We have presents in very great variety and number, and ready to believe that there are a good many who find it "more blessed to give than to receive." You have noticed already the address and price of \$100 with which I am presented by some friends in my former congregation at Blind Head, when I was on my farewell visit there. In addition to this, I was remembered in a most sub-

stantial way by other friends there. A member of the congregation of Oranvale, in the township of Innisfil, sent me \$25 as a token of regard, and the promise of \$10 a year to my mission, on condition that I will be delighted to fulfil. But I must not particularize any more just now.

I have but one request to make before I finish this letter. Will our friends at home, and the friends of the Lord Jesus Christ wherever your paper is read, remember the very peculiar and trying situation in which we are, and pray to Him, from whom we have life and breath and all things, that He will keep us and bring us safely through all our journeyings by land and sea, and bless us very abundantly in everything we undertake for the promotion of His glory and the advancement of Christ's cause? If we have God's blessing, we shall have peace, and comfort, and joy, and great success.

Yours very sincerely,  
J. B. FRASER.

San Francisco, Nov. 12, 1874.

### Letter from Formosa.

To Rev. Prof. McLaren, Convener Foreign Mission Committee.

MY DEAR BROTHER.--Several weeks ago I went to a town called Lo-ki-han, about twelve miles from savage territory. After remaining over night there I started the following morning to cross the mountain ranges, and was not long reaching the home of the Savage. Just on the border there is a large Chinese Settlement, engaged in the manufacturing of camphor out of the large trees which stand like elms in a Canadian forest. The trees are cut down, and then the roots and trunks are cut up into small bits and then steamed. The process is quite different from that of sugar making in Canada. Those engaged in this work face death every day, and all in order to gather sordid perishable dust. How much more willing should we be to meet death for an everlasting inheritance. The day before I went in three wore boated, and when there, three more lost their heads. I just had time to take some ready cooked rice, and start up the side of a hill to see some savages who were standing there, when I heard loud reports of guns, howling and yelling, quite near. The savages on the hill fled, and in a moment I saw others running off victorious, with the herds, and the Chinese in pursuit, but the latter dared not follow them into their mountain retreats. Although this work goes on every day, still, the Chinese were greatly excited. You will see from this, that I could not get a favourable hearing that day, but the Lord reigneth, and He will try us, will try our faith, will try our patience, and all for His own glory. I am now going from station to station, teaching the helpers and converts--at the same time the Lord is enabling me to do much in the way of relieving suffering humanity, and thus preparing hearts for the everlasting Gospel. Indeed, what the Lord is doing is a matter of surprise to myself, but why should it be? "ask and it shall be given." You know, I don't pretend to be a doctor of any kind, I only do what I can to relieve those who are suffering. This by Jehovah's Help, I will continue to do until this "stammering tongue" lies silent in the grave. At Chin-nih two idolaters lay sick of what is called in the West "Asian Cholera." Chinese doctors were sent for, and gave roots, flowers, and leaves--Lauist Priests were called in, and repeated formulas, and performed incantations. All the idols in the village temple were consulted, and all of no avail. The patients grew worse? Their friends came to the chapel and pleaded with me to go and see them. I went at once, and gave them a small dose of a simple preparation; that night they slept, and next day I called again and found the Lauist Priest at the door waiting to enter, but the sick men told him to leave immediately. He seemed displeased; no matter, the Lord reigneth. The third day both came to the chapel quite well. Proceeding to Sa-teng-po, I found four more cases exactly similar, i. e. as far as the means used were concerned. Doctors, Priests, and idols, were consulted, and all of no avail. I went to their houses and left medicines, and in four days they were well, much to the annoyance of the village priest. Men may sneer, and devils rage, but this is all the Lord's work. I mention these cases because I know God performed the work, as assuredly as he sent the sun blazing through the firmament. He is always near, He never changes--He rules heaven and earth; why will not men believe Him?

From Sa-teng-po I went to Pat-li-hun, opposite Tamsui, where we have a splendid chapel. It was built entirely through native effort. On Sabbath 19th, I baptised

six men of that place, in the afternoon; with those who were admitted before we commemorated the dying love of Jesus. Our little band is gradually becoming larger. At first I sat around the table with five, and last Sabbath with 18, and one of the number admitted last is a very dear young man; formerly he was a druggist, and well acquainted with the classics, in consequence of which, he considered himself a very learned man. When I met him first he began to quote the classics like an old sage, but in a few days he would not open his mouth about these writings. He is now humble in heart, and looks back with sorrow and shame upon his past life when puffed up with pride, and when he thought their own writings contained full information about all things under heaven. He is very successful in discussing matters with those who think as he formerly did. I cannot help but believe that God has given him a new heart, and I have great hopes that he will be used by the Lord of the harvest, in gathering others into the garner. I feel so thankful to the Lord for the spirit shown by my helpers; some of them are very dear young men. Pray for them. I know you do. I plead for Canada. Will the Lord's people then remember Northern Formosa? Many do. I thank Jehovah for it. I long to see brother Fraser here, and I rejoice that there is prospect of another. The Lord is good, I rejoice too, at the near prospect of Union in our broken ranks in the Dominion. With death, judgment, and eternity before us, it is high time we should close up our ranks, burish our weapons, and go forth under the banner of Immanuel against all our foes. I often think of the General Assembly of our church, and the assemblies of other churches could only meet, out in these ends of the earth--they would return determined to remove every barrier which stands in the way of Union, and would stand shoulder to shoulder, ready to do battle against the world and the devil. Glory to God in the highest, let earth resound his praise, there is a greater Spirit of harmony, love, and union than in bygone days. The Lord be magnified, praying for Jehovah's blessing to rest upon all your labors in Knox College, and upon all associated with you and upon our beloved friend. With kindest regards,

I am ever Yours, Sincerely,

G. S. McKAY.

Formosa, Tamsui, August 19th, 1874.

### A Model Prayer-Meeting.

Lately the writer had an opportunity of attending a prayer-meeting in the 23rd Street Presbyterian Church, New York, the plan of which might be copied with great advantage by our congregations generally.

At the close of the evening public service, a goodly number adjourned into the school room of the Church, through the doors on each side of the pulpit, and an elderly gentleman took charge of the meeting, who, I was informed, had been converted only a few months. There were six short prayers and three short addresses, interspersed with singing--one or two verses some seven times--the whole occupying about 36 minutes.

The prayers and addresses only about THREE MINUTES EACH, the time proscribed by the Y. M. C. Association of Toronto. They generally related to some one topic--a short address giving an account of one or more cases of conversion--in answer to prayer offered on their behalf. A request for prayer for some one, briefly stating the merits of the case, or seeking to stir up all to greater devotedness by recalling their obligations, and the goodness of God to them in the past. There was a warmth and variety, and freshness about the meeting, which quickened all hearts, and made them feel it is good for us to be here. How much better than the long prayers, which we often hear in Canada, ranging over the whole history of man, and perhaps telling God a great deal about the doctrines of the Bible, but not about our own weakness and wants, and humbly and earnestly presenting our desires for the blessings now specially needed by us.

I here append a short American tractate, whose aim is to stir up the people to attend the prayer-meeting called "The Hour of Prayer;" and which might be ordered by the hundred in small 32 mo. tract, and circulated in the congregation.--PRESBYTERIAN.

### THE HOUR OF PRAYER.

#### A PASTOR'S INVITATION.

"Midway between the Sabbath the Church has appointed an hour for social prayer and praise."  
"Your Pastor is exceedingly desirous that you should be a habitual attendant upon this meeting, for the following, among other reasons:

"1. Your presence here will greatly encourage and aid your Pastor."  
"It needs to be strongly reinforced by the united prayers of the whole Church."

"Brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified."

"2. The Prayer Meeting is the place of power in the Church."  
"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

"3. The Church Prayer Meeting is the place for the development and expression of Christian sympathy."  
"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

"4. At the Prayer Meeting you are likely to meet Jesus."  
"You, yourself, need the sustenance and stimulant that a habitual attendance at the prayer-meeting is likely to afford you."

"We would see Jesus." "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"

"5. The Prayer Meeting will help you amid the cares, anxieties, business and temptations of the week."  
"Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"6. Our Lord himself needs just such manifested sympathy as is afforded by a general attendance at the Prayer Meeting."  
"What! could ye not watch with me one hour?"

Then, come to the prayer-meeting. For your Pastor's sake; for the Church's sake; for your own sake; for Christ's sake. Come!--Humbly, cheerfully, humbly, prayerfully asking, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do," and God will hear and bless.

"Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."  
If at any time providentially hindered from attending the Prayer-Meeting, do not forget to meet us in spirit at the "Mary Seat."

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, The Christian's native air, His watchword at the gates of death, He enters heaven with prayer!

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice, Returning from his ways; While angels in their songs rejoice, And cry--"Behold no prayers!"

O, Thou by whom we come to God,-- The Life, the Truth, the Way! The path of prayer Thyself hast trod, Lord! teach us how to pray.

DIFFICULTIES.--1. Business Hindrances. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."  
"Neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord My God, of that which does cost me nothing."

"The Life is more than meat."  
2. Inability to speak or pray in meeting. "She hath longed what she could."  
"Perhaps you can sing, at least you can come with a prayerful heart. If you attempt to speak for Jesus you may find God's promise to Moses fulfilled to you--"I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say."

SUGGESTIONS.--To make the prayer-meeting interesting and profitable, there are required:

Previous preparation of mind and heart. Promptness in attendance and service. Compactness in sitting.

Brevity in prayer and remark. Heartiness in singing. Variety in the exercises. Waiting not for others to speak or pray. Cordiality in greetings, and especially in the greeting of strangers.

The presence of Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost.

### Dreams.

Dreams being doubtless coeval with our race, many have been the attempts to define their origin, nature, and importance. Among those definitions, the briefest, if not the best, we have seen, is that of the celebrated Dr. Rush, who says that a dream is a temporary delirium, and a delirium is a permanent dream. While dreams in ancient times attracted no little attention, in our day, or rather, among ourselves, they seem to merit little notice, and I meet with less regard, and therefore we are the more struck in contrasting the marked interest and importance attached to them in ancient times, with the very marked indifference and neglect they meet with in our own. Who are right--we or they? In regard to the recorded dreams of Scripture, they were all of God--were prefigurative and important--and in consequence they met with the attention which they merited; and hence the dreams of Joseph, though but a mere lad, engaged the serious attention of his father and his brethren. Dreams coming from God differed from the mere vagaries of imagination in this, that when God spake to anyone in dreams he usually made the voice to be recognised as his by the effect which they produced upon the mind of the dreamer, as well as the requiring divine guidance for their interpretation.

The question then really is, have dreams ceased to be significant? Has this ancient and oft-employed door of intercourse with the future been forever closed? Miracles have ceased, and we can account for this--they were designed to establish the truth of Christianity by evidence suited to the extraordinary nature of the thing to be proved. But dreams were not designed like miracles, to confirm truth, and thus it cannot be said that dreams have ceased for the same reason that miracles have ceased. Prophecy, too, has ceased, and we can account for this--It was designed to fortify the Providential dealings of God, and the spiritual operations of truth, down to the end of time; but dreams were not designed like prophecy, to announce matters of universal importance, and thus it cannot be said that for the same reason they have ceased. It has been asked, however, that since the philosophy of sleeping and dreaming is the same now as it ever has been, why should not dreams be as much heard and heeded as they have been before? In the same way it may be asked that, since men possess now the same powers of reason and speech as they did then, why are they not now heard and heeded as they were before, when only men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? Simply because they are not inspired. As God can inspire men whether asleep or awake, it is this inspiration alone that gives sanctity and authority to their utterance; and as we do not believe that any are now inspired in the same sense in which the writers of the Scriptures were inspired, so we accept of none of their utterances, whether of visions, dreams, or dogmas in the sense of being revelations from God. But again it is assumed that as man is as much in need of the guidance of a particular Providence now as at any previous period of the world, dreams should be to him still as significant as ever. This we flatly deny. For while "God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the Father by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son," that same Son left behind him a class of men taught by him and guided by his spirit to complete the Divine record. The sacred canon is, therefore, now closed, the chosen witnesses of Christ have fully developed the great scheme of salvation, and all that is necessary for us to know alike, for our temporal and eternal weal is clearly set forth in the completed Word of God. Such being the case, it clearly follows that now to be looking for divine communications by means of visions, dreams, or new revelations, or to expect any new doctrine to be conveyed into our minds by the agency of any spirit, aside from what is already contained in the written word of God, is to be carried away by the spirit of error and delusion, and beguiling in all who do so a pitiable presumption, the very reverse of what God's word either produces or requires. But further it is asked, if dreams are not of God, how can we account, even in our own age for their frequently very striking and remarkable fulfilment? In reply we would say that, at least all dreams are not from God for two reasons; first, many of them are but the essence of silly vagaries, and again, very many dreams are never fulfilled. A man for instance, may have a waking impression as well as a sleeping dream that such and such will come to pass, and if the event in any way seems to justify his prognostications, then it is long remembered and oft-repeated, and that too with an air of self-conscious superiority, but if there is nothing to verify his impressions, the whole matter is buried forever in the oblivion of his own bosom. Or again, a man may take his Bible in his hand, and attaching a superstitious importance to the place where it opens, will say not only that this is the will of God (which all will readily admit) but oracularly adds that what he reads is God's will concerning you, and as in the other case if anything occurs seemingly to verify his utterance, the fact is heralded far and wide, but if not, the matter is never heard of again. Now, it cannot be denied that probably not one in ten thousand of these dreams, impressions and Bible-openings, are ever followed by aught to verify their utterances, but if they were of God they would all be fulfilled. The few that are simply coincidences which can, in most if not all cases, be accounted for on natural principles, and the wonder is, not that there should be such coincidences, but that considering the countless fancies that pass through the mind in sleep, the wonder we say is, that these coincidences are not ten times more common than they are. Dreaming is natural to man, and we are not for a moment to suppose that God created this peculiarity in man at the time he employed it to save his people any more than that he created the rainbows when he constituted it the symbol of his covenant, or that he endowed man with the power of speech simply and only that he might speak by inspiration. Further, we are not to suppose that those whose dreams are recorded in God's Word, never dreamed any other dreams than those, any more than that those who spoke by inspiration never spoke anything else. The simple solution of the whole matter seems to be this: that God employs the faculties of man, whether asleep or awake, to serve His purpose and foreshadow future events, as best suits Himself, and that in all such cases the individuals so employed, were for the time and the occasion miraculously inspired and thus solely in such a way, and for such a purpose their utterances came to pass.

Glean Morris.

D.