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"SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, THAT THEY GO FORWARD."—Ezekiel xiv, 10.

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Religious Intelligence.

CHINESE FESTIVALS.

The Rev. A. W. Loomis says, "I once undertook to keep a list of all the public days and religious festivals as they occurred at Ningpo, and to write down a short account of each, but I soon found the task too great for one who has many other duties to perform." He gives, however, as an example, a narrative of the *Tao Shin Way*, a festival or procession, which, some say, is in honor of all the gods. We regret that we have not room for this. It must be a very singular affair. He speaks of—

A procession three miles long, with thousands of spectators, many silk banners of various colors, rich umbrellas and lanterns held aloft, sedan chairs, incense cars, fancy boats filled with miniature furniture for the accommodation of the gods, horses richly caparisoned, artificial storks and elephants as large as life, images of fabulous creatures, children borne on high, supported on wires not visible, magistrates with all their state array, gentlemen in rich dress, penitents in the garb of criminals, dragging heavy chains, the din of strange music, gongs, triangles, horns, trumpets, powder crackers, and, last of all, "the god in a large sedan chair," preceded by "a fierce-looking fellow, with a fiery red face, and three large protruding eyes, one of which was in the centre of his forehead," and accompanied by "all the attendants common in the train of high officers." Need we wonder if the effect of the whole scene was exciting and bewildering!

The expense of such festivals is very large. Some of the umbrellas are said to cost \$100 each. Thousands of dollars are thus expended. The money is raised by voluntary subscriptions, the city being canvassed by committees visiting each district for this object. A labouring man gave half a month's wages towards the cost of this procession! And, alas! all is delusion, vanity, vexation of spirit! It heals no wounded spirit, comforts no sorrowing heart, takes away no burden of sin. The gospel only can do this.

Mr. Loomis, after describing the preceding and many other features of this festival, concludes this letter with the following remarks, which are discriminating and forcible.

"When we consider all the appendages to idolatrous worship, and the various devices contrived by the father of lies, who well understands how to make forbidden fruit seem good for food, and pleasant to the eyes; a thing to be desired; we are not surprised that the heathen become wedded to it. It is, as much as possible, made attractive to children, and is scarcely less so to the adults, who in all heathen countries are in their amusements hardly in any respect different from children.

"False religions abound in external ceremonies, for the perception and gratification of the senses, and by their systems of rewards to be gained by personal labors and suffering, they please the carnal heart. But the Christian religion has but few and simple ordinances, and the benefits of

these are promised to those only who by faith receive them,—a religion of faith rather than of works, with doctrines the most humbling and offensive to man's proud nature,—a religion which cannot be grafted upon any of the systems of man's invention, nor allow any parts of such systems to be mixed with it. It strikes at the root of every evil, boldly announcing, wherever it goes, its opposition to every system of salvation except that published by Christ and his apostles; and declares its determination to war with wickedness, and to demolish, root and branch, every false religion.

"Where, then, may the missionary find encouragement! If he preaches the truth, (and he can preach nothing else,) he will stir up hatred and opposition. But encouragement is not wanting. He is only the servant of God, to go where he sends him, and to preach the preaching which he bids him. He goes also with the promise of his Master, 'Lo, I am with you.' He is assured that the Word of God is the word of the spirit. He knows that wherever God has people, there he will bless his own appointed means to gather them."—*For. Mis.*

COUNTRY OF THE NESTORIANS.

Country, Climate, Productions.—The Nestorians are found chiefly in the district of Oromoon in Persia, and among the Koordish mountains in Turkey. The district of Oromoon consists of a plain extending forty miles along the lake, and reaching back twenty miles in its widest part, but growing narrower towards its extremities as the mountain sweep down nearer to the water, till at length it is hemmed in like a vast amphitheatre. Its area is not far from six hundred square miles, and it contains, in connection with the declivities of the adjacent mountains, not less than three hundred and thirty villages. The temperature is about that of the Middle Asia. As showers seldom fall in the warm season, irrigation has every where to be resorted to, and the evaporation which is thus constantly going on, in addition to some local causes which under a wise administration might be easily remedied, renders a climate, naturally one of the fittest in the world, unhealthy, especially to foreigners. The soil is extremely fertile, and the productions various and abundant, wheat, rice, cotton, tobacco, and the vine being the most abundant. Ten or more species of the grape are found. Oh! fruits are yielded in great abundance, and some of them of rare perfection, a pear having one day been brought to Mr. Perkins twelve inches in circumference. So numerous are the orchards and the elad trees in the villages and along the water courses, that on small parts of the plain has the appearance of American forests.

From some of the elevations back of Oromoon, says Mr. Perkins, "the beholder has spread out before him one of the loveliest and grandest specimens of natural scenery that was ever presented to the eye of man."

The contrast between the district of the plain and that of the mountains is as great as can be imagined. No where can scenery more wild and rugged be found than in the central regions of Koordistan. Some of the elevated plains, which are completely embosomed in loftier ranges, are of considerable extent and of great beauty. Some of the deep narrow gorges are surpassingly fertile, and every available inch of ground is under a high state of cultivation. Not a few of the villages are almost inaccessible. Many of the mountain passes are extremely difficult, even for the practised feet of the natives. The inhabitants obtain their scanty living chiefly from pasturage. During the summer they come down to the plain in considerable numbers to find employment, and still more are driven down in winter by hunger and cold to seek a subsistence on charity.

People, Language.—The Nestorians are not so much a nation as a sect. Among themselves they do not go by the name of Nestorians, but of Christians. As a sect they rose in the fifth century, in consequence of the excommunication of Nestorius, the Bishop of Constantinople, who had received his birth and education in Syria, and who was deposed, probably, more out of envy than because of heresy. His countrymen warmly espoused his cause, the sect being first established by the sovereigns of Persia, and it rapidly spread itself throughout the central and eastern parts of Asia. This was owing to their remarkable missionary character, in respect to which no sect or people, beside the Moravians, will bear a comparison with them. Their missionaries went forth in all directions, and braved every hardship and danger in the prosecution of their object. Gibbon bears witness to their zealous zeal and self-denial. They planted churches on the Malabar coast in India which continue to this day.