

In some parts of China a common school-teacher does not receive over thirty dollars a year, and men are performing faithfully the duties of pastor to two or three churches for a salary of fifty dollars a year.

A man who has an income equal to one dollar a month for each member of his family is in comfortable circumstances. They live so cheaply, not because provisions are cheap, but because they live so poorly.

Dried leaves and grass, with the dried roots of the grain, are common fuel. Rice or millet, with the coarser grains, sweet potatoes, and yams, are the necessities of life.

Wheat, meat, vegetables, and fruit are luxuries in which the majority of the people indulge but rarely. But what most interests Christians in China is that the people are heathen.

It is true they are civilized. They live in houses. They have some manufactures, and extensive commerce. They have an organized system of government. They have books and schools. Nevertheless, they are heathen. You will find a full description of their moral character in the first chapter of Romans. They are 'without God and without hope in the world.' They are 'all their lifetime subject to bondage' through their superstitions, which concern every important event and interest of their lives.

Is a new garment to be made, it must have a seam in the back, not because the pattern or the width of the cloth requires it, but for good luck to the wearer.

Is a babe to go abroad for the first time, a lucky day must be chosen, when of joy is abroad, and the god of on is hidden. The babe must be wrapped in a red cloak, and the person who carries it armed with a peach-tree switch, for evil spirits and baleful influences alike fear red cloaks and peach-tree switches.

Does a man seek a wife for his son, he first consults the astrologers, who decide under what influences and aspects of the stars must have been born the girl who will bring good luck to his family.

Is a house to be built, the magicians must select a lucky site and position for it, and a lucky day to begin work on it,

or misfortune will never depart from its inmates.

Does a man die, he must be buried in a lucky place, or calamities will follow his descendants from generation to generation.

Every village has its temple, and the cities are full of temples. Everybody visits the temples and worships the idols. Notwithstanding their poverty, none of them appear empty before their gods. Of that which costs them something do they sacrifice unto their idols, and their offerings are always presented before their prayers.

THEY NEED THE GOSPEL.

If you should ask a Chinese woman, 'Have you a soul?' she would probably answer, 'I don't know. People say we have souls. Do you know about it?'

If you ask, 'What becomes of us at death?' she would say, 'Oh, we shall go to the temple, drink the soup of oblivion to make us unconscious of everything past, and then be born into some new state of existence.'

Or perhaps she would say, 'When I die I shall shut my eyes and go away and never know anything more at all. If I am miserable I shall not know it, and if I am happy I shall not know it.'

The Chinese suppose their lot to be fixed by an unalterable destiny, and so learn to bear their heavy burdens of sorrow and suffering, toil and poverty, perhaps wrong and oppression, with a stubborn endurance, unrelieved by any ray of hope in the future, or of light from above. Such fatalists are they, and so stolid does their fatalism make those who suffer much and long, that they can scarcely be aroused to hope for any great good, or to care for anything but present relief from the burdens of this life. And when told of an endless life of happiness to come, which they may have for the seeking, they will answer, 'That is all very well for those that are born to such good luck, but as for me, I am born to an evil destiny. There is no good luck in store for me. If I can only have enough to eat and wear in this life, and keep from severe pain, and well enough to do my work, I don't care whether I am a fish, or a turtle, or a lobster, or a snail hereafter.'