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'Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
 and a light unto my path.'—Ps. cxix. 105.

Frontispiece

The Bible in China

by

MARSHALL BROOMHALL

‘The Word of our God
shall stand for ever’

THE CHINA INLAND MISSION, LONDON
PHILADELPHIA, TORONTO, MELBOURNE, AND
SHANGHAI
AGENTS: THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
4 BOUVERIE STREET, LONDON, E.C.4 1934

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THIS STORY
OF
THE BIBLE IN CHINA
IS DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE GOODLY COMPANY OF UNKNOWN CHINESE SCHOLARS
(WHO LABOURED WITH THE MISSIONARY-TRANSLATORS)
AND TO
THE NOBLE ARMY OF COLPORTEURS
WHOSE NAMES ARE IN
THE BOOK OF LIFE

Egypt and Persia and Greece and Rome, all that was greatest outside the Jewish nation, as well as Israel itself, ministered to the foundation of that Kingdom of Christ of which we are citizens. For long ages the heathen nations appeared to be left alone, and yet they were not alone. The Bible itself enshrines treasures which they gathered. . . . The races of the Far East we can hardly doubt will in their season lay open fresh depths in the Gospel which we are unfitted to discover. Already there are symptoms of such a consummation.

BISHOP B. F. WESTCOTT

Let us betake ourselves afresh to our Bible, and let us never have done with it. It bears the proof of its own supernaturalness within it; for while it is a Library, which occupied much more than a millennium in its manifold growth, yet behold, it is a Book! And the world is strewn with proofs, after a thousand criticisms, that this unique Book, manifold and one, is the divine vehicle of supernatural results in human souls. Man of God, Minister of Christ, and all true members of the Lord's Body everywhere, 'read the heart of God in God's own Words' (to quote the words of Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, who died A.D. 604), and always be reading it again, on your knees, before the real Author's face.

BISHOP HANDLEY MOULE

Foreword

IT is one hundred years since Robert Morrison died in China, and one hundred and twenty years since his Chinese translation of the New Testament was published. It is not unfitting that the centenary of Morrison's death should see the remarkable story of the Bible in China published. It seems somewhat strange that this has not been done before. And now, by one of those unexpected coincidences which do occur, two records are being issued at the same time. On the very day on which we write this foreword—the whole book being finished—we have received from China a copy of the Rev. A. J. Garnier's brochure of some eighty pages, entitled *Chinese Versions of the Bible*. Happily the two efforts do not clash.

Mr. Garnier's concise pamphlet has been prepared, as his preface states, to be the basis of a Chinese Appendix to his translation of Professor G. Milligan's *The New Testament and its Transmission*. It is an excellent summary, and being printed in China, has the advantage of giving in Chinese, as well as in English, the more important names and titles. On the other hand, our book has been written mainly for the home reader. Its larger scope allows a somewhat fuller treatment, but, all the same, minor details have been sacrificed to secure a correct impression of the whole. Sir Joshua Reynolds' advice to painters applies to writers: 'the likeness consists more in the general air, than in observing the exact similitude of every feature'. With forty versions in use in China, equal treatment of all would have blurred the picture. The main issues have therefore been brought into stronger relief, with some inevitable loss to the less important factors. The alternatives have been, a useful book of reference for the few, or a suggestive and stimulating volume for the many. Not without some pangs of regret, the popular line

has been adopted, but with every care to secure accuracy in detail and impression.

The subject is one that has haunted the writer's mind for long. Twenty-seven years ago we devoted nearly fifty pages to this topic in *The Chinese Empire*. Ten years ago, when writing the Life of Robert Morrison, the larger issues still loomed before us. Last summer, when freedom from other work gave the desired opportunity, we approached the three Bible Societies interested, the British and Foreign Bible Society, the National Bible Society of Scotland, and the American Bible Society. No reception could have been more cordial, and no facilities could have been more generous than those we received. All the necessary records were graciously placed at our disposal, and we desire to acknowledge the large-hearted way in which this was done. It has made a task, already a joyous one, even more inspiring. But our obligations are so many that it seems best to summarize these in a separate note.

The story of the Chinese Bible has some things in common with the English Bible. Bishop Westcott has told us that 'the Vernacular Versions of Europe—German, French, Spanish, Italian—were the work of single men'. So it was at first in England, and so it was at first in China. Instead of such names as Wycliffe, and Tyndale, and Coverdale in the one case, we can read Marshman, and Morrison, and Gutzlaff in the other case. But upon these foundations were built, in England, our Authorized and Revised Versions, and in China, the Union Versions. And what Bishop Westcott has written of the English Bible may be echoed concerning the Chinese Bible also. 'No one man, no one party, can lay his hand upon it, and say: "It is mine": nor again can he turn aside and say: "I have no part in it"'. As the result of its history it bears the enduring stamp of manifoldness and holds the prerogative of life.'

There are few more encouraging features in the outlook to-day than the surprising circulation of the Scriptures in

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China. Revolution, civil strife, brigandage, famine and flood have not stayed its progress. The Word of God has not been bound by any of these. There is no circulation like it in the world. And the stories told in this volume reveal the power of God's Word to change men's lives. That the average annual circulation in China to-day is roughly ten million Scriptures, inspires hope for China's future. Like a river of life from the throne of God, it carries healing wherever it flows. May this short story awaken songs of thanksgiving for the past, and renewed devotion for the future.

MARSHALL BROOMHALL

Easter, 1934

Our Obligations

OUR first obligation is to the three Bible Societies, without whose cordial approval and support this book would not have been undertaken. Will the Secretaries in London, Glasgow, and New York kindly accept a united acknowledgment of our many and varied debts to their assistance. We are also indebted to Dr. Hutton of the Moravian Missions for the loan of books and material relating to Tibet. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has also generously given permission for the use of extracts from Professor A. C. Moule's *Christians in China before the year 1550*, Archdeacon A. E. Moule's *The Chinese People*, and Professor P. Y. Saeki's *The Nestorian Monument in China*. On the problems raised by the Nestorian Monument and the Syrian Canon, we have enjoyed an interesting but inconclusive correspondence with Professor A. C. Moule, who has also consulted Professor F. C. Burkitt and Professor J. F. Bethune-Baker. This riddle must for the present be left unsolved. We are also under obligation to many missionaries for instances exemplifying the way in which men and women have been made wise unto salvation through the reading of the Scriptures.

With regard to books, we have in the main kept our pages free from lists of authorities. There is both loss and gain in this procedure. Long familiarity with the highways and byways of literature on China has enabled us to cull our information from sources far too numerous to specify in detail without exhausting the reader's patience. No trouble has been spared to track down any needed items of knowledge, or to examine the available records with care. Special mention must be made of William Canton's monumental *History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, of the *China Agency Reports* of the same Society, every page of which has been scrutinized since they

were first issued. The same is true of the China sections of the Annual Reports and the *Quarterly Records* of the National Bible Society of Scotland. Great help has also been obtained from the *China Missionary Conference Reports* and from the *Chinese Recorder*, a compendium of priceless value. How the research student blesses the memory of Dr. and Mrs. G. H. Bondfield and of Drs. G. F. Fitch and H. V. S. Myers for the one comprehensive Index which covers thirty-one volumes—the years 1890 to 1921—of this last-mentioned mine of information. Other books clamour for recognition, but we must refrain from extending the list. The subject is so vast, and the resources so extensive, that it has been a somewhat painful task to dwarf it all into one small volume.

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ERRATUM.

Page XV.

For “ St. John iii. 16 in Khalkha Mongolian ” read “ St. Matthew iv. 10 in Khalkha Mongolian.”

By Way of Introduction

Is there any command in history to equal the familiar words of Christ: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?' It demanded nothing less than the exploration of the uttermost parts of the earth, and the conquest of all human speech. And in both departments the Church has had a worthy part. Its linguistic achievements alone excel those of all the world's universities put together. Two illustrations must suffice. Of the nearly one thousand languages into which the Scriptures or portions thereof have been translated, more than three hundred of them have been reduced to writing for the first time to make them channels for the Word of God. And it was a missionary who compiled the first Chinese-English Dictionary, in order that Chinese might become eloquent with the words of eternal life.

It may sound an easy thing to give a nation the Bible in its own tongue, but close acquaintance with the facts makes one marvel at its complexity. This little volume tells something of the story of giving the Bible to China. It was a vast undertaking, a worthy part of the greatest Book-selling adventure ever attempted. In the words of Carlyle: 'Did all the Pater-noster Rows of all the world ever hear of one so successful!'

In no country has there been a greater reverence for literature than in China, and in no country has there been such a large circulation of the Word of God. Respect for printed paper is almost a religion to the Chinese, and the man of letters holds the highest rank in society. 'Who teaches me for a day, is my father for a lifetime', is a Chinese proverb. Societies exist for the rescue of the printed page from desecration. Shrines abound for the burning of loose sheets, lest they be trodden under foot. So late as 1882, an Imperial decree forbade the manufacture of 'resurrection paper' from old and discarded books. It has even been made an offence to stamp

shoe-soles with a trade-mark, for that involved treading down the character into the dust. Such facts tell their own story.

The art of printing was practised in China five centuries before it was adopted in Europe. Impressions of the Confucian Classics, by means of rubbings, were made in the second century after Christ. The converse plan, of cutting away the background, instead of engraving the text, soon followed, and printing from wooden blocks, thus cut, was known as early as the seventh and eighth centuries. In this manner the Classics were printed by Imperial decree more than a century before the Norman conquest. The production of books according to this method is attributed to Feng Tao, a man who was born towards the end of the ninth century, and after serving under ten Emperors of four different houses earned a sobriquet equivalent to our Vicar of Bray.

To give any idea of China's literary achievements is impossible within the limits of a few paragraphs. The bare facts are almost staggering. Some of the classics take us back to the days of Abraham. The Book of Odes is an anthology of some three hundred pieces selected by Confucius from three thousand. The British Museum possesses a Chinese Encyclopaedia bound in a thousand volumes. China's *magnum opus* is an encyclopaedia of more than twenty-two thousand volumes, with an Index of forty parts. But bulk is not everything. Style, in penmanship and in expression, is a fine art. A well-written character is a joy to the eye, and a good scribe is nothing less than an artist. Let one brief stanza taken from Professor H. A. Giles' translation suffice as an illustration of style. It is known as Yao's advice, Yao being an Emperor who lived about 2000 B.C.

With trembling heart and cautious steps
Walk daily in fear of God.
Though you never trip over a mountain,
You may often trip over a clod.

If any people can deserve to have the Book of Books, it is the Chinese. But to give it to them in a worthy translation has demanded gifts of no common order. So great and difficult was the undertaking that at one time it was said to be impossible. But the impossible has been accomplished, and vast sales have been the translators' reward. From the day when the first New Testaments were sold in 1814, just one hundred and twenty years ago, up to the time of writing, approximately two hundred and twenty-five million Scriptures have been circulated in China and its Dependencies. And the majority of these have been bought and paid for by a people who love reading and who reverence the printed page.

In the early years the sales were slow, but after the Boxer persecutions they rose rapidly. Since that date the figures have run into millions every year. Here are the totals for the three Bible Societies, from 1904 to 1928, a quarter of a century.

American Bible Society	44,976,160
British & Foreign Bible Society	64,192,295
National Bible Society of Scotland	40,463,983
	<u>149,632,438</u>

Of this number more than 861,000 were whole Bibles, and more than 3,550,000 were whole New Testaments. The remainder were Portions.

These figures show that in the quarter of a century prior to 1928, the average annual circulation was approximately six millions per annum. Since that time the numbers have risen considerably, the average for the five years 1929 to 1933 inclusive, being well over eleven millions per annum, the highest year, 1929, very nearly reaching fourteen million copies. When one considers the state of civil strife, of brigandage, and of Communism, these figures are most remarkable.

Without reproducing the details, it is within the truth to

say, as mentioned above, that some two hundred and twenty-five million Scriptures have been circulated in China since Robert Morrison's day, and of these more than fifty-five million have been sold during the last five years. It is easy to write these figures, and though it has taken some trouble to collate and check them, it is a more difficult task to realize their significance. The British Museum library has some four million volumes, and to house them has about sixty miles of shelves. That gives roughly an inch to a volume. This may help us to realize a little of what it means to print, handle, and circulate, over the vast territory of China, some ten or eleven million copies of the Scriptures per annum. And who shall estimate the blessing such a circulation carries with it. Dan Crawford has given us an African proverb which is suggestive. It reads thus: 'You can tell how many apples there are on a tree, but not how many trees there are in an apple'.

It is not possible that so much reading matter should be put into circulation without profound results. Some of these are told in the second part of this book. The time was when the missionary wondered if the Biblical terms would ever become household words. But they have. At home 'Gospel-truth' is an equivalent for 'veracity', and to-day in China the term 'Gospel' is being even used in advertisements. One correspondent sent us the following recommendation displayed in his city: 'The Gospel for suffers from tooth-ache'. Again, in one of the latest primers introduced into Government schools, primitive man is shown wearing an apron of fig-leaves or a coat of skins. Such things are a strong proof of Bible influence. The people are beginning to think in Bible terms.

We are sometimes asked if the widespread circulation of the Scriptures in the spoken language has helped to overcome China's age-long prejudice against its use as a literary medium? As there is no unanimity on this matter, all that we can do is

to state a few facts, and quote a few authorities, and then leave the matter open.

One of the greatest achievements of the New Thought Movement in China has been to instate *pei-hwa*, or the living tongue, in place of the classical, as a literary medium. Dr. Hu Shih, one of China's greatest authorities on this subject, has written in one of his essays: 'No dead language can produce a living literature. Produce literature in the national language, and you shall have a national language of literary worth'. And he tells us that in 1916 he made a resolution 'never to write any poetry except in the spoken language'. He further states, in the same essay, that the first public declaration of this revolution was published on the first day of 1917.

Now the missionary body, some fifty or sixty years before this date, had begun to 'produce literature in the national language', that is to say they had begun to publish the Scriptures in Mandarin. It was a bold thing to do, for while many Chinese novels had used the spoken language as their medium, it was another thing to translate a Sacred Book, the Classic of Christianity, into the common speech. If the production of literature in the national language means that 'you shall have a national language of literary worth', then the Church in China was certainly at least a pioneer in this matter, whatever the results were. As the matter is more for the Chinese expert, than for the foreigner, to decide, we have submitted the question to one or two Chinese scholars, and shall now proceed to quote from their replies. Dr. Hu Shih, in answer to our enquiry, has written as follows:

'As far as I know, the Mandarin version of the Bible played no part in preparing the way for the modern use of the *Pei-hwa* as a literary medium. In all the controversial literature of the early years of the New Literature Movement, no mention was made of these translations. The *Pei-hwa* that was advo-

cated as the new literary medium was that of the great novels, which was the same source from which the translators of the Bible obtained the medium for their Mandarin version.

It was in 1921 or 1922 that Professor Chou Tso-jen of the National Peking University gave his scholarly lecture on "The Bible and Literature", in which he first pointed out the excellence of the *Pei-hwa* style of the translated Bible. This article was later published in the Short-story *Monthly*.

'But I believe the other translations of the New Testament into the various local dialects of China, being very often the first time these have been put into written and printed form, may have had the valuable effect of giving these dialects a written form. So far no study of this phase has been attempted. I have made a collection of these dialect translations of the Bible, or parts of it, and presented them to the Chinese Department of the National Peking Library as material for the study of dialects.'

If we may venture any comment on this kind and interesting letter, it is simply to add that we do not think that anyone has suggested that the Scriptures in Mandarin helped to form the style of *Pei-hwa*. That already existed in the novels, but had not been used for sacred literature.

We have sought in the British Museum Library for Professor Chou's lecture on *The Bible and Chinese Literature*, to which Dr. Hu Shih refers, but without success. But just as we go to press, we find an extract from it in the Rev. A. J. Garnier's brochure referred to in our Preface. We venture to quote this, especially as Dr. Hu Shih refers us to it:

'I remember the time', Professor Chou writes, 'when there were people who opposed the new tendency in Chinese literature, for they said that such new writings were not new at all,—they were taken from the *Gospel of Matthew*. At the time I felt that this criticism was ridiculous, but now I am

prepared to wonder at the insight that these critics displayed. *The Gospel of Matthew* is indeed the earliest piece of "national language" in literary form, and as affected by Western influence, and I predict that its influence upon the future of our new literary productions will be very great and very deep.'

We also submitted this interesting question to Dr. Cheng Ching-yi, who for many years was one of the Company of Revisers of the Union Mandarin version of the Bible, before his present position of prominence in the Chinese Church. His reply is as follows:

'With regard to your question as to whether the widespread use of the Mandarin Bible played any part in making easy the introduction of *Kuo-yu*¹ as a literary medium, I believe it has. . . . While one cannot say that the Mandarin Bible has been the means of introducing the new style of writing in China, it must have played an important part in the matter.'

These three letters must, for the present, be left to speak for themselves. We are perhaps a little too near the facts to get a true perspective of the whole problem. The courage of the missionary body in translating the Bible into the common speech of China, sixty years before the scholars of China supported this movement, has been justified by results.

There is one other point of considerable importance, and that is the stimulus and impulse given to the art of reading by the translation of the Bible into the colloquial. While the Christian Church is comparatively small in numbers, minorities can and do exercise a powerful influence. Many testimonies prove that the standard of literacy has been definitely raised by the use of the Bible. One or two illustrations must suffice for many.

¹ *Pei-hwa* means 'plain speech' as opposed to the classical. *Kuo-yu* means 'national language' as opposed to local dialects. They both refer to the same movement, but from different aspects.

'I am happy to say', writes one missionary from North China, 'that the Christian Church is a reading Church, and one of the many uncovenanted blessings, shall I say, of the Gospel, is that it gives a desire to be able to read. For a good many years I have kept a careful record of the number of men who have learned to read through being Christians, and in examining the register of baptisms I see that at least 90 per cent. of those who could not read when they became catechumens, learned to read before receiving baptism, and this they did voluntarily. It is almost certain that had those men remained in heathenism, few, if any, would have learned to read.'

And it is not the men only who show this ambition. Here is a testimony from another quarter as to the desire of the women to be able to search the Word of God for themselves:

'The efforts which women make to grapple with the difficulties of the Character are most praiseworthy. When the day's work is over and baby gone to sleep, a gentle tap comes to the sitting-room door. It is Amah, with a dozen characters that she wants to know, characters she has met with in her day's reading. When they are explained she retires feeling that she has found a pearl of great price.'

Another missionary, the Rev. J. Stobie, gives a vivid picture of what hundreds of others have seen all over China. Touring in Manchuria he paid a visit to one of the out-of-the-way little bands of Christians.

'On the Sabbath morning I was aroused at 5 o'clock by the sound of voices repeating the Sermon on the Mount. When I looked from my place on the outer *kang* I saw several men and women poring over their Gospels; the only light obtainable being that from a piece of pine wood, ignited and held in the hand. It was a weird but most interesting scene, and one

thought of words of Scripture as most descriptive of the circumstances: "Spring up O Well! Sing ye to it; Thou Well dug by princes, sunk by the nobles of the people; Out of the desert a gift." The Word of God has become to these people, as it was to the Psalmist, A Lamp unto their feet, and a Light unto their path.'

To read these testimonies, and they could be multiplied indefinitely, is to realize something of the revolution that has taken place in China since Robert Morrison's day. When the first New Testament was published, its circulation was prohibited and many of the printing blocks were destroyed, for fear that the printer would be punished. But to-day, Bible Sunday is celebrated throughout the length and breadth of China, and hundreds of Churches send up their thank-offerings to the Bible Societies.

The Bible has found its way into the palace and into the hovel alike. By a strange and arresting contrast, when the Japanese guns were thundering against Port Arthur, a costly copy of the New Testament was being presented to the famous Empress Dowager of China, on the occasion of her sixtieth birthday, by the women of her empire. Over a thousand dollars had been subscribed for this purpose, and an edition de luxe, ornamented with the imperial Dragon and enclosed in a casket of silver, was forwarded to the palace through the good offices of the British and American Ministers. This was in November 1894. In this way the New Testament found its way into China's stronghold of reaction, with memorable consequences.

A little more than three years later, that is early in 1898, the Emperor Kwang Hsü himself sent to the offices of the American Bible Society for copies of the Scriptures, both in *Wenli* and Mandarin, as well as for a number of other books on Western learning and on Christianity. More than once the

palace eunuchs arrived at the Bible Society's Depot on this commission, on one occasion asking for 'copies of all the Christian books that had been printed'. Much anxiety was manifested when some delay was occasioned in securing a full supply from Shanghai by reason of the frozen state of the river at Tientsin.

As it is sometimes assumed that the Emperor's interest in reform dates from the time when his tutor Weng T'ung-ho introduced the reformer K'ang Yu-wei to his imperial pupil, it is well that it should be put on record that the Holy Scriptures and many Christian publications had found their entrance into the palace prior to the time when the celebrated Cantonese reformer had been invited to Peking. May it not be that the books help to explain why it was that when the Emperor met K'ang Yu-wei he was eager to welcome those reforms which it was hoped would save China from disaster, for the Emperor had obtained his first knowledge of these Scriptures and other publications from Prince Kung?

Nor was the demand for Scriptures at this time limited to the palace. The Viceroy of Nanking asked for two hundred copies of the New Testament for presentation to the officials under his jurisdiction, his reason being that he wanted them to understand the reason for the presence of the missionary in China. To rich and poor, to officials and to the people, as well as to the inhabitants of the Forbidden City, the Word of God had been made accessible. 'So mightily grew the Word of the Lord and prevailed.'

PART I

The Bible in Preparation

It is not yet 500 years since Wickliff's bones were dug up and burned, chiefly because he translated the Scriptures; and it is not yet 300 years since Tyndale was strangled by the hands of the common hangman, and then burned, for the same cause. . . . If such things occurred so recently, more modern translators need not be surprised if their works are censured or condemned. . . .

The learned of China think, as the learned of Europe thought in darker times, that every respectable book ought to be written in a sort of Latin, not in the vulgar tongue. . . . To put the Book of God into such a style, either out of compliment to the learned, or to exhibit one's own classical attainments, seems to be acting over again the usage of the Egyptian priests, who expressed their doctrines by hieroglyphics, intelligible only to themselves, or to a small sect of the initiated.

The duty of a translator of any book is two-fold; first, to comprehend accurately the sense, and to feel the spirit of the original work; and secondly, to express in his version faithfully, perspicuously, and idiomatically (and, if he can attain it, elegantly), the sense and spirit of the original.

For the first part of this duty, a Christian student will be much more competent than a heathen translator generally is; for the second part of the work, of course, a man who translates into his mother tongue will much excel.

ROBERT MORRISON, Canton, 1819

Nestorian Pioneers

OUR story opens amid the splendours of the T'ang dynasty (A.D. 618-908). It was an age of great men and of memorable kingdoms, an age distinguished by such renowned figures as Mohammed, Omar, Charlemagne, Harun-al-Rashid, T'ai-Tsung, and Alfred the Great. What scenes such names conjure up before us! What memories they awaken, from Arabian nights to burnt cakes! What a stage that world presents, and what actors tread its floors!

Imagination lifts the curtain and paints afresh the faded glories of those far-off days. With amazement we behold the march of Islam, from the heart of Arabia to the Atlantic Ocean in the west, and to the borders of China in the east,—and all within one hundred years. It seems incredible, but it is authentic history. And among the mighty acts of those great days, we see Persia, Egypt, and Palestine brought under the sway of this new faith, and we behold the celebrated Mosque of Caliph Omar rising within the walls of Jerusalem, as an abiding monument of those momentous times.

The curtain falls to lift again. Now it is Persia that attracts our attention, and we are dazzled with the splendour and renown of Harun, the brilliant Caliph of Baghdad. And, as we gaze, we dream of Arabian nights, of unimaginable wealth—for he left nine hundred millions in his vaults—and of a Court to which the wise men of the East, and the scholars of the West, flocked in numbers. What an endless witchery of romance surrounds this period and this magic name! In him East and West join hands, for on one day he sends an embassy to China, and on another he welcomes, with Oriental pomp, an envoy from Charles the Great, king of the Franks and emperor of the Romans. But it is of the Emperor T'ai-Tsung we desire to write, and he was by no means the least of the mighty men of that period of commanding personalities.

T'ai-Tsung was the most illustrious figure of the T'ang dynasty, and the T'ang dynasty, in the eyes of the Chinese, stands for the golden age of art, of poetry, and of literature. There is no prouder title for a Chinese than to be a 'man of Han', or a 'man of T'ang', for these two names recall the times when China was a world power.

Of the Emperor T'ai-Tsung, one of our best, but least flattering, authorities has said: 'He is perhaps the only instance in the whole course of Chinese history of a sovereign who was, from a European point of view, at once a gentleman and a brave, shrewd, compassionate man, free from priggishness and cant'. His full title was, 'Our Exalted Ancestor, the Literary-Martial Emperor', and this was no misnomer, for he excelled both in arms and letters. As a soldier and administrator he ruled from Korea to the Caspian Sea. He so thoroughly subdued the Turks and Tunguses that for half a century the Tatars, from the Yellow Sea to the frontiers of Persia, were under the full sway of China. Indeed, the fugitive sovereign of Persia actually fled to the Emperor's palace in China for protection.

Not only was T'ai-Tsung the strongest man of his dynasty, he was one of the greatest men who ever sat upon the throne of China. Wells Williams has compared him with Akbar and Marcus Aurelius, with K'ang-Hsi as well as with Charlemagne and Harun-al-Rashid—a goodly array of peers! The rulers of Nepal, and other Indian States, sent ambassadors to his Court, and so did one of the emperors of the Byzantine Empire. Indeed, his Court at Sian, then known as Chang-an, with its representatives, and visitors from most of the leading countries of Europe and Asia, presented a gay scene.

The temper and spirit of T'ai-Tsung may be gauged by the following facts. One of his first acts, on coming to the throne, was to dismiss some three thousand women, that he might cleanse the Court of their intrigue and indolence. Then, hard

by his official residence he built a Library in which he stored some 200,000 volumes, while he established schools, organized examinations, and supervised the publication of the Classics, besides amassing vast stores of historical documents. Scholars and religious leaders from other lands were welcomed and encouraged to translate their books. Languages which had never been heard before in the capital now became familiar to the ear. So varied were the costumes seen in the streets that an artist was engaged to paint from life the curious and picturesque groups which frequented the open spaces. But T'ai-Tsung was more than a great patron of learning; he consorted in person with the best men of his day, and discussed with them moral and religious problems.

It was to this distinguished Court that, in the year A.D. 635, three years after the death of Mohammed, a little company of travel-stained Nestorians came carrying their Scriptures. Whence they came is uncertain, but it is highly probable that it was from India. China had opened up land communications with Central India about this time, in fact it was only five years later that one of China's most famous travellers, Hsüan Tsang, returned to Sian laden with Buddhist literature. That a Nestorian priest was sent from India to the Chinese Court in A.D. 731 is recorded in Chinese official histories. We are not therefore without reasons for assuming that the famous A-lo-pen, whose name appears upon the Nestorian Tablet, may have reached the Chinese capital by way of Malabar.

What such a journey entailed in those days is better imagined than described. The records, which have survived from early days, prove that adventure and enterprise are not a modern monopoly. We have already suggested some of the tremendous implications, geographical and linguistic, hidden within the command, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

But we must return in thought to our Nestorian travellers

and quote a few extracts from the famous Tablet in Sian. Here is one of the relevant passages:

‘When the accomplished Emperor T’ai-Tsung began his magnificent career in glory and splendour over the (recently) established dynasty and ruled his people with intelligence, he proved himself a brilliant sage.

‘And behold there was a highly virtuous man named A-lo-pen in the Kingdom of Ta-ch’in.¹ Auguring from the azure sky, he decided to carry the true Sutras (of the True Way) with him, and observing the course of the winds, he made his way (to China) through difficulties and perils. Thus in the Ninth year of the period named Cheng-kuan (A.D. 635) he arrived at Chang-an. The Emperor dispatched his Minister, Duke Fang Hsüan-ling, with a guard of honour, to the western suburb to meet the visitor and conduct him to the Palace. The Sutras (Scriptures) were translated in the Imperial Library. (His Majesty) investigated “The Way” in his own Forbidden apartments, and being convinced of its correctness and truth, he gave special orders for its propagation.’

The Nestorian Tablet is our earliest evidence of the coming of Christianity to China, and of the translation of the Scriptures into the Chinese language. Various traditions have been stressed in favour of an earlier date, but there is no certain ground for this assumption. Professor Parker, after much delving among ancient records, boldly asserts: ‘No Christianity of any kind was heard of, even in the faintest way, previous to the same date [the beginning of the seventh century], in either China or Tartary (unless the *Terzai* were Christians)’. It is here therefore that we begin our story.

¹ *Ta-ch’in*. This name is somewhat vaguely used by Chinese writers, but in the Nestorian Inscription it obviously stands for Syria or Palestine, as the following sentence proves: ‘A Virgin gave birth to the Holy One in Ta-ch’in’.

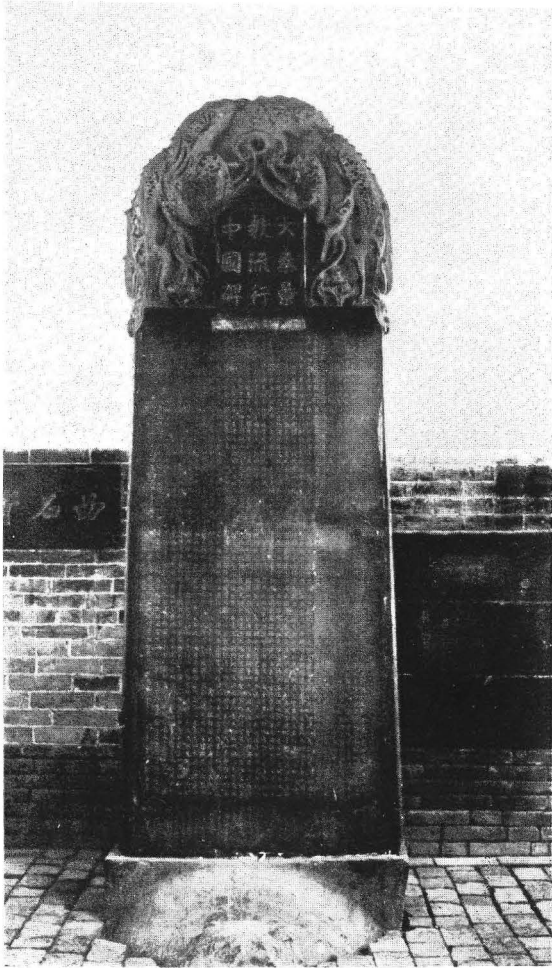


Photo by J. O. Fraser

THE NESTORIAN TABLET

For safe keeping this monument has, in recent years, been housed within the city of Sian among other stone records.

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A little more than three hundred years ago, somewhere about 1623, the Nestorian Tablet was unearthed in the neighbourhood of Sian. Its value was then unknown, and to this day there remains some uncertainty as to the exact date and place of the great discovery. The important point is, that the stone, with its inscription, having been long buried, is in an almost perfect condition.

This monument, with its boldly carved crown, stands some 9 feet high, is 3 feet 4 inches wide, and 11 inches thick. It was erected in A.D. 781, and its record reviews the history of Nestorianism from the date of its introduction into China, a period of nearly 150 years.

The front face of this slab of black limestone bears an inscription in Chinese, in prose and verse, of approximately two thousand characters. On the two margins and at the foot of the main text, are shorter inscriptions in Syriac. Further, on the right and left edges of the stone, the slab being nearly a foot thick, are lists of names in Syriac and Chinese. The Syriac is in the Estrangelo character and is written vertically.

As, in days past, prolonged efforts were made to condemn the Tablet as a forgery, and as there are still certain perplexities concerning its message, it may be well to quote the opinion of so careful and able a Sinologue as Alexander Wylie. After an exhaustive examination of the problems, he writes in his *Chinese Researches*: 'We have not been able to discover the slightest hint of a suspicion as to its genuineness or authenticity'.

The translation¹ and the elucidation of this ancient inscription bristles with fascinating problems, and an extensive

¹ The best English versions are by Wylie, Legge, Moule, and Saeki. A. C. Moule's book, *Christianity in China before the Year 1550*, is of great value to the student, but Saeki's translation serves our purpose best. His monograph gives the original in full and supplies copious notes. The writer is the happy possessor of a complete rubbing.

literature has grown up around the subject. One brief quotation from Professor Parker's *Studies in Chinese Religion* will provide an excellent summary:

'As is usual [he writes] in China with solemn documents of record, it was found to be composed in a very ponderous and recondite, not to say obscure style, bristling with classical and philosophical quotations from the ancient books of China: these 1800 words contain no fewer than 400 ready-made expressions culled from the classics, Confucius' and Lao-tze's works, the philosophical schools and so on; all fitted on to Christian words, such as "triune", "the flesh", "sin", etc. etc.'

As our concern is with the Bible in China, we must not be drawn into the wider field of enquiry, but limit our few quotations to the subject under discussion.

After a long introduction, leading up to the Fall of man, the inscription proceeds:

'Whereupon one Person of our Trinity, the Messiah, Who is the Luminous Lord of the Universe, veiling His true Majesty, appeared upon earth as man. Angels proclaimed the Glad Tidings. A Virgin gave birth to the Holy One in Tach'in. A bright star announced the blessed event. Persians saw the splendour and came forth with their tribute.

'Fulfilling the Old Law as it was declared by the twenty-four Sages,¹ He (the Messiah) taught how to rule both families and kingdoms according to His own great Plan. Establishing His New Teaching of Non-assertion which operates silently through the Holy Spirit, another Person of the Trinity, He formed in man the capacity for well-doing through the Right Faith. . . .

'His mighty work being thus completed, He returned at

¹ This must refer to the Old Testament and its writers.

noon to His original position (in Heaven). The twenty-seven standard works of His Sutras were preserved.¹ The great means of conversion were widely extended, and the sealed Gate of the Blessed Life was unlocked.'

After a somewhat detailed review of the history of the Nestorians in China, from the time of their arrival, there follows an Ode from which it is only necessary to quote the few lines which refer to the Scriptures. These read:

The brightest and most brilliant of all Teachings—
The Teaching of the Luminous Religion—
Took root deep and firm in our Land of T'ang.
With the translation of the Scriptures,
And the building of convents,
We see the living and the dead all sailing in One Ship of Mercy.

One question naturally arises, after reading these quotations, and that is: How much of the Bible was translated? On this point there is room for a difference of opinion, but the studied judgments of two experts deserve to be recorded. Mr. Alexander Wylie, whom Professor Parker—always sparing of compliments—has called 'this indefatigable enquirer', 'this exceeding modest and able Protestant missionary', has written as follows:

'From these various notices, preserved to us in the durable records of a stone tablet, we gather with much confidence the impression that the New Testament, at least, was translated into Chinese during the first half of the seventh century; and this seems the more probable, when we consider that at that period, the emperor was engaged in a most extensive under-

¹ This obviously refers to the twenty-seven Books of the New Testament, but as the Peshito, the Syriac Version of the Bible, has only twenty-two Books in its New Testament, some highly perplexing and, at present, insoluble problems are raised. For fuller detail see the Appendix.

taking, translating the Buddhist works which had been recently brought from India by the Chinese traveller Heuen-chwang [Hsüan Tsang, see p. 15]. The monastery where this work was executed was at a recent period still pointed out at Sian.'

On the other hand, Professor Saeki, having in mind that Professor Pelliot had found at Tunhwang a list of some thirty-five Nestorian Sutras translated into Chinese, and the further fact that the author of the Nestorian Inscription was also engaged in translating Buddhist Scriptures, sums up his views as follows:

'We are not yet in a position to say which parts of the Bible were actually translated. The word *sutras* used here, literally means "standard books," and may mean the Bible, or the Scriptures, but it may also mean the Church literature. . . . If the Assyrian monks could spare time to translate Buddhist works as well as their own literature, how much more time must they have given to Bible translation!

'So the expression "the Sutras were translated" may mean the translation of parts, if not the whole, of the Bible. That capable men were found to aid the missionaries in translating Christian literature into Chinese may be clearly seen both from the composition and the style of the Nestorian Inscription.'

That is where for the present the matter must be left. As China's buried treasures are brought to light we may learn more. The possibilities in this direction are shown by the fact that for the last twenty years experts have been busy cataloguing the more than six thousand documents unearthed by Sir Aurel Stein from a library sealed up in the rocks near Tunhwang, in north-west China, nearly a thousand years ago.¹ And as we write, *The Times* reports the return to Rome

¹ *On Ancient Central-Asian Tracks*, by Sir Aurel Stein.

of Signor Tucci, an Italian archaeologist, with some three thousand Tibetan manuscripts and other material of great historic interest.

One precious document found by Professor Pelliot at Tunhwang, has been identified as a Chinese translation of a Syrian form of the *Gloria in excelsis*.¹ And this is but one of many evidences which bear witness to the missionary zeal of the Syrian Church. In addition to the few Christian gravestones found in several parts of China, there are whole cemeteries, with Syriac inscriptions, in Russian and Chinese Turkestan. Four such cemeteries are in the neighbourhood of Kuldja. These are striking testimonies to the spread of Christianity in Central and Eastern Asia.

There is a pathetic interest attaching to these records of a glory that is departed. What zeal and enterprise they reveal! Without any modern means of transport, mountains, rivers, and deserts were crossed to carry the Good Tidings of great joy to the distant East. But the gates of hell appear to have prevailed against that early Church, for its churches and its Scriptures are no more. Though we have knowledge of cruel persecutions and of wholesale massacres, we hesitate to believe that violence alone is a sufficient explanation. Is there no other cause?

In days past there have been those who attributed the failure of Nestorianism to its denial of Deity to Christ, but recent research has materially increased our knowledge of Nestorian belief and corrected opinion in this matter.² But it is a significant fact that the Name of Jesus does not once occur on the Nestorian monument, nor is it to be found in the Chinese

¹ *Christianity in China*, by A. C. Moule, reproduces the original document with a translation.

² See *Nestorius and his Teaching*, by J. F. Bethune-Baker (Cambridge), and *Nestorius: The Bazaar of Heracleides*. This latter book is a Syriac translation of a Greek work by Nestorius himself, rendered into English by G. Driver and L. Hodgson (Oxford, 1925).

version of the Nestorian *Gloria in excelsis*. And though a figure of the Cross stands at the head of the famous tablet, the atonement, wrought on the Cross, is not so much as mentioned.

That no copies of the Scriptures, translated by the Nestorians, can be traced is not to be wondered at, since centuries had to elapse ere the art of printing was practised in China. Hand-made copies were bound to be scarce. There is therefore less tragedy in the disappearance of those early versions than in the eclipse of the Church. What the Church owes, in modern days, to the invention of printing can hardly be exaggerated.

But before we close our story of Nestorian times we cannot refrain from some reference to some highly interesting evidence as to the knowledge of Christianity in China during the T'ang dynasty. Some fifty odd years before the close of this famous line of emperors, an Arab traveller named Ibn Wahab found his way to the capital of China, the same city to which the Nestorians had gone. Here he had an interview with the reigning Emperor, the records of which have been preserved to us in an ancient Arabic manuscript entitled *Achbar ul Sin wal Hind*, or 'Observations on China and India'. The report of this Arab traveller's conversation with the Emperor, together with the references to pictures of Old Testament prophets, etc., throw much welcome light upon the knowledge possessed by the Chinese Court at that period. The Emperor possessed a great box containing portraits of ancient worthies and inscriptions beneath them. Among the persons mentioned in this Arabic manuscript are Noah, Moses, and Mohammed. The whole conversation is full of interest, but one brief extract must suffice:

“‘Thère”, said the Arab, “is Moses with his rod, and the children of Israel.” He [the Emperor] agreed with me as to the small extent of their country and the manner in which the

ancient inhabitants were destroyed by Moses. I then said to him: "He there is Jesus upon an Ass, and here are His apostles with him". "He", said the Emperor, "was not long on earth, seeing that all He did was transacted within the space of somewhat better than thirty months."¹

The T'ang dynasty, which lasted for nearly three centuries, was followed by a period of widespread disorder. Within fifty years there were no fewer than five dynasties. Such conditions were most unfavourable to the spread of Christianity, and with no printed page to conserve the truth, it is not strange that few records of the Faith are to be found in the centuries which immediately follow. But the total disappearance of the Church from China is a tragedy, however it may be explained.

Without attempting to assess the relative importance of certain causes, the following factors may be mentioned. There was the growing hostility of Islam, the wholesale slaughters and devastating invasions of Genghis Khan, the appalling ruthlessness of Tamerlane, a fanatical Moslem bitterly opposed to everything Christian. So savage and pitiless were these conditions that they would explain anything. But to these hostile circumstances it must be added that the Church appears to have compromised its Message. And when it is remembered that the Church had no facilities for the printing and dissemination of the Scriptures, the tragedy is the more easily understood. The value of the printed page as a standard of doctrine, and as a support to a persecuted remnant, can hardly be overstated. But there is something unutterably grievous in the contemplation of the extinction of a once zealous and aggressive Church.

Few subjects call for more solemn reflection than the departed glory of a great Church. How are we to explain the

¹ The whole of this highly interesting conversation is printed in the author's *Islam in China*, pp. 39-46.

removal of the Candlesticks from the seven Churches of Asia? The Churches of Asia Minor are no more. Is the rise of Islam a sufficient explanation for the complete elimination of the early Churches in North Africa? These questions are of more than academic interest, for we are witnessing to-day in Russia, and indeed throughout the world, a challenge the gravity of which is not less than those which have confronted the Church of Christ in times past.

And one said: 'What shall I cry? All flesh is grass . . . but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.'

Under the Great Khans

OUR story must take a leap of nearly four hundred years' for during that period little or nothing is known of Christianity in China proper. The country was in a disrupted condition, and it is not until it was reunited under the brief but powerful Mongol dynasty, which lasted less than a hundred years (A.D. 1280-1368), that we gain fresh light upon our subject. One monk who visited China during the tenth century said that he could not find a single Christian.

But whatever conditions prevailed to the south of the Great Wall, we do know that in the north, among the Tatar tribes, missionary activity had by no means ceased. Indeed Genghis Khan married his son to a Kerait princess—and the Keraites were Nestorians—and this princess became the mother of three Mongol rulers, one of whom married a Christian wife and maintained a Nestorian chapel.

The world at this period reveals a scene of remarkable activity. 'The early years of the thirteenth century', says one writer, 'found all Christendom seething with great thoughts, which were soon to be embodied in great lives.' In A.D. 1210 the Franciscan order received the Pope's authorization, while the Dominican order obtained Papal confirmation six years later. Europe was still busy with her Crusades, and Venice was showing extraordinary commercial enterprise.

While these things were happening in Europe, one of the world's most ruthless soldiers but greatest administrators was beginning to show his hand. In A.D. 1213, just two years before the signing of Magna Charta at Runnymede for the protection of life and liberty, Genghis Khan, on the contrary, was launching his great campaign for the conquest of Asia, and, if possible, for the subjugation of Europe. With his armies he pierced the mountain passes of India and the gorges of the Caucasus. For seven years he laid Asia waste, and these vast

military operations were continued by his son Ogotai, who carried pillage and slaughter into the heart of Europe.

Great results followed these terrible doings. The power of Mohammedanism was checked in Asia, and intercourse was opened up between East and West. Roads broad enough for three carts to travel abreast were cut, by the Mongols, through dense forests, thus facilitating future travel. Dr. Bretschneider has published a Mongol map, including Central Asia and Eastern Europe, showing more than a hundred places mentioned by mediaeval Mohammedan authors or European travellers.

Of the doors thus opened, the Church in Europe did not fail to make use. The travels of Marco Polo are well known, but before Marco was born, messengers of the Church had been sent to the Court of the Great Khan at Karakorum, south-west of modern Urga. Of these early missionaries we must write in some detail, but before doing so, we cannot refrain from quoting part of Raymond Lull's Appeal to the University of Paris, for it shows us the Spirit of God moving the heart of at least one man in those dark and difficult days. Amid those stern times there were some lovely lives. Here are a few passages from Raymond Lull's noble document:

'When O Lord! shall all the earth adore Thee, when shall it sing and bless Thy name, when shall every tribe and tongue serve Thee? Consider this, ye reverend fathers and masters, in your intellects and wills, you whose object is the highest truth and highest goodness. . . .

'Ye see, reverend fathers and masters, how great a peril hangs over the whole Church of God; unless your wisdom and devotion, by which the whole of Christendom is upheld, opposes its saving shield against the unfaith of the Saracens; if it fail in stemming back the impetuous torrent of the Tatars. . . .

‘Thus conscience stings me and compels me to come to you, whose discretion and wisdom is supremely concerned to bring about a mighty remedy,—pious, meritorious, a service pleasing to God and useful to the world. I mean that here in Paris, where the spring of Divine knowledge gushes forth, and where the light of the Truth shines forth on Christian peoples, there should be founded a faculty for Arabic, Tatar and Greek studies. Thus we may be able to learn the languages of the adversaries of God; and that our learned men, by preaching to them and teaching them, may by the sword of the truth overcome their falsehoods and restore to God a people as an acceptable offering, and may convert our foes and His to friends.’

From this impassioned appeal for Asia we turn to consider some of the Missions sent by the Church to the Far East, for these will throw some light upon our subject. In A.D. 1245 Friar John de Plana Carpini was entrusted by the Pope with a special mission to the Emperor of the Mongols. Carpini, who had been a companion of St. Francis of Assisi, set forth from Lyons, and after an absence of more than two years brought back the Khan’s reply in the autumn of A.D. 1247. This document, with its Mongol seal, has recently been discovered in the Vatican archives.¹

It was an arduous journey for a man of sixty-five years of age to undertake, but Carpini has left us a valuable first-hand description of the Mongol Court and of his experiences. From this we learn that the Great Khan had a Chapel near his tent where the services were sung and the bells rung at certain hours. But the passage which concerns us most is the following:

‘The men of Cathay are pagans, having a special kind of writing by themselves, and, it is reported, the Scriptures of

¹ This seal is reproduced in *Contemporaries of Marco Polo*, recently published in the Travellers’ Library Series (Jonathan Cape, 3s. 6d.).

the Old and New Testaments. They have also recorded in histories the lives of their forefathers: and they have monks, and certain houses made after the manner of our Churches. They say that they have many saints also, and they worship one God. They adore and reverence Jesus Christ our Lord, and believe the articles of eternal life, but are not baptized. They do also honourably esteem and reverence our Scriptures. They love Christians, and bestow much alms, and are very courteous and gentle people. They have no beards and they agree partly with the Mongols in the disposition of their countenance.'

It must be remembered that Carpini did not speak the languages of the Far East, and it must be added that this quotation is given without its context, which reveals another side to the story.

Our next witness is a Frenchman, who six years after Carpini's return was sent by Louis IX of France as his envoy to the Far East. He has left us a splendid record of his experiences, three times as long as Carpini's, and full of life and colour. By some it is regarded as equal to Marco Polo's famous story.

Friar William of Rubruck, for that is our hero's name, set out from Constantinople in A.D. 1253 and was absent for about two years. The King provided him with a Bible, and Queen Margaret presented him with an illuminated Book of Psalms. Rubruck's story is full of references to Christianity, and to the Scriptures, but we do not know one passage which proves that the Scriptures were translated into either Mongol or Chinese. One or two allusions rather point the other way, such as the following:

'In fifteen cities of Cathay one sees Nestorians, and in one city called Segin [Sian] there is a Bishop. . . . They say their prayers and have sacred books in Syriac that they do not

understand. This results in their chanting, as do the monks in our country who know nothing of grammar.'

Friar William evidently had small respect for the decadent Nestorians. He upbraided them for their ignorance of the Scriptures, and they scoffed at him for not knowing the language. But the following lines suggest a more friendly spirit:

'I asked him [the monk] to aid me to understand the language of the country, promising to aid him in the study of the Holy Scriptures; for the brother who is aided by a brother is like a strong city.'

As we follow this warm-hearted Friar on his perilous journey across Asia, we recognize in him the spirit of the colporteur, for this is what he writes:

'When they requested to have some books of us, and I had not any to give them, for indeed we had none, but only a Bible and a Breviary, this grieved me. And I said unto them: "Bring me some ink and paper, and I will write for you as long as we shall remain here"; and they did so.'

Our next witness is Marco Polo, who as a youth of seventeen, in A.D. 1271, travelled to China with his father and uncle and resided there for seventeen years. One of the most arresting passages in his great story is that which tells us that Kublai Khan sent a request to the Pope for

'a hundred wise men of the Christian religion, who shall know also the seven arts and who shall know well how to argue and to show plainly to the idolaters and to the other classes of people that all their religion was erroneous'.¹

¹ We have recently been thrilled to find that Columbus used this appeal by Kublai Khan as an argument with the Spanish Court for their assistance in his scheme to find a western passage to Cathay and the Indies. 'The Spaniards

While there are numerous references to Nestorians and Christians and Churches, there are, we believe, only three that refer directly to the Scriptures. These are as follows:

‘The Christian astronomers have the Psalter and read certain Psalms and make their enchantments.’

The next passage is remarkable as showing the Khan doing reverence and honour to all four religions represented at his Court: to the Christians, the Saracens, the Jews, and the idolaters. ‘The Christians,’ he says, ‘say their God is Jesus Christ, the Saracens Mahommed, the Jews Moses, the idolaters Sogomoni Borcan [*i.e.* Buddha].’ The reference which interests us most refers to Easter, when the great Khan

‘made all the Christians come to him, and wished them to bring him the Book in which are the four Gospels, to which he made them offer incense many times with great ceremony, kissed it devoutly, and wished all his barons and lords who were present to do the same’.

The third and last reference to the Scriptures is found in a passage which refers to a Church in Hangchow, a Church which appears to have been cut off from the outside world for seven hundred years. This passage is only found in one manuscript of a late date.

‘Masters Maffeo and Marco frequented that place so much from day to day, making themselves at home with them and asking about their business, that they found that they held the Christian religion. For they had Books, and these Masters Maffeo and Marco reading in them began to interpret the writing and to translate from word to word and from tongue to

would appear in the East, knowing that their presence was desired. . . . The conversion of Tartary would be the crowning glory of Catholic Spain.’ See Lord Acton’s *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 61. Columbus carried a letter for the great Khan from Ferdinand and Isabella.

tongue, so that they found it to be the Psalter. . . . [They said] that that faith had been preserved among them for seven hundred years, but for a long time they had been without teaching and so were ignorant of the chief things.'

Up to this point our data about the Bible in the Far East, during the Mongol period, has been both scanty and uncertain, but now we reach more satisfactory information.

While Marco Polo was on his way home from China, John de Monte Corvino was travelling out to the Mongol Court which had somewhat recently been established at Cambulac, or Khan-baliq, near to the present Peking. There are reasons to believe that these two men, Marco Polo and Friar John, actually met, and if so what a conversation they must have had together! Marco, who was thirty-five, had spent seventeen eventful years in China, while Friar John, who was forty-two years of age, was never to return to Europe, but was to die at his post thirty-nine years later. How eagerly they must have interrogated one another, the one about Europe, the other about Kublai Khan and his Court at Cambulac.

John de Monte Corvino reached his destination to find the great Khan dead, and his successor reigning in his stead. It was a lonely and a hard task to which he addressed himself. For twelve long years he had no news from Europe, while the Nestorians jealously opposed him as a rival, and the Mongol Emperor was too much given to idolatry to give him heed. But this brave-hearted man determined that the people to whom he had come should possess the Word of God in their own tongue, and it is this which chiefly concerns us here.

In A.D. 1305, after about sixteen years in the East, he wrote home as follows:

'I am now old and am become white, more from toils and troubles than from age, for I am fifty-eight years old. I have a competent knowledge of the Tatar language and character,

which is the usual language of the Tatars; and I have now translated in that language and character the whole New Testament and Psalter, which I have had written in their fairest writing. And I understand and read and preach openly and in public as it were in testimony of the law of Christ. And I arranged with the aforesaid king George [a Christian Tatar], if he had lived, to translate the whole Latin Office, that it might be sung throughout the whole land in his dominion.'

In a later letter he states that he had had 'pictures made of the Old and New Testament for the instruction of the unlearned: and they are written [upon] in Latin, Tursic, and Persian letters so that all tongues may be able to read'.¹

It is worthy of note that while the Pope, in his communications with Friar John, comments with approval on these paintings of Old and New Testament stories, and on the use of the Latin tongue, he makes no reference whatever to the translations of the New Testament and Psalms. But there is no word of disapproval.

John de Monte Corvino died at his post about A.D. 1328, when he was over eighty years of age. He had been the first Archbishop of Cambulac, and in reality the last, for his successor, who set forth from Europe in A.D. 1333, with a band of thirty-three missionaries, died during the journey. Foreign missions in the Far East had fallen upon evil days, for the brief but distinguished Mongol dynasty fell also before a Chinese rising. The new and illustrious Ming dynasty, in its hatred of all things foreign, Mongol or European, stamped out the Christian Church. And what the Chinese failed to do, Tamerlane, whose name was a terror to all, effectually com-

¹ Professor A. C. Moule, in *Christians in China*, p. 178, shows how Tursic may mean Mongol. He also comments on the strange absence of any reference to the Chinese as distinct from the Mongols.

pleted. Travel by land became impossible, and the Moslems held the sea.

Once more the student of the Christian story comes upon a tragic blank. Between our first and second chapters there had been a barren tract of some three or four centuries, and ere our story can be resumed another two hundred fruitless years have to pass. They were dark days in Europe also, for they were the days when Huss and Savonarola and countless others died for the faith. Instead of fair fields of promise, we encounter a desolation.

In the Footsteps of Xavier

OUR story reopens during the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368–1644), a dynasty which, as already mentioned, made a clean sweep of Christianity. *Ming* means Brilliant, and this was a brilliant period in Chinese history, a period distinguished by vast developments and immense literary labours.

This dynasty was contemporary with the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe. Constantinople fell before the Turks in A.D. 1453, and the exiled scholars of Greece carried their treasures of literature with them and stimulated the revival of learning. The invention of printing—an invention known and used in China centuries earlier—followed almost immediately, as did also the discovery of the wider world. In 1492 Columbus discovered America, and five years later Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope. The results were momentous, for Pope Alexander VI,—who five years later strangled and burned Savonarola,—apportioned the new world of the West to Spain, and the teeming millions of the East to Portugal, on condition that they evangelized the peoples. Zealously did they fulfil their commissions, and jealously did they guard their rights. For many years no Spanish missionary could cross the Indian Ocean, but could reach China only *via* Mexico and the Philippines. As one writer has expressed it: ‘Never were the Cross and Sword more blandly identified’.

It may, at first sight, seem strange that the Protestant Reformers did nothing for foreign missions, but the truth is they were fighting for their lives at home, and the Papal Powers held the seas. Six years before Luther died, and in the very year that England severed her connection with the Papacy, the Jesuits obtained the official sanction of Rome. Seven years later, Xavier set forth upon his impressive and celebrated mission to the Far East. His name is one that has captivated the

hearts and minds of men, and though his foreign service lasted little more than ten years, his burning love for Christ, and his ardent zeal for the souls of men, will always appeal to the imagination. Love counts for more than years.

This is not the place to tell the story of Roman Catholic Missions to China. But a background must be roughly sketched for the story of the Bible in that land. Xavier died on an island off the coast of China, as near as Dover is to Calais, a martyr to Portuguese opposition and commercial greed. China seemed a closed land. 'Oh rock, rock, rock, when wilt thou open to my Lord?' cried Valignani, the Superintendent of the Jesuit Missions to the East. It is moving to note that Matteo Ricci, the man who gained a footing in China, and even entered Peking, was born in the same year that Xavier died in sight of that great country.

By 1601, just twenty years after he had landed at Macao, Ricci had established himself in Imperial favour at Peking. With amazing industry and consummate ability, he and his colleagues ingratiated themselves in the favour of the Court, and of the Emperor himself. By 1637 they had published no fewer than three hundred and forty treatises in Chinese upon religion, philosophy, and other subjects. But admire their diligence and learning as we must, we cannot but condemn their conformity with pagan ideas, and their care to avoid the offence of the Cross.

The reports of their successes speedily provoked other religious Orders to follow them to China. In 1631 and 1633 respectively, the Dominicans and the Franciscans began to arrive, and it was not long before a controversy, without a parallel in Missions, broke out between them. This contention lasted for more than a century and involved the Pope, the Emperor, the various Orders in China, and the countries from which they came. The rivalries of the nations, the jealousies of the Orders, the assumptions of the Papacy, and the sover-

eighty of the Throne in China, were all involved in and challenged by this conflict of opinion and decree.

The methods employed by the various Orders were in violent conflict. The Jesuits kept the Cross in the background, but the Franciscans multiplied their crucifixes. The Jesuits exalted learning, while the Dominicans and Franciscans seldom mastered the language. According to Father Ripa, some five hundred Roman Catholic missionaries entered China between 1580 and 1724, and yet he makes the almost incredible statement that 'none had been able to surmount the formidable barrier of the language, so as to make himself understood by the people at large'.

The main causes of conflict may be summarized under three heads. First, the term to be used for God; second, the worship of Confucius and ancestors; and third, a group of problems connected with certain festivals. The Pope, having been appealed to by the Franciscans and others against the Jesuits, denounced the rites by which the Chinese had been deceived. He signified his approval of *T'ien Chu* (Lord of Heaven) for God, and his prohibition of the use of *T'ien* (Heaven) alone, and also of *Shang Ti* (Supreme Ruler), the term now used by most Protestants. He also forbade the use of Tablets inscribed *King T'ien* (Worship Heaven).

It is instructive to recall that while this conflict was being fought out in China, Pascal was espousing the cause of Port Royal against the Jesuits. Strange as it may seem, while the Jesuits in Europe were upholding the infallibility of the Pope in their conflict with the Jansenists, in China, on the contrary, they denied that the Pope had any power or authority to determine the meaning of a single Chinese word.

For some years the Pope waited, hoping the conflict would die out. But when patience proved unavailing, he despatched a special legate, in the person of Cardinal de Tournon, to decide the quarrel. In reality the Cardinal's hat followed the

legate to China. Unhappily the Pope's representative was young and inexperienced, and, indeed, utterly lacking in those qualities demanded for such a task. Nor was this all, for Bishop Maigrot, Vicar-Apostolic of Fukien, whom he supported against the Jesuits, was almost wholly ignorant of Chinese. The poor Bishop cut a sorry figure before the Emperor, who scorned his ignorance of the language when a problem of terminology was the subject at issue. On the other hand, the Jesuits were learned in all the wisdom of the land of Sinim.

The obstinacy of the ignorant Bishop, and the determination of the Cardinal not to surrender his trust, destroyed the last hope of a reconciliation, or the continued toleration of the Emperor. The Crown now spoke in no uncertain words. The relevant part of Kang Hsi's decree is as follows:

'I, the Emperor, in order to instruct you, have declared that *King T'ien* (Adore Heaven), means the same thing as that which you express in your law as *King T'ien Chu* (Honour the Lord of Heaven). . . .

'Before Father Ricci and his companions came to China, no one had ever heard talk either of the Incarnation, or of the name *T'ien Chu*, which you give to God, who certainly was not incarnate in this country. And why had we not the right, before Father Ricci came, to give the name *T'ien* to God; and why have we not the power to continue to do so?

'We honour Confucius as our Master, testifying thereby our gratitude for the doctrine he has left us. We do not pray before the Tablets of Confucius or of our ancestors for honour or happiness. These are the three points upon which you contend. If these opinions are not to your taste, consider that you must leave my Empire.'

To make a long story short, those who refused obedience were exiled or imprisoned, while those who desired to remain were required to obtain letters-patent from the Emperor.

Such permits could only be secured by signing a pledge to teach according to Father Ricci's principle, and not according to the definitions of Bishop Maigrot. The Papal legate commanded all missionaries to refuse obedience to the Imperial demands. This was equivalent to an open declaration of war. The legate was banished to Macao, where he languished and died a virtual prisoner. As for the missionaries, persecution and exile became the general order of the day.

It is utterly impossible in a severely condensed narrative to do justice to the magnitude of this subject. Amid all the conflict of opinion, and the bitterness of spirit involved, the man would be blind indeed who did not discern many elements of true nobility. There was boundless devotion and ardent zeal, even if not according to knowledge. Cardinal de Tournon, as his life ebbed out in what was virtually a Portuguese prison, cried out with deep emotion: 'I am leaving the ship of the Church in a storm; but while the great Pilot is on board, the loss of a poor under-rower will be inconsiderable'.

Such words are sublime and impressive. And his interpreter, Appiani, after more than ten years in captivity, wrote to his nephew:

'The reason of my captivity was that I held firmly for the truth, for religion, and for obedience and fidelity to the Holy See. . . . May the most holy will of God be done in everything! In all places and countries there is a way to enter Paradise to which alone we ought to aspire, and in all places and countries there are many ways which lead to hell, which we ought much and in the greatest degree to fear. The one way is Christ, with the doctrines and example He has left us; the other is the world and the devil, and the lusts of the flesh. Let us cling to Him Who suffered and died, and rose again for our sakes, and to strengthen us in virtue set before us the Cross, fleeing from all else, which lasts but a little while and ruins for eternity.'

Such were some against whom the able Jesuits were directing their energies. Dr. Eugene Stock has aptly summed up the situation thus:

'Some great men are patterns; some are beacons. Xavier was both. But most of his comrades and successors were beacons, and not patterns. The history of Jesuit Missions, as told by the Jesuits themselves, is one of the saddest portions of the Church's annals.'

For our purpose there is no need to follow the story further. The end of the controversy did not come until the final Bull of Benedict XIV, in 1742, prescribing an oath of obedience upon all missionaries in China, and the return to Europe, for punishment, of any who refused submission. By this time the Emperor Kang Hsi, who had banished the legate, had been dead some twenty years, and conditions in China had greatly changed. Hundreds of Churches had been closed, scores of missionaries had been banished or executed, and those who remained were, for the most part, in hiding.

With the suppression of the Jesuits by the Papacy in 1773, and the overthrow of the Vatican by Napoleon in 1809, the work of Roman Catholic missions in China entered upon dark and difficult days. While some of their methods may be a warning, their zeal and devotion are an inspiration and a reproof. That was what Hudson Taylor felt when he wrote *China's Spiritual Need and Claims*, in 1865. Their willingness to endure hardness for the sake of the Gospel was, in Hudson Taylor's eyes, a reproach to the Protestant Church.

'Shall we [he wrote] who have the full light of the pure Gospel be so much behind these men in our zeal and patience and perseverance for the spread of the Gospel? Shall we prove less obedient to the command of *our* Superior, and neglect His behests?'

With this imperfect sketch as our background, we are now ready to ask the question: What did these Roman Catholic missionaries do about the Bible in China? This question it is by no means easy to answer. Accurate information is most difficult to secure. We propose to record what has been done, so far as our data allows, and then we shall examine the attitude of the Roman Church towards the Scriptures in the vernacular. We shall find that Rome is not opposed to translations so long as they are not circulated.

The chief source of our information on the first point is Wylie's *Chinese Researches*. The assistance given by the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, even under the heading 'Versions of the Bible', is extraordinarily meagre. The reason for this may appear later.

Professor Latourette, in his painstaking study of Roman Catholic Missions, writes: 'No complete translation of the Bible seems ever to have been published, and it is not certain that one was ever made'. It was at one time an open question as to whether Latin was essential for the Chinese priesthood, and the Pope in 1615 actually approved of the Chinese language being used for the liturgy and sacraments, but this permission was subsequently withdrawn.¹ When it is recalled that the Jesuits translated such works as the *Summa*, by Thomas Aquinas, and that the Pope received a copy of the *Missal* in Chinese, dedicated to himself, there must be strong reasons why we do not hear more about the translations of the Scriptures.

Ricci, that prodigy of industry and learning, excused himself from the translation of the Scriptures because of other duties. When the famous Paul Hsü, the donor of Zikawei, proposed a scheme for the translation of the Bible, nothing

¹ See C. H. Robinson's *History of Christian Missions*, p. 175, and Latourette's *History of Christian Missions in China*, p. 133. The latter gives his authorities.

came of it. Selections, elegantly illustrated, were published. These are now extremely rare. But such selections and quotations awakened suspicions in the minds of the Chinese, when they found that the Book itself was withheld. One high official wrote:

‘Father Ricci, who came to China in past years, has quoted his Bible, and the comments of his holy men, in order to palliate his vicious doctrines.’

Alexander Wylie is disposed to think that the whole Bible may have been translated, though not printed, and his authority is an Italian gentleman, Dr. Careri, who, after visiting Peking, wrote:

‘The European missionaries have begun to undeceive them [the Chinese] by printing five hundred Books of the Law of God, which they composed in less than a century; having translated the works of St. Thomas and also the Holy Scriptures.’

If this be true, it is strange that copies have not been found. Emanuel Diaz, a Portuguese missionary, did translate and publish a version of the Gospels. This was finished in 1636. On the other hand, Father le Comte, writing to the Confessor of Louis XIV, reported the acceptance by the Pope of the *Missal* in Chinese, for which permission had been obtained, but he adds: ‘It was not judged expedient to make use of it’. He also reported the desire for ‘an exact version of the Holy Scriptures’, but then states:

‘There are such weighty reasons why it should not be given to the public, that it would be rash imprudence to make use of it; the more so that the substance of the Gospel, and even the most edifying parts of it, have already been explained in several of their books.’

Mr. Wylie ascertained that there was in the library *De Propaganda* at Rome a translation of the New Testament into Chinese by J. Basset, but who this man was and when he was in China he could not ascertain.

Among the earlier translations is a version of St. Matthew's Gospel by a Japanese, and an explanation of the Gospels, for Sundays and feast days, by Father de Mailla, dated 1740. From the *Memoirs of Father Ripa* it is evident that the College for Chinese youths established by him in Naples possessed a translation of some portions of the Scriptures. One sentence in that book reads:

'One of them [the students] read some passages out of the New Testament translated into Chinese, which sounded strangely enough, most of the words being of one syllable.'

At a much later date an edition of the four Gospels, with notes by J. Dejeans, was issued from the Roman Catholic press at Hongkong in 1892. This contains the official sanction of the Bishop of Canton and is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. A translation of the Acts was made in 1887, and of the New Testament in 1897, by C. P. Laurent, Ly.S.J., and was printed at Zicawei. The Roman Catholics have also published several summaries of the Old Testament and of the Liturgical Gospels.

Robert Morrison, we know, found in the British Museum a manuscript translation of substantial portions of the New Testament, to which further reference will be made later. And when at Canton he was told by Roman Catholic missionaries that both the Old and New Testaments had been translated into Chinese, and were in use, and from one of them he obtained a translation of the Gospels.

If our summary seems scattered and fragmentary, our apology must be the difficulty of obtaining accurate information. Concerning such versions as Dr. Muirhead had been able to examine, he wrote:

‘There is great freedom and simplicity in the style of translation, taken from the Vulgate as their standard form, which we have often had occasion to admire, but hardly to imitate as a whole, whether appearing in their quotations or in their professed translations.’

Though it does not properly belong to this chapter, we cannot do better than include here a reference also made by Dr. Muirhead in 1890 to the work of the Russian Church in this matter:

‘The Russian Church in Peking [he writes] issued a version of the New Testament, chiefly at the hands of the distinguished Archimandrite Palladius, some years ago, which has lately been revised. It is formed much in the same way as the Roman Catholic publications, as also in the terms employed, and deserves commendation in the main, as the production of an excellent Chinese scholar.’

From what has been written it will appear that a fair amount of translation work has been accomplished, but where the Roman Catholics have differed from the Protestants is that these versions have been, for the most part, confined to private hands and have not been made available to the public. This is consistent with their avowed policy.

A New Force in Old China

FROM what has been written it will be recognized that, within certain limits, the Church of Rome has permitted the translation of the Scriptures, but, speaking generally, she has not approved of their wide and free circulation among the people. As we now pass to consider what the Protestant Church has done in China, we are not only impressed with the large place given to translation work, but also with the importance attached to the wide dissemination of the Word of God. This alone was the introduction of a new and potent force into old China.

Professor G. M. Trevelyan in his essay on John Bunyan has written:

‘Multiply by tens of thousands that “Man clothed with rags, with . . . a Book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back”, and you have a force of tremendous potency, which has been one of the chief elements in the growth of modern England, the force by means of which Oliver Cromwell, and George Fox, and John Wesley wrought their wonders, being men of a like experience themselves; the force by alliance with which the more sceptical Whig aristocracy long bore rule in the island, and therewith balanced other forces, in that equipoise of freedom that has made modern England.’

As another of our historians has testified: ‘The effect of the Bible in this way was simply amazing. The whole temper of the nation was changed.’ So real a place has the man with the Book had in Great Britain that the Bible reading of Wycliffe’s Lollards is one of the scenes chosen to represent English history in the cartoons placed in the House of Commons lobby at Westminster.

It is the right and natural ambition of every Christian that the Bible should be to other nations what it has been to his

own. It was this desire that moved our fathers to launch the modern missionary enterprise in China. The translation and circulation of the Scriptures has always had an important place in the missionary movement, but in the case of China it was the main and, at first, the only motive. In the early days of the nineteenth century China was a closed land. Normal missionary work was impossible. There was neither freedom to enter the country nor liberty to preach the Gospel. The only thing that could be done was to make the Bible itself do the work of the pioneer. And when Robert Morrison sailed for China, the object of his mission, as defined by the London Missionary Society, was, in its initial stages at least, limited to the acquisition of the Chinese language and the translation of the Scriptures into the Chinese tongue, for it was recognized that more aggressive steps were at that date impracticable.

Robert Morrison died before China was open to the missionary, but he had set on foot a new force in old China which was destined to revolutionize the thinking of the most populous and most conservative nation in the world.

We all know what it is that has made England great and what alone can keep her so. 'What is the cause', asked a French traveller, 'that the colonists of New Zealand and Tasmania and Australia are so wise and so practical?' and he replied:

'In my opinion it must be attributed chiefly to their habitual reading of the Holy Scriptures and their thorough acquaintance with their contents. Hence come the great ideas of the Fatherhood of God, of His righteousness, of His providence which shape those constant and faithful souls which we call characters. And to what do they owe their strength of principle if not to the Bible, their great teacher?'¹

And this was the new force which in a new way began its

¹ Quoted by Bishop Westcott from the *Revue du Christianisme pratique*, September 1890.

regenerating work in China in the days of Robert Morrison. Those were formative years, years when the impact of the West was destined to shake China to her foundations, and calamitous it would have been if Western civilization had been solely a materialistic force devoid of spiritual power.

Some forty years ago a distinguished scientist said to the late Dr. Fairbairn:

‘If you want to prove the truth, the wisdom, the sober and honest history of the Bible, and the purity of its religion, place it among the Sacred Books of the East. . . . The sobriety of the Bible, the purity of its spirit, the elevation and devotion of its tone, make it occupy an entirely unique place. Placed among the Sacred Books of the East, the contrast would make its truth only the more stand out.’

This is exactly what has been done, and the forty years which have passed since those words were spoken have seen great changes made in the relative places of honour held by the Bible and the other Sacred Books of the East. The status of the Bible has undoubtedly increased, while the standing of other honoured works has, by comparison, decreased. ‘For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.’

Lest it may appear to some that in writing thus we are simply recording the biased opinion of a Westerner, we will quote a few lines from a recently published book entitled *As it looks to Young China*. This volume is written by a group of seven Chinese scholars, and the Editor, who is Professor of History in the Yenching University at Peking, closes his introductory chapter, to which he gives the arresting heading ‘Setting Confucius aside’, with these words:

‘In the midst of many conflicting opinions on great social questions current in China today one thing is certain. The

historic culture centring upon Confucianism is disrupted. There are still some Chinese who can hear Confucius weeping in his grave. But few of them will attempt, like Tseng Kuo-fan, to set him back into the central place he once occupied in Chinese thought.'

And yet all the while the demand for and the circulation of the Christian Scriptures in China has been going forward by leaps and bounds.

Henri Dominique Lacordaire, great Roman Catholic as he was, towards the end of his distinguished life said:

'I have been studying the Bible for thirty years, and every day I discover new light and new depth in it. Men's thoughts are soon fathomed and exhausted, but God's Word is a boundless fountain.'

Preaching in Notre Dame in Paris on one occasion, the populace burst out into loud applause. 'Do not applaud God's Word,' Lacordaire replied. 'Believe it, love it, fulfil it: this is the only acclamation which will rise up to Heaven, or which is worthy to do so.'

The Roman Church at its best has not despised the Bible, though in the past she has withheld it from the people. What a different world it would have been had she loved God's Word like Lacordaire, or had she displayed the courage of Erasmus, one of her greatest scholars, who prefixed the following brave words to his edition of the New Testament:

'I utterly dissent from those who are unwilling that the sacred Scriptures should be read by the unlearned, translated into their vulgar tongue, as though Christ had taught such subtleties that they can be scarcely understood even by a few theologians, or as though the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men's ignorance of it. The mysteries of kings it may be safer to conceal, but Christ wished His mysteries to

be published as openly as possible. I wish that even the weakest woman should read the Gospel—should read the epistles of Paul. I wish these were translated into all languages, so that they might be read and understood, not only by Scots and Irishmen, but also by Turks and Saracens. To make them understand is surely the first step. It may be that they might be ridiculed by many, but some would take them to heart. I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey.'

On this great subject, a subject of fundamental importance to the Reformation, Martin Luther was of one mind with Erasmus, differ though they did in other matters of procedure. This is what Luther wrote while shut up in the Wartburg translating the Bible:

'Would that this one Book were in every language, in every hand, before the eyes, and in the ears and hearts of all men! Scripture without any comment is the sun whence all teachers receive their light.'

Three centuries later, a lonely missionary, labouring at the other end of the world, was fired with a like ambition. We refer to Robert Morrison, the first Protestant pioneer in China. Amid hostile surroundings in Canton, his heart was stirred with a like ambition to that which had moved Erasmus and Luther in Europe. In personality and environment these three men present startling contrasts, but the theme which tuned their respective songs was one. As the subject of this book is *The Bible in China*, we cannot do better than recall Morrison's aspirations:

'To have Moses, David, and the prophets, Jesus Christ, and His disciples, using their own words, and thereby declar-

ing to the inhabitants of this land the wonderful works of God, indicates, I hope, the speedy introduction of a happier era in these parts of the world; and I trust that the gloomy darkness of pagan scepticism will be dispelled by the Day-spring from on high; and that the gilded idols of Buddha, and the numberless images which fill this land, will one day assuredly fall to the ground before the power of God's Word, as the idol fell before the ark.

'These are my anticipations, *although there appears not the least opening at present.* A bitter aversion to the Name of our blessed Saviour, and to any book that contains His Name or His doctrines, is felt and cherished. This, however, does not induce us to despair. I remember Britain, what she was, and what she now is in respect to religion. Three hundred years have not elapsed since national authority said that the Bible should not be read openly in any Church by the people, nor privately by the poor; that only noblemen and gentlemen, and noble ladies and gentlewomen, might have the Bible in their homes. I remember this, and cherish hope for China.'

Morrison and Marshman

To few men falls the undivided honour of being the first in any great undertaking. This truth finds ample illustration in the realms of science, of discovery, of religion, and of politics. And to two men falls the distinction of having produced the earliest translations of the Bible into Chinese. One laboured in India and the other in Canton. It is a strange and almost incredible story of overlapping. But it is more easy to-day to condemn such rivalry than to enter into the situation as it presented itself to the parties concerned.

The burden of the unevangelized world, and especially of China, had been heavily laid upon the heart of the Rev. William Moseley, a Congregational minister in Northamptonshire. Realizing that many lands were still closed to the missionary, he believed that the Scriptures might penetrate where the preacher could not go. The result was that on March 7, 1798, exactly six years to the day before the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society, he issued a circular urging 'the establishment of a Society for the translation of the Holy Scriptures into the languages of the most populous Oriental nations'.

This circular brought him into touch with Charles Grant, one of the Directors of the East India Company. But Charles Grant, though sympathetic, assured him that 'although the undertaking was a practical impossibility, it did a young man much credit to employ his talents in such a desirable undertaking'. He even asserted 'that no translation of the Holy Scriptures could be made into the Chinese language, for he knew the nature of the language would not allow of any translation whatever'.

This may sound almost incredible to-day, but Charles Grant was not alone. The Bishop of Durham, and other distinguished persons, expressed the same opinion. But while

these wise and sympathetic men said it couldn't be done, somebody tackled the task and did it. As Carey said: 'Few people know what may be done till they try and persevere in what they undertake'.

Carey's first companions were Joshua Marshman and Ward. Such a trio the world has seldom seen. They laughed at impossibilities and cried: 'They shall be done'. If John Wesley made the world his parish, these men made the whole of Asia their province. 'We have it in our power,' wrote Carey, 'if our means would do for it, in the space of about fifteen years to have the Word of God translated and printed in all the languages of the East.' We may smile at such sublime optimism, but it is better to build castles in the air than to dig dungeons of despair.

Of that great triumvirate at Serampore, we are only concerned with Joshua Marshman. What a man he was! By the time he was twelve years old he had read more than a hundred volumes. Obtaining employment, as an errand boy, in a bookseller's shop in London, he revelled in the world of books. In the year after Carey sailed for India, he became a teacher in a school at Bristol. Here he read the Classics, studied Hebrew and Syriac, and then sailed for India, in 1799, at the age of thirty-one.

The Serampore group, with all Asia for their province, dared to assign the translation of the Bible into Chinese to Joshua Marshman. This was before Robert Morrison had sailed for China. It was a bold adventure, but they secured the help of Johannes Lassar, an Armenian who had been born at Macao, and had been official correspondent for the Portuguese authorities with the Court at Peking. This man's salary of £450 a year had been promised by David Brown and Claudius Buchanan, Provost and Vice-Provost of Fort-William College. In this way the great task of translating the Bible into Chinese was undertaken by Dr. Marshman, though living in India. It was to engage all his energies for sixteen years.

Meanwhile events had been moving elsewhere. William Moseley, despite the pessimists, was as full of zeal for his project as ever, and when, in 1804, a Chinese manuscript labelled *Quatuor Evangelia Sinice* was discovered in the British Museum, his joy knew no bounds. This find was nothing less than a transcript, made in Canton in 1737, of a Roman Catholic translation of a Harmony of the Four Gospels, of the Acts, and of all St. Paul's Epistles. Such a discovery proved that his dream was not a mad impossibility.

With much care this manuscript was examined by several Sinologues, and reports were sent to the newly founded British and Foreign Bible Society. At first an estimate for printing the document as it stood was considered, but it was computed that this would cost about two guineas a copy. Seeing no way of handling the matter, the Bible Society reluctantly felt unable to proceed. For the next four years the matter was discussed, on and off, by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, but eventually they too turned it down. The Church Missionary Society also gave the question careful consideration, and no less than eleven pages of their first Report are devoted to it. But they too did not see what could be done. China was still a closed land, and the East India Company was hostile to Foreign Missions.

It was at this juncture that the London Missionary Society took the matter up. Among their students was a youth named Robert Morrison, whose first ambition had been to go to Africa. His father was a Scotsman who had come South and married a Northumbrian bride in the very year that Joshua Marshman was born. But Robert, the youngest son, was not born until his rival translator was nearly fourteen.

Robert Morrison inherited the tough, tenacious characteristics of the Borderer, and as a boy probably played with George Stephenson, another pioneer in a different realm. Gifted with keen powers of observation, and with a facility

of expression—indeed with too florid a style—his solid qualities and persevering industry were such that his tutor, Dr. Bogue, singled him out as eminently suited for the difficult post in China. The needs of that great land were laid before him, and Morrison whole-heartedly responded. And the stars in their courses fought on his behalf.

It was surely by no accident that at this juncture Dr. Moseley, with his heart full of China, should in Leadenhall Street, in the city of London, meet a Chinese gentleman. Unable to let him pass, he invited him to dinner. The invitation was accepted, with the result that Dr. Moseley was introduced to a young Chinese student who had recently arrived from Canton, and was studying English in a boarding school in Clapham. This young Cantonese and Robert Morrison were soon brought into touch with one another, and a working arrangement, beneficial to both, was speedily arranged. Together they transcribed the Chinese manuscript in the British Museum, as well as a hand-written Latin and Chinese Dictionary lent by the Royal Society.

On the last day of January 1807, Robert Morrison sailed for China, but via America owing to the hostility of the East India Company. Since China was closed to travel, his commission was limited, by the Society which sent him out, to the acquisition of the Chinese language, and the translation of the Bible into the same tongue.

Canton was reached on Sunday, September 7, 1807, more than seven months after he had set sail from Gravesend. Marshman by this time was half-way through his translation of the New Testament, but Morrison was a younger man and was to be resident in China itself. On the other hand, Marshman was no mean linguist, and had had a start of several years. The two men were to run a close race to the finish.

It would be difficult to imagine a situation more discourag-

ing than the one in which Robert Morrison was placed as a young man of twenty-five. In Canton all foreigners were confined to an area not greater than that occupied by the base of the Great Pyramid, and they were only allowed to reside there during the trade season. When the fleet sailed they had to depart for Macao. Further, in Canton the East India Company were ill-disposed to missionary ideals, and in Macao the Roman Catholic bishop and priests were hostile to all Protestants. Again, the Chinese Government forbade, under penalty of death, any native to teach his language to the despised foreigner. The teacher Morrison secured actually carried poison on his person, with a view to suicide should he be detected. Morrison's path was hedged about with difficulties on all sides. It is small wonder that he wrote in his diary: 'I have been full of anxiety; a great deal too much so'. It was at first only as a paying guest in an American factory that residence at Canton was possible. At Serampore, Marshman and his Baptist colleagues had to live under the Danish flag, not the British. And at Canton, Morrison, without any colleague, had to take shelter under the Stars and Stripes, and not under the Union Jack.

All foreigners in Canton, in those days, were virtually prisoners. The factory site, well covered with buildings, had a river frontage limited to a thousand feet. The land was a muddy flat, liable to be flooded at high water. All servants were engaged by the Chinese authorities, and could be withdrawn at will. No sedan-chairs were allowed, nor might anyone row on the river for air or exercise. No foreign woman, be she wife or visitor, might so much as set her foot upon the settlement. Thus cabined and confined, Morrison lived his frugal and arduous life. With an earthenware lamp for his light at night, and a folio copy of Matthew Henry's *Commentary* as wind-screen for his primitive lamp, he laboured on at his herculean task.

時同世在耶穌與帝袁孝



千零四年
孝哀帝之先

約有
或神風
或神氣

בראשית

CAP. I. A



א וַיֵּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת
 ב הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ
 ג עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֵף עַל-
 ד מַיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי-
 ה אוֹר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאוֹר כִּי טוֹב וַיְבַדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר
 וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וּלְחֹשֶׁךְ לַיְלָה
 ז וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד: פ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי
 ח לְקוֹץ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לַמַּיִם: נ וַיַּעַשׂ
 ט אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַרְקוּעַ וַיְבַדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לְרַקִּיעַ
 י וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לְרַקִּיעַ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים
 יא לְרַקִּיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי: פ וַיֹּאמֶר
 יב אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל-מָקוֹם אֶחָד וַתִּרְאֶה
 יג תְּבִשָּׂה וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיִבֶּשֶׁת אֶרֶץ וּלְמַקְוֵה י
 יד הַמַּיִם קָנָה יַמִּים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
 טו הַדָּשָׁא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מְזִרְעַ עֵץ וְרֵעַ עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשֶׂה פְּרִי
 טז לְמִינֵהוּ אֲשֶׁר זֶרַעוֹ בֶן עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַתִּוצֵא הָאָרֶץ
 יז דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מְזִרְעַ עֵץ לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֵשֶׂה-פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר זֶרַעוֹ
 יח בֶּן לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב: וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר
 יט יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי: פ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֶת כְּרַקִּיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם
 כ לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים

ולמים

A

כ' רבתי v. 1

ROBERT MORRISON'S HEBREW BIBLE

This page shows the opening verses of Genesis. The Chinese characters are Morrison's annotations. The characters across the top of the page read: 'The Emperor Hsiao-ai and Jesus were contemporaneous'. The only note relevant to that page of Hebrew is on the left showing that Morrison was not certain how best to translate 'the spirit of God' in verse 2, whether to say 'the wind of God' or 'the breath of God'. He adopted the former, but another term is used to-day.

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With the Apostle Paul's list of hardships we are familiar. They were the lot of an intrepid soldier. Robert Morrison's trials were of a different nature, yet hardly less formidable. Two or three brief sentences, taken from his letters, speak volumes. Here they are:

'This is a very lonely situation.'

'I feel the confinement a good deal.'

'I am under the continual dread of the oppressor.'

'The natives who assist me are hunted from place to place and sometimes seized.'

'My hand is weary of holding the pen. My health would be better if I could exchange it sometimes for the plough.'

These were not merely emotional utterances. There were hard facts and poignant realities behind these words. The men who had cut his printing blocks had been seized by the authorities, and Chinese law knew no mercy. The blocks, prepared with much care and anxiety for the printing of the New Testament, had been destroyed. He learned that sanction had been given, by the Emperor, for the taking of Sir George Staunton's life, and he knew that he also had incurred the wrath of the same power. His Chinese Grammar was submitted for criticism, by the Bengal Government, to his rival translator in India, and was pigeon-holed in a Government office in Calcutta, while Marshman was free to publish his *Clavis Sinica*. His name was erased, by the East India Company, from their roll, simply because he had translated the Scriptures into Chinese. But though instructions were sent out by the great Company in London that he was to be dismissed from Canton, his lot was maintained by a higher Power than the world's most powerful monopoly.

By November 1819, after more than twelve years' toil, not only had he mastered the language and become familiar with the Classics, but he had published his Grammar, and had

completed, with some aid from Dr. Milne,¹ the translation of the Old and New Testament. He had also made great progress with his Chinese Dictionary, to which he frequently devoted from six to eight hours a day. For the publication of this Dictionary, when it was completed, the East India Company contributed £12,000.

Toward the two translations of the Bible into Chinese, undertaken by Marshman and Morrison respectively, the British and Foreign Bible Society gave generous aid, being 'desirous of encouraging all exertions to cultivate a field in which the harvest is so great and the labourers so few.' And it should be added that the Edinburgh Bible Society, from 1809 to 1826, sent more than £20,000 to the British and Foreign Bible Society, as well as £6600 direct to Serampore, so that Scotland had a substantial part in Marshman's Chinese version as well as in other Oriental printings at that centre.

It was impossible that there should be no sense of rivalry between the two translators. Marshman had his colleagues, but Morrison, save for a brief period, had none, and his letters to Serampore either miscarried, or were treated with a prudent silence. Both men completed their tasks almost simultaneously, but Marshman, with his better facilities for printing, got his work first through the press, and was the first to place his Bible in the hands of the Bible Society at home.

At the Annual Meetings of the British and Foreign Bible Society in May 1823, John Marshman, on behalf of his father, placed a complete copy of the Bible in Chinese on the table. In the following May, Dr. Morrison himself presented his translation to the same Society's Annual Meeting. It was hailed with great demonstrations of satisfaction by all friends of the

¹ Milne's assistance was limited to the historical books of the Old Testament, Deuteronomy to Chronicles, except Ruth, and in part to Job. The basis of Morrison's New Testament was the Roman Catholic MS. already mentioned.

Society, and King George IV graciously accepted a copy and received the translator.

Such overlapping as we have recorded is happily almost without precedent. Though it is easy to see how it came to pass, it was none the less to be regretted. John Clark Marshman, the official historian of the Serampore Mission, whose natural sympathies would be with his father, wrote:

‘On an impartial review of the circumstances and wants of the Serampore Mission, the appropriation of Mr. Marshman’s strength to a distant object of doubtful expediency cannot be regarded without some feelings of regret.’

More will be said elsewhere about printing in Chinese, but a few words here may not be out of place. Dr. Marshman’s Bible was printed with movable metallic type, instead of with the wooden blocks generally employed by the Chinese. Dr. George Smith has given us a quaint and vivid picture of the Indian ‘cutting the matrices, or casting the type, for the [Marshman] Bible, while he squatted below his favourite idol, under the auspices of which alone he would work’. On the other hand, Morrison’s Bible was printed from wooden blocks, and he was not always sure which enemy he feared most, the Viceroy who seized and destroyed them, or the white ants which devoured them!

No man was in a better position than William Milne to appreciate the task to which Robert Morrison had set his hand, and no more generous or more eloquent tribute was ever paid to Morrison than that which Milne penned a few weeks before his own death.

‘By God’s help [he wrote] you have set on foot what all the empires and mandarins, and priests and literati, and people of China can never destroy or effectually stop: what will raze their temples, destroy their idols, change their lives and save

the souls of many. Be not ungratefully discouraged, my dear friend. How many servants equally faithful have gone down to the dust without being honoured a tenth part so much.'

Marshman, though the older man, outlived Morrison. Marshman died in 1837. Morrison died in 1834, on the 1st of August. It is a noteworthy fact that Morrison sailed for China in 1807, the same year that the slave trade was made illegal, and that he died on the very day when all slaves in the British Empire were declared free. As William Canton has said: 'Morrison had left behind him the charter of a truer freedom for hundreds of millions in a more hopeless house of bondage'.

Before we close this chapter it will be profitable to summarize the judgment of experts as to the real value of these the earliest Protestant efforts to give the whole Bible to the Chinese people.

Of Dr. Marshman's translation, Drs. Muirhead and J. Wherry have respectively written as follows:

'It is a remarkable work, considering the circumstances in which it was made, and reflects high credit on him and his assistant.'

'With revision it would be possible to make of it a version that could still be read with profit. It is surprising how much of the actual contents of the Book is good current Chinese, and what a large proportion of it appears *ipsisimis verbis* in subsequent translations.'

As the two same authorities have commented on the work of Drs. Morrison and Milne, it will be interesting to have these recorded at the same time, and in the same order:

'As a first effort of the kind [wrote Dr. Muirhead], their translation of the Old and New Testaments cannot be too highly commended. They naturally adopted a simple and liter-

使徒行傳

第一章

陡斐勒余先言耶穌始行訓諸情。至于以聖風囑所選之使徒。而升天之日。蓋受難四旬之後。其以多自徵已活。現伊等而言天國之情。又同食間命曰。勿離柔撒冷。惟候父之許。汝曹所曾聞出吾口。蓋若翰固受水洗。汝曹乃不日受聖風之洗。且集會者問之曰。主爾復舉依臘爾國于此。

使徒行傳第一章

一

THE FIRST SCRIPTURE CIRCULATED IN CHINA

A photographic reproduction of the first page of Robert Morrison's translation of The Acts of the Apostles. It was published in 1910, three years after Morrison's arrival in China. In view of the grave risks involved, the Chinese printer pasted a false label on the cover before distributing the volumes to the local booksellers, who received them gratis and sold them for a small sum.

To face page 59

ary system in reducing the original, and succeeded so well as to be of considerable service in the work of their successors.'

'A comparison of Morrison's with Marshman's [wrote Dr. Wherry] does not reveal a great superiority, though it was more generally adopted and more widely circulated. . . . Where they differ, the advantage may be generally with Morrison, who as a resident in China could command native scholarship of a higher order.'

Though the general opinion was that such overlapping was to be regretted, the Baptists, for many years, printed and circulated Marshman's version, as it used for 'baptism' a Chinese character which signified immersion. Other denominations adopted Morrison's version, in which the term used for this rite was more neutral.¹

¹ Both versions employed *Shen* for God, and *Sheng Feng* for Holy Spirit. Marshman used *Chan* for Baptism, while Morrison used *Hsi*.

The Delegates' Version

THE death of Morrison coincided with the cessation of the East India Company's Charter, and this ushered in a period of strain. The Chinese Government, though scornful of the foreigner, had been willing to trade with merchants from abroad, since they could treat them as inferiors. But so soon as the British Government sent out a Plenipotentiary who claimed, in the name of his Sovereign, to be treated as an equal with the Emperor's representative, a crisis became inevitable. In the war that followed, opium was more the occasion and pretext than the cause. But, be that as it may, the clash in international ideals ushered in a new era, marked by the opening of five ports to foreign residence, together with the cession of Hongkong.

But before these new doors had been opened, considerable enterprise had been shown in the circulation of the Scriptures. There were hundreds of thousands of Chinese in the Malay Archipelago who were willing to receive books. William Milne, and other workers in the Ultra-Ganges Mission, had engaged in this labour of love. The first distribution was probably made by Milne himself. In the spring of 1814 he had visited Java, Malacca, and Penang, and during these journeys had given away twenty-five complete copies of the New Testament to Chinese emigrants on board. 'Perhaps', he wrote, 'these were the first twenty-five complete Chinese Testaments that were ever distributed.'

The work thus begun continued far and wide. A great and effectual door was opened to the Word of God, and there were not wanting men of daring to scatter the Good Seed. One of these was Charles Gutzlaff, a Prussian agent of the Netherlands Missionary Society, who, during the years 1831 to 1835, made no fewer than seven journeys, in Chinese junks and other vessels, along the coasts of Siam, China, and Korea,

even reaching Japan. He was an accomplished scholar, a man of great resource, of boundless enterprise and unquenchable optimism. Though many of his dreams were not realized, his zeal and enthusiasm did much to rouse Europe to take an active interest in China. We shall hear more about him later.

Among those who were moved to emulate Gutzlaff's daring was Dr. Medhurst. Walter Henry Medhurst went out to China as a printer under the London Missionary Society in 1816. Educated at St. Paul's School, he showed great aptitude for languages and became an eminent translator. In 1828 he too boarded a Chinese junk and commenced itinerant work along the coasts of Java, Batavia, and the Malayan peninsula.

In 1835, in company with a Mr. E. Stevens, he followed the Chinese coast from south to north, landing at numerous places *en route*. Gutzlaff had not hesitated to travel in vessels which had opium on board, but Medhurst was unwilling to do this. His scruples were honoured, and an American brig, belonging to the Christian firm of Oliphant and Company, was placed at his disposal, as the cargo was not ready. But the captain refused, at first, to sail uncharted seas. His reluctance was, at length, overcome, with the result that some six thousand Scriptures and other books and tracts were scattered far and wide. Such were some of the earliest efforts to distribute the Word of God among the peoples of China. But we must now revert to the subject of Bible translation and revision.

Marshman and Morrison had left an invaluable legacy for those who followed. In addition to the two translations of the whole Bible, Marshman had published his *Clavis Sinica*, or Grammar of the Chinese language, and translations of parts of the Classics. Morrison's contribution was greater. He had left a Dictionary of Chinese and English in six volumes, his *Horae Sinicae*, translations from the popular literature of the Chinese, a Grammar of the Chinese language, and a vast number of

smaller works. With these instruments of learning in their hands, later missionaries found progress more easy, and it was but natural that they should soon recognize the necessity for the revision of what the pioneers had done. Morrison had been well aware of this necessity, and some time before his death had written home:

‘I make it my daily study to find out and correct errors in the Chinese version of the Scriptures; and my brethren of the Ultra-Ganges Mission are requested to note down whatever may occur to them as an error or imperfection in the translation.’

Dr. Morrison had hoped that his own son would undertake a thorough revision, but his son’s official duties made that impossible. But Drs. Medhurst, Gutzlaff, and Bridgman, the latter of the American Board, took the matter up, with the promise of critical assistance by Morrison junior. The revised New Testament was finished by 1835, and various editions were printed at Singapore, Serampore, and Batavia. The Old Testament, which was mainly the work of Medhurst and Gutzlaff, was not completed until several years later. But political developments were to open up the way for something much more worthy of so momentous a task.

With the cession of Hongkong to the British, as already mentioned, a new rallying-centre became available. And so it came to pass that on August 22, 1843, no fewer than twelve missionaries,¹ eight British and four American, met together to inaugurate a new version of the Scriptures which should be ‘better adapted for general circulation than any hitherto published’.

¹ These were Messrs. Dyer, Hobson, Legge, Medhurst, W. C. Milne, A. and J. Stronach, all of the London Missionary Society; Messrs. Bridgman and Ball of the American Board; Messrs. Dean and Roberts of the American Baptist; and Mr. Brown of the Morrison Educational Society.

Six meetings were held during August and September. At some of these gatherings they were joined by two more representatives of the American Baptists, and by a Mr. Walter M. Lowrie of the American Presbyterians.

Walter Lowrie was a young graduate of Princeton University, only twenty-four years of age, whose talents and linguistic gifts gave promise of a great future. He became, however, the first Protestant missionary in China to suffer a violent death, and we shall let him, though dead, yet speak about this translation.

The work we are now considering became known as the Delegates' Version for reasons which will appear. Among the decisions made at Hongkong the following may be recorded:

The basis of the revision should be the *Textus receptus*.

The whole body of Protestant missionaries shall form a General Committee.

There shall be local Committees, one at each Port.

The work shall be subdivided.

Each of the five centres shall submit its work to the other four.

When the New Testament has passed through this joint scrutiny, the whole is to be revised by selected *delegates*.

Nearly four years were given to the preparatory work outlined above, and then the committee of selected delegates met, in June 1847, in the home of Dr. Medhurst at Shanghai. But before this point had been reached, the Baptists had withdrawn. It had been decided that different renderings for the Greek word *Baptizo* should be used, if separate editions became necessary. But there was no agreement as to the best name for God. The Roman Catholics had had their controversy settled by the Pope, as we have seen, but the Protestant logomachy was not so easily concluded. As William Canton has well said: 'Since Jacob wrestled till the breaking of

day at the ford at Jabbok, surely men had not often uttered with such earnestness the petition, "Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy Name" '.

But before we gather with that historic company of translators at Shanghai, and try to enter into some of their problems, it will be good for us to be reminded of some of the hardships and difficulties of those early days. Here is an extract from one of young Walter Lowrie's letters to his father, dated 1843:

'The past fifteen months have been times of sore trial, in one respect or another, to the Protestant missionaries in China. I have been struck, in looking over the list in this part of the world, to see that scarcely a single one has escaped without some personal affliction, either of sickness or accident, or some deeply painful bereavement. Mrs. Boone died at Ku-lang-su, August 30th, 1842. . . . Mrs. Dean died in Hongkong in March 1843. Dr. Hepburn, Dr. Hobson, and Mr. Stronach have each lost a son within the year. Dr. Lockhart has been called to mourn the death of an only child in the same time. Mr. Medhurst, Mr. Milne, and myself, have either been shipwrecked or most narrowly escaped it. Mr. Brown's house in Hongkong was attacked and plundered by a gang of robbers in the night. Mr. McBryde has been obliged to return to the United States, through failure of health. But a day or two since, Mr. Dyer, who had spent seventeen years in labouring for the Chinese, was removed by death, when absent from his family; and almost every other missionary here has had attacks of sickness more or less severe. We have all met with a severe loss in the death of the Hon. John R. Morrison, who died on the 29th of last August. He was the eldest son of the late Dr. Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China. There was bitter mourning here when he died, for probably no foreigner in China was so popular with all classes as he.'

Such an extract gives us a brief glimpse into the trials and sorrows amid which the work was carried forward. Walter Lowrie's own shipwreck, to which he makes such slight reference, was followed by five days and nights in an open boat. And it was this misadventure, if we may call it such, which brought him to Hongkong just when the missionaries were discussing the problems of revision.

And now we must go north to Shanghai, to the delegates gathering in Dr. Medhurst's home. Walter Lowrie had reached Shanghai on June 1, 1847, and was the guest of Bishop Boone. He much enjoyed the change and company. 'I see as much company in a day as I did in Ningpo in a month', he wrote to his mother. But it is from a letter to his brother, dated July 23, 1847, that we get the best view of the delegates at work. This letter will introduce us to some of the problems surrounding the best Chinese term for God, and it will be better thus to handle this vexed question, rather than to attempt ourselves to set forth the pros and cons of a very thorny subject, a subject even yet not wholly settled.

The delegates were Bishop Boone, who was thirty-five; Dr. Medhurst, who was fifty-one; Dr. Bridgman, who was forty-six; J. Stronach, who was forty-seven; W. C. Milne, who was thirty-five; and Walter Lowrie, who was only twenty-eight. And now we must quote from young Lowrie's letter to his brother.

'After we had got together, all went on well for a week, when we were stopped by a question which has excited no little talk and writing for some time, "What is the proper word for God in Chinese?" Morrison and Milne have adopted the word *Shen*, which, according to the best judgment I can form, means *God* or *Divinity* in general. Mr. Medhurst for many years used the same term, and even so late as this present year, 1847, has published a dictionary in which he says: "The

Chinese themselves, for God, and invisible beings in general, use *Shen*". But some twelve years ago or more, he began to use *Shang Ti*, Supreme Ruler, for the true God, and *Shen* for false god. Mr. Gutzlaff also did the same; and these two being the best and most experienced Chinese scholars, had of course great weight. And most of the missionaries were carried away by their example.

'For some years past, however, there has been a good deal said on the subject, and a strong disposition manifested to return to the old way. *Shang Ti* is objected to, first, as being the distinctive title of the national deity of China, and hence something like the Jupiter of Rome; and second, it is not a generic term, and cannot be used in such passages as "Chemosh thy God and Jehovah our God", "If Jehovah be God", etc., "The unknown God, Him declare I unto you", etc. In fact there are many verses where the point and emphasis rest on the use of the *generic* word all through, as in John x. 35, 36, 1 Cor. viii. 6, etc. Hence of late many of the missionaries wish to return to the old word, and a good deal has been written in the *Chinese Repository*, and a great deal said on the subject.

'Dr. Medhurst, however, has taken up the cudgels in earnest, and printed a book of nearly three hundred pages, in which he maintains that *Shen* never means god, much less the supreme God. This, by the way, is in opposition to three dictionaries of his own, published in the last ten years. And he further maintains that *Ti*, which properly means ruler, is the generic term for God in Chinese; and that *Shang Ti*, High or Supreme Ruler, is the proper word to translate *Elohim* and *Theos*, when they refer to the true God. So the case stood when the convention met.

'We went on with the revision very well, till we came to Matthew i. 23, where the word *Theos* occurs. Dr. Bridgman then proposed that we use the word *Shen*. Bishop Boone seconded this; and it was well known that my views coincided

with theirs. Dr. Medhurst and Mr. Stronach took decided ground for *Shang Ti*: and so we have now been discussing this question for three weeks, Medhurst and Boone being the chief speakers. The latter is a supreme debater, and having a very quick and logical mind, pressed Dr. Medhurst so closely that he declared that he must have all down in black and white. We agreed to this, and Bishop Boone and myself worked hard for a week, and wrote out an argument for *Shen*, covering twenty-six folio pages. Mr. Medhurst, who had spent five months in writing his book, and scarcely allowed us ten days to answer it, took our answer so seriously, that he said he must have some weeks to prepare a reply. So he and Mr. Stronach are engaged on this. I greatly fear that the result of all will be, that each side will hold its own view, and Dr. Medhurst and Mr. Stronach will secede. If that case there will be two versions or none.

'A large majority of the missionaries in China, I believe, are for *Shen*; most of our missionaries are strongly for it, though one or two hesitate a little; all the Baptists; all the Episcopalians, both English and American; most of the American Board missionaries, and several even of the London Missionary Society. This of itself is a strong proof for *Shen*, for it shows that even the acknowledged scholarship of Medhurst and Gutzlaff is not able to command assent for *Shang Ti*. But I did not mean to write so much on this.'

This letter takes us right into the heart of a subject which has keenly divided the missionary body, and even yet is still debated. Walter Lowrie, in a letter to his father, written only a few days later than the one just quoted, says: 'I hope in the next overland to be able to give an account of the close of the discussion'. Such was the optimism of youth more than eighty years ago!

Walter Lowrie's next letter was addressed to a missionary

in India, seeking to know whether Indian experience could throw any light upon the great problem. It was the last letter he ever wrote. Circumstances called him to return to Ningpo for a brief visit. He left Shanghai by the overland route and reached Chapu, where he was detained by contrary winds for three days. On August 19 he set out to cross the Hangchow Bay, but had not proceeded far before a craft, with three masts and eight oars, bore down upon his boat. His little vessel was speedily overtaken and boarded by heavily armed pirates. When these fierce men began to break open his trunk with their spears, he quietly handed them the key, saying, 'There is no need to burst it open, here is the key'. Then taking a Bible from his pocket he sat down and began to read. It was a copy of Baxter's 12mo edition, in Hebrew, Greek, and English, the copy he had saved with much difficulty when shipwrecked.¹

Fearing that the foreigner would report the outrage to Shanghai, the pirates seized him and threw him overboard. As he fell into the water he had the presence of mind to throw his much-prized Bible back on to the deck, and also to kick off his shoes. Being able to swim he endeavoured to return to the boat, but the pirates beat him off with an iron-hooked pole until he sank. No trace of his body was ever seen again.

Thus died at the early age of twenty-eight Walter Lowrie, the first Protestant martyr in China. It was a terrible blow to the missionary community and to the small translation committee. Strange to say, he and Bishop Boone had not long before discussed another case, where a worker of promise had been cut off in early manhood. 'He could not call it mysterious, peculiarly distressing, as was commonly done', he had remarked. 'Never', said Bishop Boone, 'have I heard one converse who had a more delightful state of childlike simplicity of heart in relying upon his Saviour.'

¹ The Bible Hudson Taylor had on the Brighton beach was one of the same edition.

With sad hearts the committee continued its work, appointing C. W. Milne, son of Dr. Milne, to fill the vacant place. For the next three years daily meetings were held. Bishop Boone's health compelled him to retire, and the giant's portion fell upon Dr. Medhurst, the oldest member of the committee. The views of Medhurst and Gutzlaff prevailed, and *Shang Ti* replaced *Shen*, and *Sheng Shen* took the place of *Sheng Ling* for Holy Spirit.

This work, though called by its authors a revision, was in reality a new version. It was greatly in advance of all previous efforts, and though not without its critics was generally acknowledged to be a literary work of a new flavour.

Work on the Old Testament proceeded without delay. The committee met for this purpose on August 1, 1850, but after seven months the divergence of views became too pronounced for co-operation to continue. The result was that Dr. Bridgman withdrew, while Medhurst, Stronach, and Milne completed the task, Dr. Medhurst again bearing the lion's share. It was printed in 1853, and of this work Dr. Muirhead has written:

'No one can fail to admire the classic beauty and rhythm of the style. . . . There is no doubt as to its supreme excellence as a literary production, its splendid scholarship, and its adaptation to the native culture.'

Dr. Bridgman, who had retired, associated himself with Dr. Culbertson of the American Presbyterians, and commenced a new version of the whole Bible. The main points at issue intimately concerned the principles underlying the translator's art. May a translator subordinate strict fidelity to the original, even in minute shades of thought, to elegance and perfection of style? Which is the more important: a literal reproduction of the original, or perspicacity in the new language? Here there is legitimate grounds for a difference of opinion. The problem

is well illustrated by the respective merits of the English Authorised and Revised versions.¹ In the Chinese versions under discussion, Dr. Medhurst's renderings had leaned towards perfect Chinese, and Dr. Bridgman's towards the letter of the original. Both served a good purpose. To the Chinese reader, unfamiliar with Biblical thought, peculiarities in phraseology brought only confusion, but for the theological student fidelity to the original was more than style.

Drs. Bridgman and Culbertson's version of the New Testament appeared in 1859, and the Old Testament in 1862. *Shen* was used for God, and *Sheng Ling* for Holy Spirit. The British Society had published Medhurst's version and the American Society published Bridgman's.

Dr. Bridgman died shortly before the completion of the whole task. He had been a great translator and a great editor, for he edited the first twenty volumes of the *Chinese Repository*. Dr. Culbertson, like Bede, just lived to finish his great task, and the news that the degree of D.D. had been conferred upon him in America only reached Shanghai after his death.

¹ Bishop Wescott justified departure from the beautiful English of the Authorized Version with these words: 'This phrase or that may seem to me to be strange or uncouth, but I have a limited and imperfect vision. Let me then strive with absolute self-control and self-surrender to allow Apostles and Evangelist to speak in their own words to the last syllable and the least inflection, in Hebrew idiom and with Hebrew thought. Let them so speak, and let us humbly wait till in God's good time we are enabled to read the fulness of their meaning in our own tongue. I know no way in which we can understand the meaning of a message except by the patient observance of the exact words in which it is conveyed.'

Gutzlaff and the Taiping Rebels

WE are still within the region of individual and therefore rival versions. Many years were to elapse ere union work was possible. This chapter will be mainly concerned with Gutzlaff's translation, a translation which had a somewhat romantic history. But something must first be said about the work of the Rev. Josiah Goddard.

Josiah Goddard was sent out to the Far East by the American Baptist Society in 1838, four years after Robert Morrison's death. The necessity for a revision of Marshman's version had been recognized by the Baptists, and Goddard was chosen for this task. He lived to see a revised New Testament published in 1853, but, dying the following year, he left the Old Testament almost untouched.

Goddard's New Testament was subsequently revised by Dr. E. C. Lord, an American Baptist resident at Ningpo, and a handsome edition, with references, was printed at Shanghai in 1883. This translation is highly spoken of. It is said to succeed, in a remarkably happy manner, in obtaining an easy and agreeable flow of polished Chinese. It was, however, little known or used outside Baptist circles.

We now come to the main subject of this chapter, namely, Charles Gutzlaff's version. Gutzlaff was no ordinary man. His activities and his industry are almost incredible. He aspired to have Christian astronomers and mathematicians enter Peking after the manner of the Jesuits. He formed a Chinese Union for the employment of Chinese evangelists and colporteurs. His zeal and enthusiasm were highly contagious and provoked the formation of several missionary societies. Though some of his schemes failed, there was much that endured. His visit to Herrnhut led to the Moravian mission to Tibet. Through him all the German missions in south China had their birth, as also the Chinese Evangelization Society, which sent out Hudson

Taylor. Alexander Wylie places more than sixty Chinese publications to his credit, and in addition he published writings in Japanese, Siamese, Dutch, German, and English. He sailed for the Far East when he was only twenty-three and died in 1851 at the early age of forty-eight, after twenty-five strenuous years for the peoples he loved.

Besides assisting with the Delegates' Version, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Gutzlaff prepared an independent version of the whole Bible. The Chinese Evangelization Society, two years after sending Hudson Taylor to China, bore the cost of a new edition of the Old Testament, for which new blocks were specially cut. The New Testament was revised by Gutzlaff several times, and ten or more editions were issued. While the missionary community as a whole did not favour this version, it bid fair at one time to be the most successful of all, for it was adopted and printed by the Taiping rebels. As this movement strongly influenced the Churches at home, and affected Bible production, more than a passing reference to it is called for.

Hung Siu-tsuen, the leader of the Taiping rebellion, was born about thirty miles from Canton in 1813, six years after Morrison's arrival in China. As a disappointed aspirant to literary honours, he was brought into touch with the Gospel through a tract written by one of William Milne's converts. Like Mohammed, he became the victim of visions and trances which he harmonized with what he had read in the tract.

' These books [he wrote] are purposely sent by heaven to me to confirm the truth of my former experiences. If I had received the books without having gone through the sickness, I should not have dared to believe in them, and on my own account to oppose the customs of the whole world. If I had merely been sick, but had not also received the books, I should have had no further evidence as to the truth of my visions.'

These experiences he took as his commission from Heaven, and wrote as follows:

'I have received the immediate command from God in His presence; the Will of Heaven rests with me. Although I should meet thereby with calamity, difficulty and suffering, yet I am resolved to act.'

Being something of a scholar, he wrote various odes and exhortations, of which the following will serve as an illustration:

When our transgressions high as heaven rise,
 How well to trust in Jesus' full atonement!
 We follow not the demons, we obey
 The holy precepts, worshipping alone
 One God, and thus we cultivate our hearts.

He was brought into touch with an imperfectly instructed company of Worshippers of God in the province of Kwangsi. These people, known as 'The Society of the Worshippers of *Shang Ti*', had a very limited knowledge of the truth. They threw away their idols, wrote a confession of their sins, which they burned before God, after a Chinese custom. A cupful of water was then poured over the confessor, by way of baptism, when the following words were recited: 'Purification from all sins, putting off the old, and regeneration'. Ablutions followed. The written Name of God took the place of their idols, and before this Name incense was burned. In a word, it was not dissimilar from what has been known elsewhere in China during the twilight stage of a religious awakening. Had it come under early and wise guidance, the results might have been very different from what they were.

As it happened, this movement came under the influence of one of the secret societies inspired by a desire to overthrow the Manchu dynasty. The result was a powerful politico-

religious upheaval, with each of the two elements struggling for mastery.

It is not within our purpose to follow the story of the Taiping rebellion, but only to show what effect it had upon the translation and circulation of the Bible. The Taiping leader, after he had established himself at Nanking, published numerous portions of the Scriptures, adopting Gutzlaff's version for this purpose. Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and St. Matthew's Gospel appeared during 1853, as instalments of the whole Bible. Upon the cover of these were emblazoned the Imperial arms of the Taiping dynasty, and the title-page bore the following legend: 'A New Edition issued by the Heavenly Dynasty of the Taiping (Great Peace), in the third year of his reign'.

These volumes were intended to serve as text-books for the examination of future students. Immense interest and great hopes were inspired by these events, though opinions differed as to their final issue. Dr. Griffith John, for instance, wrote to the London Missionary Society as follows:

'I fully believe that God is uprooting idolatry in this land through the insurgents, and that He will by means of them, in connection with the foreign missionary, plant Christianity in its stead.'

It was small wonder that at home many felt that this was a tide in the affairs of China which, if taken at the flood, would lead to great and widespread blessing. And this was not the passing hope of a day. We have before us as we write, a four-page quarto leaflet written by the Rev. John Angel James in 1853, and a pamphlet of sixty pages, by the same pen, dated five years later. Both are the outpourings of a heart deeply concerned about the Church's attitude towards the uprising in China. To feel again the emotions which stirred that great preacher, we will quote a few lines from his glowing appeal



LABEL, SHOWING DRAGONS, ON TAIPING EDITION

The five large characters give the General Title, 'The Sacred Book of the Newly Bequeathed Oracles'. The two smaller characters below refer to that particular section or portion on which the label appears.

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dated 1853. It is headed: 'China: Something must be done, and done immediately for China. What?' Then in words that burn, he begins:

'We live in an age of wonders, but the greatest of them all is this movement in China. "The Chinese revolution", says *The Times* newspaper, "is, in all respects, the greatest revolution the world has yet seen." . . . God is evidently coming forth from His place to do one of His greatest works in the earth and with a voice loud and awful as thunder, is summoning the Christian Church to do something worthy of Him, of itself, and of the events which have occurred. We must be stone deaf not to hear, and insensible even to death itself not to feel, the calls of God upon our devoted attention. . . .

'The facts are clearly and fully established, that the new faith of the insurgents is substantially Christian, as evinced by the acknowledgment of the writer, in the admission of the sameness of their religious books and ours,—that they, on this ground, recognize us as their brethren, and are, therefore, of course, prepared and ready to enter into fellowship with us, and to receive our books. . . . There is, in this movement, less of the hand of man, and more of the finger of God, than in anything that has recently occurred.'

The writer of the appeal then proceeds to say that he had been approached with regard to a scheme to print and circulate in China one million copies of the Chinese New Testament. He calls attention to the fact that the British and Foreign Bible Society had 'promptly and most nobly responded to the foregoing appeal', and he advertised the following resolution of the Bible Society:

'That the Committee, relying upon the sympathy of the British public in this desirable object, are prepared to take upon themselves all the measures necessary for the printing

with the least practicable delay, One Million copies of the Chinese New Testament.'

This resolution, signed by the two secretaries of the Society, was passed on September 19, 1853. It was surely a noteworthy fact that while the Bible Society in London was making this decision, Hudson Taylor, on the very same day, was sailing for China from Liverpool for the first time. It was the urgency of the same crisis in China that moved both parties, one a powerful society and the other an unknown youth. But both were instruments in the hand of the same Master-builder.

There was an immense response to the appeal. One friend subscribed for 10,000 copies. Dr. James' congregation at Birmingham accepted responsibility for 25,000. Large and small sums swelled the total. And one of the last gifts came from two children in Scotland by the hand of a Chinese. So generous was the response that the fund amounted to £52,368 and sufficed to finance the British and Foreign Bible Society's entire expenditure in China for the next twenty years.

But the early promise of the movement and the eager hopes of friends at home were not realized. For fifteen years the rebellion, in its conflict with the Imperial power, wasted the richest provinces of China, and cost the lives of some fifteen millions of people. It is a 'sad story of high purpose, deteriorated by success, and of lofty ideals corrupted by the cruelty, the plunder, and the licence of war'.

It is not our desire to attempt any evaluation of this great tragedy, but two brief extracts from the pen of one who was an eye-witness of much that happened shall close this chapter. Archdeacon A. E. Moule, in his excellent handbook, *The Chinese People*, writes as follows:

'He [the leader] took the title which may be differently rendered as the King of Great Peace, or King of the Heavenly

Kingdom, or, as some confusion of dialectic pronunciation gave it, King of Heavenly Virtue. Great crowds flocked to his banner; defence turned into attack; he became a military leader of conspicuous ability, and a great conqueror, but the scourge and devastator of his native land. What might have happened had he had more careful teaching and wiser and stronger counsellors, and (it must be added) had he possessed a fuller appreciation and application to his conscience of what he did know? The Taiping rebellion might have still become a fact of history, but he would not have led it. He started at length on his terrible career, to end fourteen years later in defeat, despair, and suicide; but we dare not follow in detail that wild story of the "Heavenly Dynasty of Great Peace".

Yet in spite of all the tragedy of it, Archdeacon Moule, who had seen at close quarters that long-drawn-out decline from high hopes to blood and dust and ashes, writes as follows:

'Notwithstanding the after history of the Rebellion—the unmitigated curse which it became to China, and its failure in government and in the attainment of its high ideals—it is unjust and unreasonable too, if we withhold any meed of praise to men bold and courageous enough to anticipate the wants of their native land in religion and morality, and in social and economic reform, and, not content with a dream, to awake themselves and strive by very force to awaken the nation and make the dream a reality.'

In the same writer's opinion, the rebellion did not wholly fail of its purpose, but left permanent influences and traces for good behind. He believed that much of their programme was unconsciously adopted, though less wisely, first by the Manchus, and later by the Republic.

The People's Bible

UP to this point we have been concerned solely with versions produced in *Wenli*, the literary style. There were many reasons for this. It could hardly have been otherwise. There were no Christian Churches needing Scriptures in local dialects. The facilities for acquiring the book language were far greater than those for becoming familiar with the vernacular. Further, reading was limited to the scholars, and publications in anything but the literary style would have been despised by them.

It is by no means easy for the Westerner to-day to enter into the ancient scholar's contempt for the vernacular as a literary medium. This spirit is by no means limited to China. Here are a few lines from one of Lord Acton's lectures on The Renaissance:

'The desire for good Latin became injurious to Italian, and Petrarca censured Dante for his error in composing the *Divine Comedy* in the vulgar tongue. He even regretted that the *Decamerone* was not written in Latin, and refused to read what his friend had written for the level of uneducated men.'

We now know that the Greek New Testament was written in a common dialect, but we still feel that anything less than dignified English is unworthy of our sacred Scriptures. We cannot pray to God, 'Your Kingdom come, Your will be done', without a shudder. And this is to feel something of a Chinese scholar's prejudice against familiar speech for high literature. To him it was to debase what should be dignified.

But great and far-reaching changes have taken place in China since Robert Morrison's day, and recent years have seen the languages of the masses become a literary vehicle. As Dante made the dialect of Tuscany become the language of Italy, as Luther caused central German to become the normal

type for the whole country, and as Chaucer and Wycliffe helped to make our Midland dialect into modern English, so developments have been taking place in China towards a national language.¹

Mandarin, or *Kwan-hwa*, as its name signifies, has for long been spoken by the officials in the Law Courts. With provincial variations it is the speech of the vast majority of the Chinese people. This is what Dr. Hu Shih, one of the greatest authorities on this subject, has written:

Mandarin 'extends, in short, over nine-tenths of Chinese territory. Throughout this vast region, what is vaguely termed the Mandarin dialect is intelligible with more or less facility. . . . A man from any part of this vast territory of the three Mandarin dialects can travel and trade throughout the whole territory without having to change his native dialect.'

Mandarin is spoken by more people than any other language in the world, English not excepted. It is no exaggeration to say that for every two persons who speak English, there are three who speak Mandarin. It will thus be seen to be a mighty instrument for spreading the Word of God among the most populous nation in the world.

The earliest Mandarin version of parts of the Bible was made by Father Louis de Poirot, a Jesuit missionary who was interpreter at the Court of Peking from 1745 onwards. He translated the greater part of the Old Testament into Mandarin and Tatar, and this translation is now in the Jesuit College at

¹ Walter Pater, in his book *The Renaissance*, tells of the same struggle in France. 'The first note of this literary revolution was struck by Joachim du Bellay in a little tract written at the early age of twenty-four, . . . *La deffense et Illustration de la langue Françoise*.' 'I cannot blame too strongly the rashness of some of our countrymen,' writes du Bellay, 'who, being anything rather than Greeks or Latins, deprecate and reject with stoical disdain everything written in French; nor can I express my surprise at the odd opinion of some learned men who think that our vulgar tongue is wholly incapable of erudition and good literature.'

Sicawei near Shanghai. But so far as we know this has never been circulated.

At this stage we enter upon a more complex story than was called for in the earlier chapters. That the reader may not be confused by a mass of detail, we shall limit ourselves to the main issues which shall be gathered around four groups. These are:

(1) Dr. Medhurst's Mandarin version of the New Testament.

(2) Bishop Schereschewsky's Mandarin translation of the Old Testament.

(3) The Peking-group Mandarin version of the New Testament.

(4) Dr. Griffith John's Mandarin version.

Taking these four efforts in the order stated, their story may be briefly developed as follows:

(1) *Dr. Medhurst's Version*.—This was the earliest Protestant attempt at a Mandarin version, and was little more than a rendering of the Delegates' Version into Mandarin by a native of Nanking. Opinions vary as to its value, but even the most sympathetic critics say that it lacks fidelity to the Greek. This criticism raises a question of extraordinary interest.

There were some authorities who asserted that all vernacular versions should be based on a standard literary translation. On the other hand, there were those who believed that the literary versions should be founded upon vernacular translations. It was recognized that the early translators, as mentioned above, were by force of circumstances restricted to the book language. But it was cogently argued that even in making these literary versions the translator carried on his work by reciting to a Chinese scholar an oral version of what he wanted. That is to say, he was employing a vernacular with his pundit to obtain a literary rendering. If then he translated the literary rendering

thus obtained back into a vernacular, he was using a double process.

Dr. J. C. Gibson, of the English Presbyterians, strongly urged that 'the better way would be to begin by making, from the original, the best vernacular possible. This could then be used to assist in forming a *Wenli* text.' This course he said 'must be followed, whether the vernacular version be written or not'. But we must not follow this interesting argument further.

(2) *Bishop Schereschewsky's Old Testament*.—We have now come to one of the most extraordinary stories in the extensive records of Bible translation. It is to be regretted that the life-history of this remarkable man has never been published, for it would be hard to find anywhere a nobler illustration of courage and determination in the face of overwhelming handicaps.

Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky was born on May 23, 1831, of Jewish parents, in the town of Tauroggen, Lithuania. By the time he was seventeen he had become tutor in a Russian family, and when he was eighteen he was writing poetry in Hebrew. After several years of study in Europe he emigrated to America. In New York, through the instrumentality of a Jewish missionary, Mr. G. R. Leaderer, Christian truth began to dawn upon his mind on a Passover evening spent in the home of the missionary. The well-known Dr. Edersheim, Dr. Adolph Saphir, and G. R. Leaderer were all converts of the Scottish Mission to the Jews in Hungary, so that Schereschewsky's conversion has deeply interesting links with Scotland.

Having embraced Christianity he was baptized in 1856, and subsequently became a theological student in New York. He was offered a professorship, but refused it, saying that he wanted to go to China and translate the Bible. As a member of the American Episcopal Church he was designated to the field of his choice, or rather of God's appointing, and arrived in

China in 1859, having made such progress with the language on the voyage, under the tuition of Bishop Boone, that he astonished his Chinese teacher with a composition in classical Chinese. After two years in Shanghai he moved to Peking, where he resided for thirteen years, from 1862 to 1875. His translation of the Book of Genesis was completed in 1866, but the whole of the Old Testament was not published until 1875. In this edition he used *T'ien Chu*, the Roman Catholic term, for God, but in later editions he employed other terms. This version had no rival for forty years.

Although the subsequent career of this remarkable man does not correctly fall under the heading of this chapter, this seems the most appropriate place to complete our brief story of his life.

When he had completed the work mentioned above, he returned to the United States of America for furlough. In 1875 he was nominated as Bishop of Shanghai, but declined the honour. The same appointment was pressed upon him during the following year, and he reluctantly accepted, and was consecrated in New York in October 1877.

As Bishop of Shanghai he established St. John's College, one of the foremost Christian institutions in China, but in 1881, while working in Wuchang, he was stricken with paralysis as the result of sunstroke. Visits to Europe and America for treatment proved of no avail, and he resigned his Bishopric. It seemed as though God were setting him aside for literary work. Unable to hold a pen, and having only the use of one finger of each hand, he continued his task in an undaunted spirit by means of a typewriter for twenty-five years. Lifted into his chair in the morning, he was lifted out at night for rest. In this manner he continued a task which constitutes one of the great romances of Bible history.

After the revision of his Old Testament, he translated the whole of the Bible into *Easy Wenli*. In view of his own limita-

tions, he humorously called this work 'a Two-finger Edition'. Nor was this all, for with Bishop Burdon he rendered the Prayer Book into Mandarin, then by himself alone into *Wenli*. His next work was to prepare a complete set of References for the Old and New Testaments, and he was only released from his long labours of love while engaged in translating the Apocrypha. Among other unfinished tasks was a Dictionary of Mongolian. Such a life is an outstanding example of triumph over difficulties, of sublime faith in God, and of patient endurance. It has been one of the distinctions of the American Bible Society that the greater part of Bishop Schereschewsky's work, if not all, was undertaken in fellowship with them.

(3) *The Peking Mandarin New Testament*.—Soon after the opening of Peking to foreign residence, the northern missionaries, who had been feeling the need of a Mandarin version, commenced correspondence on the matter. The men to whom had been entrusted the responsibility of missionary work in the capital of the Empire were all of them distinguished by outstanding ability. There was Dr. Burdon, who afterwards became Bishop of Victoria; there was Bishop Schereschewsky, of whom we have already written; there was Dr. Edkins of the London Missionary Society, an eminent Sinologue; Dr. Blodget of the American Board, a man 'whom nature, grace, and culture combined to form a model missionary'; and Dr. W. A. P. Martin, of the American Presbyterians, a man of massive mind and comprehensive scholarship. Here was a band of giants indeed, and they all combined to give to China a translation of the New Testament in northern Mandarin.

With Dr. Medhurst's southern Mandarin version as a basis, they apportioned out their task, each member undertaking to submit his work to all the others. Verse by verse and almost word by word, the translation received the searching scrutiny of the whole body, with the assistance of the most competent

Chinese scholars such as Peking alone could afford. Eight years were thus employed, the whole task being completed by 1870.

With both American and European missionaries collaborating, and with the respective Bible Societies interested, sincere efforts were made to obtain, in this version, unanimity by way of compromise. In a word, various editions were published, in which all the rival terms were used. After careful revision this work was printed in its final form in 1872, the British and Foreign Bible Society issuing their own edition with *Shang Ti* and another edition for Dr. Burdon with *T'ien Chu*, while the American Bible Society edition employed *Chen Shen*, all various terms for God.

The success of this version was more immediate, more widespread, and more permanent than the most sanguine of the translators had hoped. It marked an epoch in the history of the Bible in China.

'Almost immediately in one half of the Empire the new Mandarin Testament supplanted the *Wenli*, in the family, in the class-room, in the street-chapel, and in the Church services. . . . It was, though to a less degree, to the unlearned of North China what the Bibles of Wycliffe and Luther were to the English and Germans. The style is vigorous, terse and clear. It is free, or nearly so, from localisms, and is sufficiently removed from the commonplace to be dignified and reverent without being pedantic.'

Such a work opened up a new era in giving the Bible to the Chinese.

(4) *Dr. Griffith John's Mandarin Version*.—At the date of which we write, the difference between Peking and Hankow Mandarin was much more marked than it is to-day. 'The Middle dialect', to quote Dr. Hu Shih, 'is comparatively a

little more conservative, being geographically nearest to the south-eastern dialects.'

For about one thousand years North China came under the dominance and influence of barbarian invaders, with the result that Pekinese incorporated a certain amount of Tatar and Mongol elements. To quote Dr. Hù Shih once more:

'A study of the northern dynasties of the three centuries before the T'ang dynasty, and of the literature of the Nu-chen and Mongol dynasties during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, will convince us of the influence of the invading races over the languages and literature of northern China.'

It was because of this difference that Dr. Griffith John was approached with a view to his preparing a revised Mandarin version more suited to Central China. This version was finished and printed by the National Bible Society of Scotland at Hankow in 1889. Mr. John Archibald, that Society's agent, had settled at Hankow in 1877, and Dr. John had taken the Society to his heart. With Dr. John to counsel and with Mr. Archibald to execute, a vigorous cause was soon established. A printing press was set up in 1885 which gave to that Society an independence and a freedom peculiarly its own. This press did great service in the printing of numerous editions of divers versions.

Two years before this printing press had been established, the same Society had begun the publication of Dr. John's *Easy Wenli* version. Though it does not properly belong to this chapter, a brief reference may be made to this version.

Easy Wenli is a language in which the archaic and allusive phrases of the *High Wenli*, or classical style, are omitted. In the day of which we write it was a better medium for popular literature than either the classical or the vernacular. It was a connecting link between the two, commending itself to those

who, while not scholars, preferred a literary flavour to colloquialisms.

The surviving members of the Peking Mandarin version, Bishop Burdon and Dr. Blodget, published their version in *Easy Wenli* in 1889, but four years before they had completed their task, in fact when only the Book of Psalms was issued, Dr. Griffith John had published his version at Hankow. Dr. John's translation was more terse and more classical, while the Peking version was more intelligible for reading aloud. But the points of difference were so slight as almost to make them rivals. On all sides there was a growing conviction that concerted action was urgently needed. The day for such joint action was, happily, much nearer than then appeared. But that belongs to another chapter, though it may be mentioned here, little as it was then foreseen, that *Easy Wenli* was ere long to fall out of the linguistic race.

Union Versions

WHEN we recall the long years that elapsed since Caedmon, in the seventh century, in the words of the venerable Bede, 'sang the creation of the world, the origin of man, and all the history of Genesis', up to the issue of the Authorized and Revised versions in our own country, we need not be amazed at the long and varied efforts made in China to supply that great country with the Word of God. The problems to be solved, and the difficulties to be overcome, for so populous a land as China, were greater and more complex than any that could arise in so small a country as England. None the less, the missionary community in China were becoming increasingly distressed by the rival translations which were being issued by varied translators. How strong this feeling was is best shown by a few quotations from one of the leaflets sent out in China on this matter. There lies before us, as we write, one such circular sent out by the Methodist Episcopal Mission in 1864. It is addressed to the Protestant Missions in China. Here are a few selected sentences from this little document:

'We are happy to believe that all the Protestant missionaries labouring among the Chinese are united in opinion as to the propriety and importance of having one uniform and standard version of the Sacred Scriptures in the general language of China. The evils resulting from circulating, in the same language, different versions of the Word of God, are so great and manifold that no Christian mind can reflect upon the subject without profound sorrow. You, doubtless, have deplored the apparent antagonism which has existed for years between the great representative Bible Societies of Europe and America, and also between the different Protestant Missions in China on this subject. . . . We are not insensible to the

difficulties in the way of the proposed enterprise. . . . But we cannot believe that the present conflicting views of Protestant Missionaries are to become stereotyped, and indicate for all coming time the normal state of the Christian Church in China.'

The writers then relate how they had locally overcome the conflict of versions, and they appealed for like action to be taken by the whole missionary body. Yet no fewer than twenty-six years were to elapse before the matter was finally dealt with. As late as 1888 another circular was issued, stating that 'there is a general desire for a Union version, but the impression prevails that the time for it has not yet come'. It was no small wonder that the venerable Dr. Muirhead should sigh: 'As missionaries we have discussed the subject to satiety!'

But the much-desired day was at hand. Much careful work had been going on behind the scenes, in preparation for the great Missionary Conference to meet in Shanghai in 1890. Dr. William Wright, Editorial Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, who was going out to China as a delegate, had been in close consultation with the National Bible Society of Scotland, and he had found that 'it was their wish to give to China, not a one-man version, but the very best version that the united scholarship of the various Missions could produce'.

But in China many were sceptical, almost to the last moment, of reaching any practical results. The fruitless discussions of half a century had produced a despondency nigh unto despair. When, at the Conference, the three representative committees brought in unanimous reports in favour of Unions versions in *High Wenli*, *Easy Wenli*, and Mandarin, there was a feeling of amazement and surprise. And when, twenty-four hours later, the Conference unanimously adopted these reports, there was an outburst of the greatest enthusiasm.

The whole company rose as one man and sang the Doxology. 'I saw tears of joy in the eyes of strong men,' said Dr. Wright, 'and my heart was too full to permit my lips to sing.' It was the most outstanding decision of that distinguished gathering, and a landmark in the history of the Church in China.

The Conference decided that all existing material was to be at the disposal of the translators of the Union versions; that the text underlying the English Revised version was to be the basis of their work, and that in order to secure One Bible in Three Versions, the three companies of translators were to co-operate in all matters concerning the settlement of the text and its interpretation. An executive committee was also appointed to superintend the whole undertaking, with authority to nominate new translators if vacancies occurred, and to seek, in the name of the Conference, the approval and aid of the three Bible Societies of Great Britain and America.¹ The versions were to be the common property of the co-operating Societies, with liberty to publish with such terms for God, Holy Spirit, and Baptism, as might be called for, and, if deemed expedient, to add explanatory readings, maps, chapter and sectional headings. Thus after many long and weary years, this much-to-be-desired arrangement was made.

But it was one thing for the Conference to decide what should be done, and it was another thing to do it. As one of the translators said: 'It's a long road from Genesis to Revelation'. And so it was found by all. Ten years later, when the next Conference would have met, had not the Boxer crisis made that impossible, the Union version of the New Testament in *Easy Wenli* had been completed, but work on the Old Testament had not commenced. The General Conference had been postponed until 1907, the centenary of Robert Morrison's

¹ The American Bible Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the National Bible Society of Scotland.

arrival in China, and by that time the problem had materially changed. But we must report on the *High Wenli* version before discussing changed conditions.

When work upon the *High Wenli* version was seriously commenced, it was found that practice does not always follow theory. One member of the committee demanded a literal rendering, while another strongly favoured style. One of these retired, and the other one died. Then a third member had all his work on the New Testament destroyed by the Boxers. Happily, duplicate copies of the major portion of his draft were in the hands of his colleagues for criticism, so that the net loss proved less than was at first feared.

Apart from the perennial struggle between style and literalism, this translation had its own peculiar difficulties, since many classical expressions had Confucian implications. But despite every obstacle, the manuscript of the New Testament was placed in the hands of the Bible Societies shortly before the Centenary Conference of 1907.

Seventeen years had now elapsed since the two Union *Wenli* versions had been approved, and seventeen years in the history of a nation may entail radical alterations. Vast and revolutionary forces had been at work, and the very language had changed. A flood of newspapers and periodicals, together with a new system of education, had so simplified style that three versions were now unnecessary. *High* and *Easy Wenli* were tending towards a common ground, and Mandarin was being dignified for literary use. The Centenary Conference therefore decided that there should be only one Classical version, instead of two. A resolution was adopted saying that what had been completed should be published and sold for a period of three years, but that meantime the revisers should unite in preparing one Classical version in which the best of each rendering should be incorporated.

And now we come to the story of the Mandarin Union

version. It is a record of extraordinary difficulty, connected with the securing of translators. This was to be a version to meet the needs of some 300 millions of people scattered over the greater part of China. It was highly desirable that the translators should be representative of the leading denominations of Europe and America, as well as of the different Mandarin-speaking areas. No fewer than twenty-eight men were nominated, but the greatest difficulty was experienced in securing seven. Those possessing the necessary qualifications were few, and these few when found were full of work they could not leave. The men who could be spared were not wanted, and the men who were wanted could not be spared. In a circular letter the Chairman wrote: 'I am at my wits' end what to do next'.

Dr. Griffith John and David Hill were approached, but both declined. The Rev. F. W. Baller was invited, but work upon a much-needed dictionary compelled postponement, though he joined later. The Rev. Samuel Clarke accepted, but as he lived more than a thousand miles from Shanghai, and there was no railway, distance ultimately proved an insuperable difficulty. These are but illustrations. What with death, and retirements from the field, not to speak of sickness and other impediments, it is a story of baffling conditions which it would be hard to beat. As Dr. Goodrich, the senior member of this committee, said:

'To produce a Bible, whose language shall run close to the original, simple enough to be understood by ordinary persons when read out in Church, or in the home, and yet chaste in diction; this work to be done by a committee chosen from widely distant localities (from Peking in the north-east, to Kweichow in the south-west), might well have frightened any body of men! For the first years the work was almost the despair of the committee. Their efforts to make themselves

mutually understood, and to unite on a rendering, were often infinitely prolonged and exasperatingly amusing.'

It will be profitable to dwell a little longer on this Mandarin version, for it will help the reader to appreciate the greatness of the task undertaken and accomplished. No one was more surprised than the translators themselves at the length of time demanded by their commission. Contrary to what might be supposed, Mandarin was found much more difficult to handle than *Wenli*. Here is one extract from the committee's report:

'It has a Scylla on the one hand, and a Charybdis on the other. It is the constant danger of falling into undignified colloquialisms and unintelligible localisms, or else of mounting into the cloudland of *Wenli*. Its vocabulary is limited, and its construction lacks suppleness, whereas *Wenli* has a vocabulary co-extensive with the Imperial dictionary, and its style, as used by foreigners, is as supple as a rubber ball.'

A few quotations or illustrations selected from two articles written by Mr. F. W. Baller, a member of the committee, will be both amusing and instructive. Mr. Baller, who for a good many years was at the head of the China Inland Mission's Language School, never lacked the salt of humour. If humour is 'the twinkling eye of truth', Mr. Baller could make truth twinkle. Of the work itself he thus wrote:

'Every word, phrase and sentence was challenged and subjected to a very thorough scrutiny, and the final version decided on only after careful discussion. Indeed, to attend a committee meeting was like attending a debating society for several hours a day, and when this continued for four, five, or six months, both brain and body loudly demanded a rest! . . . Surely no body of men have more cause to feel the force of the words "If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he

knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" than a revision committee.'

For the first time, all, or nearly all of the figures of speech contained in the original Greek, appeared in the Mandarin version. 'To be clothed upon with a house', or 'to put on a man', are fairly bold figures. In previous translations the temptation had been to paraphrase such expressions, or give a marginal reading, but during the work of this committee one of the Chinese scholars broke in: 'Do you suppose that we Chinese cannot understand and appreciate metaphors? Our books are full of them, and new ones are welcome.' That decided the matter.

In this revision a thousand new expressions and eighty-seven new characters were found needful to express fully the meaning of the original text. Here are a few of the corrections:

In 2 Cor. v. 21, former translations had said that Christ was 'made a sinner', instead of 'made sin for us'. In Mark iv. 14, the 'sower soweth the word' was translated 'the sower is the preacher'. As amended it read, 'that which the sower sows is the word'. In Matt. viii. 20, the phrase 'to lay his head' had previously been translated 'to rest his body'. Mark ix. 49, 'every one shall be salted with fire' had previously read 'every one shall be disciplined with fire', a statement which savoured of Purgatory, and had no connection with Levitical ordinances. In John ii. 4, and xix. 26, previous versions had translated 'woman' by 'Mother', which might favour Mariolatry. This was corrected.

Again, the well-known text, 'My grace is sufficient for thee', had been translated 'I have given you grace enough', which suggested to the much-tried Chinese Christian that no more grace would be given!

Some of the difficulties which confronted the translators arose from the attempt to make the version suitable for widely

scattered provinces. In many parts of the country a yoke for two animals was unknown, and there was also great diversity of use in the term which applied to a yoke for a single animal. The word for 'purse' was settled only after long discussions as to the relative merits of four aspirants for the honour. The word for 'thistle' in Hebrews vi. 8 was not easily determined. In the tentative edition a term well known in Shantung was used, but when a specimen of the thistle was brought in to the committee, the Chinese scholar, who came from Szechwan, said he had never seen such a thing, and it was quite unknown in West China. So there was nothing for it but to select a more widespread specimen.

One other illustration of the pitfalls which beset the translator's path may be recorded. The word proposed for 'calf' was supposed to be too bookish, so it was suggested that 'small cow' should be substituted. But this happy issue out of their perplexities only landed them into an unforeseen trap. It was found that the acceptance of this expression would have put the translation on an equality with the preacher who told his audience that the father of the Prodigal Son 'brought forth the fatted calf, a calf he had kept for years'!

Mr. Baller, from whose articles most of these illustrations have been culled, was not only full of humour, but sometimes of a droll and scathing mirth. He suggested that Job's desire that his adversary would write a book was that he might enjoy the pleasure of criticizing it! He pleaded for suggestions, not strictures, and he advised the man whose one talent was criticism, to follow the scriptural precedent and bury it in a napkin! Here is one of his sallies:

'In view of the well-nigh universal belief that a bounteous Providence has endowed most men with the capacity to criticize, we were quite sure that the turbid waters of the River which would rage and roar when our work was done

would be an exhilarating contrast to the Waters of Shiloah which had trickled softly through our Jerusalem Chamber!

Suggestions and criticism sent to the committee were welcomed, but published criticisms, which could not be answered by busy men, were protested against by the Chairman. Not infrequently the rendering suggested, by some critic who had rushed into print, had been already considered and rejected, for a score of good reasons, which only those who had threshed out the subject together were in a position to understand. One good brother's suggestion for Matt. vii. 6, 'lest haply they trample them under their feet', entirely overlooked the fact that, in Chinese, the pigs, in common with horses, mules, and donkeys, have trotters and not feet. His rendering would have earned, said Mr. Baller, the title of 'The Foot Bible', as a fitting supplement to the 'Breeches Bible'!

It is impossible to study the story of the Bible in China without being deeply impressed with the magnitude of the task, with the high qualities and rare qualifications demanded for an ideal translator, and also with the wealth of learning poured forth without stint over a long period of years that the great task might be completed. While the Bible Societies were unsparing in their generosity and assistance, the Missionary Societies, without exception, were willing to release their ablest men for long periods, that China might have the Word of God in its own tongue.

To write in any details of the many translators is impossible, but a few words must be devoted to Dr. Mateer, for many years the Chairman of the Mandarin Committee. He was a man of great capacity, of untiring industry, of unwearying patience, one who tracked words, like a hound, until he found what he wanted. It has been said of him that 'he never feared the face of man, but he feared God'. The word used to translate 'pious

fear' did not satisfy him, and Dr. Goodrich, one of his fellow-translators, has told us how he once said with great emphasis and feeling, 'men need to know the fear of God'. This was a case in which, like a sleuth-hound upon a trail, he toiled and searched until he found the word for godly-fear which would commend itself to him and to his colleagues. We well remember reading fourteen long articles from his pen in successive numbers of *The Chinese Recorder*, full of references to Chinese writings, and all concerning one disputed term. The labour demanded for such well-documented articles would have been intolerable to the majority of students. But such was Dr. Mateer.

For sixteen years, in the prime of his life, he devoted his best thought to the revision of the Mandarin Bible. He was never absent from any session, not even for a single day, until about a fortnight before his death. Dr. Goodrich was the only other member of whom this could be said. Dr. Mateer laboured on with a grip which nothing but death could loosen.

He had completed his work on the New Testament, and on part of the Old Testament, when he was laid low with dysentery. The day before he died, his brother, the Rev. Robert Mateer, kneeling by his bedside, prayed that an abundant entrance might be given the sick man into the heavenly rest. But Dr. Mateer cried out from his couch: 'Keep up your faith a notch higher, Robert. Pray that I may be spared to finish the translation of the Old Testament, especially the Psalms.' He then asked that Dr. Hayes might come and pray that this desire of his might be granted. Dr. Hayes came and prayed as desired, and the ardent translator added: 'O Lord, may this prayer be answered!' But his work was done, and the next day he fell asleep in Jesus.

Dr. Mateer was a man who seldom so much as asked a blessing upon a meal without adding, 'and forgive us our

sins'. 'I can but think', wrote Dr. Goodrich, 'that when the chariot of fire bore him upward, with what adoring reverence he presented himself before the Great King and cried, as he did a little while before the end came, "Holy, Holy, Holy, True and Mighty!"'

Chinese Dialects

IN this chapter we approach a difficult and somewhat complex subject. To treat of it with any fulness would, we fear, confuse the general reader, and bury the main story beneath a mass of detail. These subordinate matters are not trifles, but the subject is so vast that any adequate treatment would be too exhaustive for a popular story. We trust that no reader, even the one most deeply interested, will think that the dialect versions are being lightly esteemed because they are not given a larger place in this small volume. All that can be attempted here must be more by way of suggestion than by a comprehensive and exact study.

In the early days when there were no local Churches, the best line of procedure for the translator was to issue the Bible in the language which would appeal to the nation as a whole. But as congregations were formed in different parts of the Empire, a new problem naturally arose, and that was to provide the Scriptures for these local groups of Christians. While the classical versions served the scholars everywhere, and while the Mandarin translations met the needs of some two-thirds of the population, there were still millions of people whose need was unsupplied.

In the maritime provinces in the south-east of China there are many old and conservative dialects which have escaped the influence of the northern invasions. 'The continuity of an essentially Chinese civilization in the south-east', to quote Dr. Hu Shih, 'has never been interrupted for more than twenty centuries'. These dialects are highly differentiated by tones; Cantonese, with its nine tones, being probably the oldest of all. In the majority of the other dialects there are six tones.

To the ordinary reader the word 'dialect' may suggest some local patois, confined to the uneducated. But in these south-eastern provinces these dialects are spoken by all classes of the

community, in groups varying from four to twelve millions of people. This may appear a subordinate task, in comparison with the need and claims of hundreds of millions elsewhere, but it is none the less a work of the greatest importance. Officials of high rank will speak their own vernacular. If the people of China are to have the Word of God in their mother-tongue, then there must be translations into these dialects.

Sometimes these vernacular versions can be printed in character, but sometimes the use of romanized is necessary. Even where the classical version is read in Church, the reader is frequently compelled to extemporize an oral version for the majority of those present. A somewhat appropriate illustration of this occurs in the Book of Nehemiah, viii. 8 R.V., where we read: 'They read in the Book, in the Law of God, distinctly (margin "with an interpretation"); and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading'. But the very liability to error, when such an impromptu interpretation or rendering is given, is a strong argument in favour of a carefully prepared and printed version in the local speech.

To tell the story of these local translations¹ within the scope of a small volume is not possible, and it would necessitate the introduction of a multitude of names and other details confusing to the general reader. For instance, the Cantonese version, which meets the needs of some fifteen to twenty million people, is such a composite production as to be almost a mosaic of the translator's art. It represents a variety of private and united efforts, extending over a period of more than fifty years, before the whole Bible was published. It is a story of solid work squarely done, but the record, with its inevitable list of translators, would weary any reader who was not definitely interested in that particular version.

¹ The more important dialects into which the Scriptures have been translated are: Ningpo, Wenchow, Kienning, Kienyang, Foochow, Amoy, Tingchow, Swatow, Canton, Hakka, Wukingfu, and Hainan.

But without attempting to tell the tale of all these varied dialects, reference may well be made to a selected few, for tragedy and romance have had their part in some of them.

One version, prepared for a very limited constituency, is for the prefecture of Kienning in the province of Fukien. The success which had attended the romanized edition of the Foo-chow version, a version meeting the needs of some eight millions of people, prompted the ladies of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society in the Kienning prefecture, to prepare a similar work for their local dialect. The manuscript of the New Testament was completed during 1895, which was a fateful year for that area, for, on August 1, eleven persons connected with the Church Missionary and Church of England Zenana Societies were murdered, while others suffered serious hurt.

At the time of the massacre these workers were residing, during the hot season, in the mountain village of Hwasang, some twelve miles from Kucheng. They had been spending a few days together for prayer and Bible study, simultaneously with the Keswick Convention in England. Among the subjects chosen for meditation was 'The continual Burnt-offering made by fire', and on July 31 their meeting had closed with the solemn dedication, which is part of the Communion service: 'Here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee'.

Within a few hours of those words being uttered, that sacrifice had literally been offered up. Not only were the workers slain, but their homes were fired, so that some of their number actually became Burnt-offerings upon the altar of love.

By a remarkable coincidence, upon the very day that the news of this great tragedy reached England, the British and Foreign Bible Society received a letter from the Rev. Robert

Stewart, one of the martyrs, strongly urging the publication of the New Testament in the Kienning colloquial, for use in the very area where the massacre had taken place. This version was seen through the press by Miss B. Newcome, the sister of one of the martyred ladies, who was home on furlough in Ireland, and funds were specially contributed, by friends of those who suffered, in order that this New Testament might be a Memorial in memory of the Hwasang martyrs.

Another tragedy, though of a less serious nature, attended the publication of the Amoy version. The Amoy dialect is spoken by some ten millions of people in the southern portion of the province of Fukien, as well as in Formosa and the Straits Settlements. The first complete book of the Bible to be issued in this dialect was St. John's Gospel. This was printed at Dr. Wells Williams' press at Canton in 1852.

For many years work continued on this version, the New Testament being printed in Glasgow in 1873 at the expense of the late Mr. H. M. Matheson, and under the supervision of the late Dr. J. L. Maxwell, one of the pioneers in Formosa. Under Dr. Maxwell's care the Old Testament was put through the press about ten years later. Although this version had been extensively revised, work was suspended in 1893 in order to benefit by the Union *Wenli* version.

More recently the venerable Dr. Thomas Barclay had spent many years in a careful revision of this version, and when all was finished the manuscript was put into the printer's hands for type-setting. Dr. Barclay spent the year 1931 in Shanghai to read and correct the proof. When nine hundred out of a thousand pages had been set up, and it was anticipated that the Book would be published in the early summer of 1932, serious fighting broke out between China and Japan in Shanghai itself. One of the first buildings to be destroyed was the Commercial Press, the largest printing establishment in Asia. The buildings, printing machines, moulds, plates, type, and

stocks of paper were all burned or ruined beyond the possibilities of salvage. And in this great holocaust were included the plates of the nine hundred pages ready for printing, the remaining portion of the manuscript, and all of the specially prepared type. It was a heart-breaking set-back for an old man over eighty years of age.

Happily Dr. Barclay had been wise enough to file duplicate copies of the proof, and from these the type could be reset, when new type was ready. But every page, and indeed every word, had to pass through the compositor's hands again, and all the new proofs had to be carefully read and corrected afresh. The Commercial Press, in characteristic fashion, undertook to fulfil its original contract as soon as possible. New type had to be prepared and, at the time of writing, the work of type-setting is proceeding apace. And the brave missionary veteran, Dr. Barclay, at the age of eighty-three has remained in Shanghai to see this work through the press.¹

This is but one glimpse into the fortunes of one version. In the history of the Bible in China there have been a good many trying catastrophes. Robert Morrison had his type destroyed by a Chinese printer, in a fit of fear that he was about to be seized by the authorities. Upon another occasion the Chinese officials destroyed Morrison's blocks, and upon another occasion a fire, exceeding in extent the Great Fire of London, gutted the factories at Canton and destroyed his stock of paper. Nor were the Chinese his only adversaries, for the Roman Catholic priests at Macao induced the Portuguese authorities to veto the use of his press in that settlement.

It is perhaps inevitable that some misfortunes should happen over a period of many years. With a brief reference to one more calamity, this short and imperfect survey of Dialect Versions may close. On this occasion, when a large edition

¹ Since this was written Dr. Barclay has completed his task and has retired to Formosa.

of the Mandarin New Testament was being put through the press on the machines of the London Missionary Society, the power used was supplied by buffaloes. As these beasts were being worried by mosquitoes, the commonly employed method of smoking out these irritants was resorted to. Unfortunately the straw caught fire, and as this soon spread to the paper stores, the conflagration was not stayed before the Manchu type, obtained from St. Petersburg, together with a large stock of Mongolian and Mandarin Scriptures, worth about £2000, had been destroyed. But despite fire and earthquake and sword, the work has progressed even though it has occasionally been temporarily retarded.

For the Tribes

CHINA, with its vast territories, presents some striking contrasts. In no country in the world can so many people be reached with one language, but, on the other hand, in few lands can such a babel of tongues be found.

There are strong reasons for believing that the Chinese people of to-day are the fruit of the gradual welding into one nation of Tatar tribes from the north with the Mon-khmer, Shan, and Tibeto-Burmese races who were once in occupation of the country. So thoroughly has this assimilation taken place that it is mainly among the mountains of the west and south-west that the descendants of these original tribes are to be found. Here the high mountain ranges and deep-flowing rivers have preserved a larger variety of languages and dialects than exist in many other equal areas.

There is a fairly strong consensus of opinion among those who have studied the problem locally that these languages and dialects can be grouped into four families. These are:

(1) The Shan family, known also as the Tai.

(2) The Tibeto-Burman family, which embraces Tibetan, the Si-fan group, the Nosu or Lolo group, the Burmese and Kachin.

(3) The Mon-khmer family, which includes the Miao and possibly the Min-kia.

(4) The Chinese.

These four families have been classified under one or other of the three following titles: Sinitic, Polytonic, and Monosyllabic. A few more words about the first three groups may be desirable before we write about translation work.

The Shan Family.—From the eighth to the thirteenth centuries the Shans constituted a mighty kingdom known to the Chinese as the *Nan Chao*, but they were conquered by Kublai Khan, the founder of the Mongol dynasty. They are

the same as the Tai or Lao of Burma. The Chung-kia of China, known as Pai-i, are of the same stock, and there are some six or seven millions of them in south and south-west China. They have no written language, but they have so largely adopted the language of their conquerors that to-day one word out of every three is Chinese.

The Tibeto-Burman Family.—To this large family belong the Nosu, sometimes contemptuously called Lolo, the Lisu, Laka, Kang-i or Kopu. These all speak languages radically related though the dialects vary so greatly as to be sometimes mutually unintelligible. Even the Lisu of one area cannot understand the Lisu of another part, so that Scriptures prepared for the one are useless to the other. The Nosu have had a writing of their own, but this has been jealously guarded for a select class. One converted Nosu began a translation of the Scriptures into this ancient script. In an Address presented by the Nosu Church to the United Methodist Conference in Great Britain, they used these words: 'We are by no means a few people in China, we are the old possessors of the land'. This proud claim reveals their spirit.

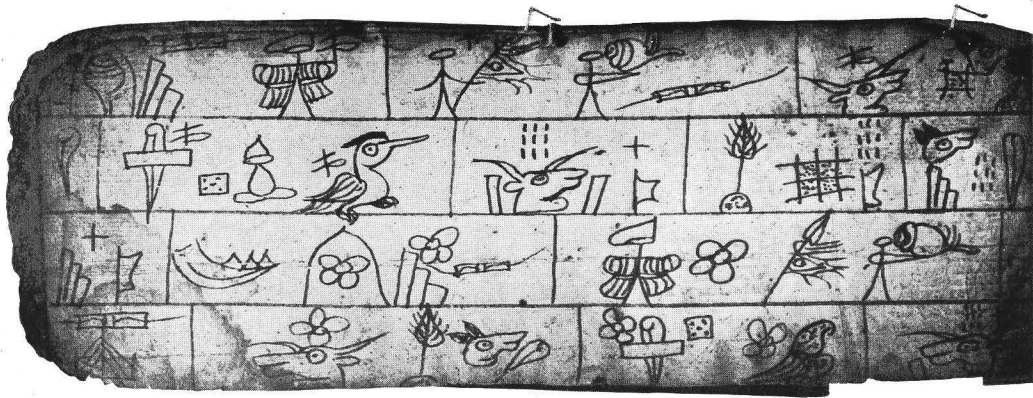
The Mon-khmer Family.—To this family belong the Miao, probably the most widely scattered of all the tribes, and, next to the Chung-kia, the most numerous. As the poorest of the tribes they live on the summits of the hills. They are subdivided into many tribes. They have no literature and there are few traces of a written language. Whether the Min-kia, who constitute the majority of the population of the Tali plain, and in other areas to the west, belong to this family is an open question. They claim to have come from Fukien, and it is noteworthy that *Min* is the classical name for that province.

If romance can be said to pertain to a work which demands hardships and toil of no common order, then there is romance in the story of work among these tribes. Many of the plains

and cities of south-west China stand from six to seven thousand feet above sea-level, while the mountains tower still higher above this fertile table-land. In large areas of this country more than half the population is composed of the unabsorbed non-Chinese aborigines mentioned above. So mixed are their villages that they have been likened to a chess-board in a well-advanced game. And so isolated are some of the groups that communities of less than one hundred persons have been known not to marry outside the limited circle of their own hills.

When the powerful Mongol dynasty conquered China in the thirteenth century, it was content with the submission of the more influential tribes, and these were left as feudal lords over the weaker and less progressive peoples. The result has been that, speaking broadly, the Chinese occupy the fertile table-lands and valleys; the Nosu, except in their independent territory, reside on the lower heights, while the Miao have been driven to the mountain-tops, and the Chung-kia have been forced to betake themselves to the deep, oppressive, and insalubrious river-basins. It must be remembered that the rivers run in deep corrosions far below the surface of the table-land.

For long years mission work in these areas was, in the main, limited by circumstances to the Chinese and was full of discouragement. It seemed to be the most barren and unfruitful of soils. Then suddenly, like life from the dead, a great work of grace broke forth among these despised tribes, as though God would provoke the Chinese by a people who are no people. It is not possible to tell here the great story of the spiritual awakening experienced in these south-west provinces. That must be read elsewhere. Though the first converts were baptized in the early 'eighties, it was not until after 1900 that the mass movement began, and in this glorious ingathering the China Inland Mission and the Bible Christians (now the



A PAGE FROM A MOSSU BOOK

This book, presented to the author by Mr. J. H. Edgar, has thirty pages, eleven inches long and three and a half inches deep. The leaves are apparently of thin bark and are very brittle by age. The Mossu live in Western China and as yet have no Scriptures in their tongue, though brief vocabularies have been made. Specimens of the Nosu and Miao scripts have been published in Paris by the D'Ollone expedition.

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Methodist Church) have been drawn into a great fellowship. 'The natives do not know', wrote Samuel Pollard, 'that we are two Missions, and never will know. We share each other's burdens, we do each other's work, we rejoice in each other's successes, we lend workers to each other, we are one in the cause of Jesus Christ.'

This mass movement was one of the most remarkable in the history of missions. When the tribes-people began to come, they came not in tens, nor in hundreds, but in thousands. They actually became a peril. The crowding of such vast numbers of simple hill-folk into the narrow limits of small mission compounds raised hygienic problems of serious proportions. But quite apart from sanitary questions, health, strength, and ingenuity were taxed to their utmost to cope with such opportunities of service. Here were thousands of illiterate peoples, of different tribes, with no written language, and all hungering to be taught. This is what Samuel Pollard wrote about it:

'The great demand these crowds made was for books; something giving them an account of Jesus was what they wanted. We were caught napping. We had never imagined a revival coming in this way, and so were quite unprepared. No one among us knew the Miao language, and at first all teaching had to be done in Chinese. We soon disposed of our large stock of large-type Christian books. Whenever possible we started the enquirers learning Mark's Gospel. It was a pathetic sight to see these poor, ignorant, dirty men, who had never before handled a book or a pen, sitting down trying to master Mark's Gospel in Chinese. Fancy a lot of Bermondsey dockers learning Christianity via Syriac!'

Seldom has a more pathetic, yet blessed, sight been seen. Here were multitudes eager to know the way of salvation, and there was nothing for them to read in their own tongue. In

fact they had no literature and no written language. Yet they were rising at 5 o'clock in the morning to learn to read in Chinese—which was not their speech—and continuing at their lessons until the early hours of the next day. There was no getting away from them. They swarmed everywhere, into the kitchen, the dining-room, the study, the sitting-room, the guest-hall, the chapel, the school-rooms, the courtyards, and the stables. Morning, noon, and night they were everywhere.

Here was a call for the Scriptures in the tongue of the peoples which has few parallels, if any. Within six months there were ten thousand people, in and around one mission station only—not to speak of others—all studying the Gospel, and yet there was no portion of the Word of God in their own language.

This movement began among the Miao, then it spread to the Nosu, then to the Lisu, then to the Laka, then to the Kopu, then to the Shans and Chung-kia. It was abundantly evident that these languages must be mastered and that portions of the Scriptures, at least, must be translated into them. While there are traces of crude hieroglyphics used by some of the more influential tribes, generally speaking they had no writing. It was also natural that among such primitive and illiterate peoples the translators should encounter special difficulties, for their dialects are poverty-stricken in comparison with Chinese. In some cases no equivalent could be found for such words as 'grace', 'spirit', or 'conscience'. Much time was spent in finding suitable terms for 'parable', 'astonishment', 'nevertheless', 'evidence', 'hyssop', 'sponge', and 'vinegar', to give a few examples.

Here is one little peep into a translator's domestic and literary life. Mr. Pollard, perplexed about the tribal word for 'sponge', borrowed the one his wife was using to bath the baby, and then showed it to the people. They were immensely interested in this strange 'wool' which drank water so readily. They

wanted to know what it was, and he wanted to hear what they would call it. But they never got beyond that early stage of mutual ignorance, and so 'sponge' stands to-day in their Gospel as 'the wool of the sea'.

Another puzzle was the word for 'kingdom', in the Lord's prayer, 'Thy Kingdom come'. The Miao do not remember a time when they had a kingdom, and so their version of that prayer reads, 'Thy heavenly-home come'. For a long time the lack of a word for 'comfort' and 'Comforter' held up the translation of St. John's Gospel. As some of the tribes-people knew Chinese, they were interrogated as to a tribal equivalent for the Chinese word, but to no avail. Word-hunting often proved an exciting proceeding, but it often left the hunter weary and disappointed. For a long time this word 'comfort' continued to baffle the translator, until one day, quite incidentally, a native was heard to say that in a certain village a woman had lost her son. The speaker then proceeded to say that he was going to visit the woman 'to get her heart round the corner'. It was an exciting moment. As Dan Crawford has said, 'to learn a language you must do more than hear it spoken, you must over-hear it'. Here was such a case. The speaker was closely questioned as to the word he had used. It was only a small word of three letters, but it was big with a wealth of meaning to the eager translator. It proved to be what was wanted, and so 'the Comforter' in the tribal version of St. John's Gospel stands as 'the One who gets the heart round the corners'.¹

With the work of translation came the problem of reducing these languages to writing. Mr. Adam of the China Inland Mission fell back upon the romanized system, but Mr. Pollard of the Bible Christians devised a new script. He recalled the case of a Methodist missionary among the Indians in North

¹ Compare the Hebrew idiom, 'To speak to the heart', for 'to comfort' or 'to woo'.

America who had adopted a system of syllabics, and following this example he prepared a somewhat similar scheme for the tribal languages.

But apart from the spelling, the tones introduce a new dimension into the speech. It is as though a musical score were needed all the time. 'You can learn the multiplication table by singing it,' wrote Samuel Pollard, 'but it would be awkward if in all mathematical problems, figures included, the element of music must never be lacking.' The tribal languages, like Chinese, are monosyllabic, and the vowel frequently ends the word. By adopting the system, known in shorthand, of putting the vowel mark alongside of the consonant, it was found that that problem could be solved.

But in addition to the romanized and Pollard script, other methods have been adopted for other tribal versions. For one version, if not for more, the Chinese National Phonetic Script has been adopted. Nor does this complete the list, for as other dialects have been added to the list in which the Scriptures have been translated, so other scripts have been found desirable or necessary. Up to the time of writing no fewer than four scripts have been used, but there is a tendency to reduce these. How far differing dialects demand differences in type, only the experts can determine.

The Bible has now become a household Book among not a few of these tribal people, and scriptural names have been adopted by the majority at baptism. Formerly the different members of a family were distinguished by numerals, but now a levy is made upon the pages of the Old and New Testament. The names of the apostles and prophets, of priests and princes, of ancient men and women of renown have become household words. But it has been found possible to have too many Marks and Johns, Marthas and Marys, so Jehoshaphats, Alexanders, and Sosthenes, etc., are becoming more common. And as each recipient of a new name desires to know the life-story of his

KOPU.

˘S˘A˘S˘O˘J˘L˘C˘J˘. G. C ˘J ˘G˘G˘. G. ˘C˘
C˘J˘G˘G˘C˘J˘G˘G˘.

LAKA.

˘S˘A˘S. J˘T˘T˘C°. G. C˘J˘C˘. G.
˘V˘C˘. G. ˘A˘C˘.

LISU: Western, or Hwa Dial.

WU-S NI, M JOA M A J PO NY= AW
NYI.. RA BV AW NYI MA BV AW M,
M.. A LO= BV LO.

MIAO: Chuan Dial.

T. C. J. Y. T. T. + L. C. . J. J. L. J. T. . J. J.
L. J. C. . J. J. L. C. .

MIAO: He, or Black Miao Dial.

Chinese Chu Yin script.

ㄊ	ㄚ	ㄌ	ㄌ	ㄌ	ㄌ
ㄊ	ㄚ	ㄌ	ㄌ	ㄌ	ㄌ
ㄌ	ㄚ	ㄌ	ㄌ	ㄌ	ㄌ

NOSU.

G. C˘T˘T˘J˘J˘C˘V˘T˘T˘L˘C˘J˘J˘S. J˘T˘
L˘C˘T˘C˘C˘L˘J˘L˘V. .

Specimens of some of the Scripts used for Tribal Versions of the Scriptures.

or her namesake, the Bible characters become the subject of family conversation.

So closely has Bible-reading been identified, by these tribal people, with Christianity, that persecution has, at times, taken the form of an attack upon literature, for they have become men of the Book. Landlords have therefore forbidden their tenants to own books, and chapels have sometimes been destroyed where these commands have been disobeyed. But despite every hindrance, in scores of villages, where formerly there were no books and no readers, there have grown up cottage libraries composed almost exclusively of some portion or portions of God's Word and a small Hymn-book.

The book-hunger of these illiterate folk has been a strange and wonderful thing. When the first copies of one of the Gospels arrived at Yunnanfu—a cavalcade of twenty-nine horse-loads—every copy was sold within two hours of arrival. What would Thomas Charles of Bala have said had he seen the many disappointed applicants, as he had seen Mary Jones in Wales of old? And there is a real point of contact, for these aborigines correspond in China, to some extent, to the ancient Britons and Welsh who were driven into the hills of Cornwall and Wales by the Anglo-Saxons of old.

This brief sketch gives only a glimpse into a big problem, for while a good beginning has been made, it is only a beginning. There is no need to report the exact stage reached in the various versions, but at the time of writing only one of these many groups has the whole of the New Testament in its own language.

In conclusion it may be mentioned that, in addition to the difficulties experienced by the translators, the printers of these versions have not been without their trials. The only fount of the Hwa Miao script was destroyed in the Yokohama earthquake of 1923. Although reprints of what had been already published could be obtained by lithography, new type had to

be made for a subsequent revision. New matrices were cut and a new fount of improved type was cast in Shanghai, but these were destroyed during the fighting between the Japanese and Chinese in 1932. Here again the Chinese Press undertook to bear the loss and to replace the type, for which new matrices have had to be cut.

Amid many upheavals, both at home and abroad, the work goes forward. Earthquakes and wars, rebellions and famines, brigandage and even death itself may retard progress, but the gates of hell, thank God, do not prevail against the Church which Christ has redeemed with His own blood.

The Tibetan Bible

THE Nestorians were the pioneer messengers of the Gospel to Tibet. The Roman Catholics followed in the seventeenth century, and Father Antonio de Andrada, a Portuguese Jesuit, who entered the country in 1626, was probably the first of these: others followed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but we have to come down to the Moravian Missions, which settled to the west of the country, before we find any definite effort to give the Tibetans the Bible in their own language. This Tibetan Mission was one of the most heroic efforts of that heroic and missionary Church, and it owed its inception to the inspiration of Charles Gutzlaff.

We have already seen how the zeal of Gutzlaff gave birth to several Missions in China proper. During his visit to Europe in 1850, he urged the Moravian Board at Herrnhut to undertake a Mission to Mongolia. An appeal for volunteers was made, and from some thirty who offered two were selected. These two were Edward Pagell, a man of undaunted courage and iron endurance, and William Heyde, who was blessed with an unfailing buoyancy of spirit. These two brave pioneers set forth in July 1853, two months before Hudson Taylor sailed for China. As they travelled via England, these three heralds of the Gospel can hardly fail to have heard something of one another, for all had felt the spell of Gutzlaff's spirit.

Mongolia was the objective of the two Moravians, but Russia barred the road via Siberia. For this reason they travelled via England to India, hoping to reach their distant destination via Tibet. With Simla as a base, they gave themselves to the study of English, Hindustani, Mongolian, and Tibetan, and while so engaged they received much kindness from Lord and Lady Lawrence, the Viceroy and his wife.

But though they assayed to go to Mongolia, they were not suffered to travel through Tibet, so they assuredly gathered

that the Lord had called them to preach the Gospel to the Tibetans. Snowed up for three-fourths of every year, they lived, suffered, and died for that people. Mr. and Mrs. Pagell died at Poo in 1883, within a few days of one another, their colleagues at Kyelang being unable to come to their aid because of the snow. 'In all missionary literature', wrote Dr. George Smith, 'there is no story so pathetic as that told by the Buddhists themselves of the devotion, the sickness, the death, and the burial of the heroic couple.'

But our main concern is with the translation of the Scriptures, and we must go back in thought. In 1856, three years after the two pioneers had sailed, a remarkable colleague went forth to join them. We refer to Dr. Henry Augustus Jaeschke, a man endowed with an extraordinary aptitude for languages. And his talent for acquiring languages was equalled by his zeal in grasping every opportunity for learning them.

In his early years Jaeschke was regarded as a prodigy, and his faculty for foreign tongues as almost miraculous. His parents were poor, but with the aid of a scholarship he entered the Grammar School at Niesky. Later he studied theology at Gnadefeld, outstripping all the other students in Greek, and in learning Polish. While engaged as a teacher at Christianfeld he learned Danish, and added Swedish during a holiday tour, revelling in the singing of Swedish songs. At Niesky he learned Hungarian from a pupil. In addition to these acquisitions he studied Sanscrit, Persian, Arabic, and Czech, with the result that when he reached India he found little difficulty with Hindustani and Urdu. When and where he learned English is not known, but he spoke it on board ship, and when he reached Tibet in 1856 he had a working knowledge of some ten languages.

But the gift of tongues was not his only talent. He was brilliant in mathematics, played the church organ, and the clarionet in the Niesky orchestra. For his own enjoyment he learned the violin. He was a beautiful singer, and the story is

told that when his colleagues went to Simla to meet him, the first intimation they had of his arrival was hearing him singing, 'Brethren let us be daring, Ourselves not sparing'. It was in this spirit he lived and devoted his brilliant gifts to the study of Tibetan for the next twenty-six years.

For many months he dwelt alone among the Tibetans at Stok, a village near Leh. His habits were most frugal. His furniture consisted of a rickety table and a more uncertain stool, while his diet was limited to oatmeal and such eggs as his landlady's one hen supplied. Having mastered the language, he wrote a Tibetan Grammar, which became a standard authority. Then followed his Tibeto-German and Tibeto-English Dictionaries. Many other works, such as Bible stories, a Harmony of the Gospels, a Hymn-book, a Liturgy, a Catechism, and school text-books came from his pen.

In Tibet there are two ways of pronouncing the words, the literary way and the spoken way. To read Tibetan is one thing, to speak it another, and the missionary must be able to do both. In his dictionaries Jaeschke showed both pronunciations by the use of phonetics. The variations are said to be amazing. Thus blood is *khrag* and *thag*; voice is *gra* and *da*; religion is *tschos* and *tschoo*, and care is *brygad* and *gye*.

When he began the translation of the Scriptures he would trace the meaning of the words through the ancient literature down to the modern equivalents. He talked much to a converted Lama, Nathaniel, to ascertain how any phrase would be understood by the natives. 'My instrument', he wrote, 'must be, as in the case of every successful translation of the Bible, not a technical, but the vulgar tongue.'

After twelve strenuous years his health broke down, but he had completed the New Testament, with the exception of Hebrews and Revelation, and had commenced work upon the Old Testament. Though compelled to return to Germany for medical aid, his work did not cease, and though he suffered

much from headache, he kept his diary in seven languages, changing his language each day.

His unfinished task was carried forward on the field by his able successor, F. A. Redslob, assisted by the converted Lama mentioned above. This work was printed in Berlin, the proofs being read by Dr. Jaeschke. Dr. Jaeschke, who was born on May 17, 1817, died on September 24, 1883, in his sixty-seventh year. The veterans, Mr. and Mrs. Pagell, died at Poo in the same year.

Of the original band of pioneers, Heyde and his wife alone survived. In 1898 a committee was formed for the revision of the New Testament. This was published in 1903, and it is interesting to note that the veteran William Heyde was chairman of this company. When this work was completed, he and his wife returned to Europe, after having lived among the Tibetans for nearly fifty years without a break.

Before Mr. Redslob died in 1891 he had translated the Pentateuch, the Book of Joshua, and the Psalms. Subsequently a committee was formed to carry the work forward and complete the task. This great undertaking has now been accomplished, and through the kindness of Dr. S. K. Hutton, of the Moravian Missionary Society, we are able to follow one of the translators, the Tibetan Pastor, the Rev. Yoseb Gergan, at his task, and to read his report of the last stages.

Though the spokesman is one, the task had been in the hands of several, whose names will appear in the narrative. In November 1919 there were still twenty-nine books of the Old Testament untranslated. Of these the Tibetan Brother Jor Puntsogs translated seven, the major burden falling to Mr. Yoseb Gergan, with Dr. Francke, Bishop Peter, and Mr. David Macdonald of Darjeeling as revisers. And here we will let Mr. Gergan speak.

‘Now at the end of this great work, I would like to tell you

how I translated in all these years. I keep opened before me the following versions on three small Tibetan tables; the Authorised, Revised, Urdu and Moffatt's translations, and I put a ruler on each to fix the passages at once. Then I read them all respectively, and write at once when the expression of a sentence or a verse be impressed on my mind. From the beginning our translators have rendered according to the Authorised version, and I have followed in their steps.

'Besides the above books, I daily need Young's *Concordance* to find out the original meaning or pronunciation: for instance in the English Bible, Lord is used for Yahweh, Cyrus for the Hebrew Koresh, Ethiopia for Kush, and so on. In such occasions we choose the Hebrew names rather than the English.

'When we meet with different varieties of trees, precious stones, moneys, weights, measures, musical instruments and dress, then sometimes it takes a long time to find out what it really means, and sometimes we cannot find equivalent words in Tibetan. Sometimes the Jews used the same expression as a Tibetan, such as breath for strength, strength for wealth, and sometimes their expressions are quite contrary, as hand for power, lamp for sun, seek for worship.

'From the beginning our translators took much care not to translate this Holy Book into a provincial dialect. Most of the priests cannot understand the high classical language, and if it be translated into colloquial it would be more difficult to be understood than the classical. So up to the present all our translators have taken care to render the Holy Bible into a simple semi-classical tongue which can easily be understood by all classes and readers. Without the classical tongue the Bible could not be translated, because in the vulgar dialect it could not be expressed fully from lack of sufficient words.'

Turning from this interesting insight into the Tibetan translator's problems, we are able to give the latest news as to

progress. From a report signed by Mr. Gergan and dated Leh, October 1933, the following is taken:

'On the 18th of November 1919 I started work on the translation of the hitherto untranslated books of the Old Testament. On the 10th May 1928 the translation of these books was finished. Unfortunately Dr. Francke who corrected the translation died. Since the 1st November 1930, Bishop Peter and I have worked on this correction, and have now finished the books from Ezra to Malachi. What we have finished goes to Mr. Macdonald at Darjeeling, and when it comes back from him we go through it once more. After that it is made over to Br. Jor Puntsogs, who has to write the transfer copy for printing. Up to Hosea that is now finished. As it does not take much time to go through what is returned from Mr. Macdonald, there is every hope that by the beginning of the New Year (1934) the whole work will have been finished. 'Signed YOSEB GERGAN, Leh, 3.10.33.'

Though the linguistic difficulties are real, especially in connection with the finding of a fit name for God which shall be free from Buddhist associations, it is encouraging to know that there are many incidents in the Gospel story which are in harmony with Tibetan modes of thought and speech. Tibetan pilgrimages for instance have much in common with those undertaken by the Jews. The search for the child Jesus among the pilgrim cortège is a realistic touch which the Tibetan appreciates at once. The star of Bethlehem also gets home immediately to the Tibetan imagination. The story of the relentless debtor has its echo in the daily experience of the Tibetan peasantry. The Tibetan language too is full of metaphors, so that the figures of the Bible need little or no explanation. The division of the property, as related in the parable of the prodigal son, is a familiar transaction to the Tibetan, for their custom of polyandry frequently leads to quarrels and the

division of the estate among the sons. The command given by the master to his servants to go out into the highways and hedges and compel the men to come in, appeals to the Tibetan, who will take no refusal from a prospective guest. Christ's injunction 'not to salute anyone by the way', is intelligible to a people who may even postpone their journey to the next day to secure somebody's company. These are but a few of the Gospel's points of contact with the Tibetan mind.

One interesting departure has recently been attempted by the Moravian missionaries in Western Tibet, and that is the adoption of the Tibetan custom of writing inscriptions on the rocks, and thus make the mountain crags a wayside pulpit for the passing pilgrims. Well-known texts are being chiselled or painted on the rocks, even so large a portion as the story of the prodigal son. To distinguish these from Buddhist inscriptions, a Cross is painted or cut in one corner, or above it. It is hoped in this way to bring portions of God's Word home to many who may never see the printed page. Here is a telling extract from an article on this subject from the pen of the Rev. Walter Asboe:

'The stone carver in Spiti, with whom I struck up a friendship, was an expert in his art, and the speed with which he worked with his primitive chisels was simply amazing. He could chisel out the letters perfectly without first forming the characters roughly in pencil or charcoal. He worked with the greatest precision, and with incredible speed.

'When I met him he was engaged in the formidable task of carving a thousand inscriptions on as many stones for the benefit of a deceased Lama, incidentally deriving much personal merit in the prosecution of his pious exertions.

'I asked him if he would carve the inscription "God is Love" on a large stone. Thinking to help him, I took great pains to write the Tibetan words on the stone, but I soon saw his freehand carving was a vast deal better than my carefully

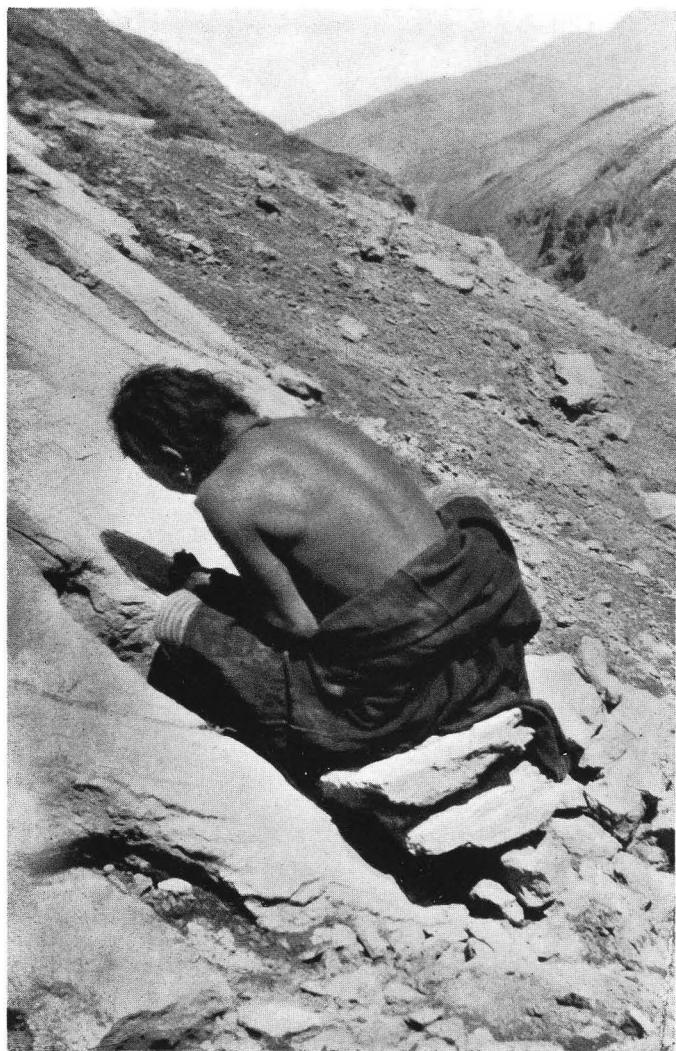


Photo by the Rev. W. Ashboe of the Moravian Mission

THE TIBETAN STONE CARVER

Carving Texts of Scripture on the rocks by the wayside in Tibet.

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prepared calligraphy. On the following day he inscribed on enormous slabs of rock by the wayside the Beatitudes and Christ's law of reciprocity in large Tibetan capitals.'

Another attempt to familiarize the Tibetans with the Scriptures has been made in Western Tibet. By means of funds supplied by the National Bible Society of Scotland, a Tibetan has been sent with Scriptures and a letter of introduction to the Head Lama of all the monasteries. The first journeys were undertaken by a man named Matta, and he has distributed Gospels to the monasteries in Lower Ladak.

One interesting illustration of the way in which the Word of God is penetrating these Buddhist strongholds is given by Mr. Edgar. In 1926 an Abbot of an unknown lamasery wrote to the missionaries at Tatsienlu saying: 'I have read all the New Testament; is it true that there is an Old Testament? If so will you kindly send me all the books, because I am much interested in Christianity.' Copies were sent and during 1930 an acknowledgment came back asking for any recent literature and saying how much he had enjoyed David's Psalms.

To complete the story concerning the Bible in Tibet, it should be recorded that in addition to the translations mentioned above, certain portions of the Scriptures have been rendered into three local dialects, for the vernaculars vary very much in this mountainous country.

The cry of many a heart: 'Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?' is slowly receiving its answer even in Tibet.

TIBETAN.

དཀོན་མཚོག་གིས་ཉིད་ཀྱི་སྐུ་གཅིག་པོ་གནང་བ་ཙམ་དུ་འཇིག་རྟེན་ལ་
 བྱས་པར་མཛད་པས། སྐྱུ་ཡང་དེ་ལྟ་དུ་བ་བྱེད་པ་མེད་པར་མི་འགྲུར་གྱི། མཐའ་
 མེད་པའི་སློབ་ཐོབ་པར་བྱའོ།

The Scriptures in Manchu

THOUGH there is knowledge of the Manchu race back to an early date, their literary history is comparatively modern. So late as the ninth century after Christ, they were still without a written language. In the twelfth century a script was devised, but this soon fell into disuse, though traces of it in books and monuments still remain. Shortly before the Manchu conquest of China in 1644, they adopted and adapted the Mongol form of writing, and as an illustration of the keen attention given to literary matters by the early Manchu Emperors of China, it may be mentioned that the Emperor Kien Lung, in 1748, published a poem in praise of Mukden, the capital of Manchuria, which was printed in thirty-two different styles both of Chinese and Manchu writing.

But in spite of all the efforts made by the Manchus to become a literary people, not only did they fail, but what is more remarkable, they practically surrendered their own language in favour of the speech of the Chinese, whom they had conquered. Manchu, as a language, is now quite extinct in Manchuria, Chinese having supplanted it. The only call in recent years for the Scriptures in Manchu has come from Chinese Turkestan, for use among the descendants of the garrisons and colonists established there in the seventeenth century.

As early as 1816 the translation of the Scriptures into Manchu was discussed by the Russian Bible Society, but owing to other claims nothing was done at the time. Five years later, Dr. Pinkerton was authorized by the British and Foreign Bible Society to proceed with the work, but when St. John was ready, Stepan Lipofzoff, who had spent fourteen years studying Manchu for the Russian Government, took up the task. The Gospel of Matthew was printed and sent to China for criticism as well as for circulation. One of these copies was seen by Gutzlaff during his early voyages along the China

coast. The whole of the New Testament was completed during 1825, but the Russian Government refused permission for it to be printed.

Many of the Jesuit missionaries in Peking had become able Manchu scholars, and one of them, Louis de Poirot, translated considerable portions of the Bible into Manchu. His manuscript, which included Genesis to Job, Daniel and Jonah, part of the Apocrypha, the Gospel of Matthew and the Acts, with an interlinear translation in Chinese, came into the hands of the Russian Holy Synod, and was seen by the Rev. W. Swan when in St. Petersburg in 1832. Early in 1833, that strange genius George Borrow, then thirty years of age, began to study Manchu, and in July of the same year he was sent by the British and Foreign Bible Society to St. Petersburg. By the end of the year he and Mr. Swan had completed the transcript of the Jesuit's version.

In the following year George Borrow obtained permission from the Russian Government, through the good offices of the British Minister at St. Petersburg, to print the whole of the New Testament under the censorship of Mr. Lipofzoff. Within ten months this task was completed and the edition was forwarded to London. It only remains to add that some twenty years later, Lipofzoff's earlier translations of Matthew and Mark, with the Chinese Delegates' version interlined, were printed in Shanghai under the direction of Mr. Wylie. Such is the brief record of a version for which there has been small need and a very limited use.

That the speech of a people, powerful enough to conquer and rule China for more than two hundred and sixty years, should become almost a dead language is an amazing fact. Apart from the call for a few Manchu Scriptures in far-away Chinese Turkestan, this translation is now almost a curiosity.

Among the Mongols

THERE are few problems more difficult than the evangelization of Mongolia. No mission field has had more devoted workers, yet the results are sorrowfully few. It will be well briefly to summarize what has been done before we tell the story of the Bible in Mongol dress.

The Nestorians were the first in the field, and the early Roman Catholics followed. We have told elsewhere of John de Monte Corvino's labours in translating some of the Scriptures into Mongolian, but like some of their rivers, these have been lost in the sands.

The next missionary effort was, with the permission of Russia, established in Siberia, due north of Urga. Here the whole of the Old Testament was translated into literary Mongol, and of this we shall write more fully. This noble adventure was brought to an end by the Russian authorities a little under twenty-five years after its commencement.

The next attempt will for ever be associated with the name of James Gilmour, of whom *The Spectator* wrote: 'Robinson Crusoe has turned missionary; has lived years in Mongolia and written a book about it'. Gilmour died without having baptized a single convert, but one of his fellow-labourers said: 'I doubt if even St. Paul endured more for Christ than did James Gilmour'.

Some six or seven years after the death of Gilmour, the Scandinavian Mongolian Mission took up the work. They were a dauntless band. Two of them, Messrs. Suber and Sternberg, when setting out for a two years' tour of Mongolia, wrote:

'We are going to spend the winter months in tents, relying on the loving care and protection of God; and be it life or be it death, we, with the assurance of obeying God's call, joyously and unhesitatingly remain at our posts. Mongolia is a hard

field, but we count it a joy to be, even in an imperfect way, a sweet savour of life to this people.'

And there were women too who endured like hardness. The two sisters Hilda and Clara Anderson and Miss Lund, like a modern Trio somewhat further west, travelled by caravan among these scattered peoples. These three women, and, in fact, the whole of this Mongolian Mission, save two members, were among the martyrs of 1900. Thus once again the work among the Mongols was brought to a stand. And to-day, owing to Soviet influence, missionary operations in Outer Mongolia are almost impossible. But the translated Scriptures remain one of the silent monuments to the devotion of God's servants.

The story of the Mongol translations of the Scriptures opens under the influence of the Russian Bible Society, a Society which had prosperous days, though, somewhat remarkable to relate, it was founded with the sanction of Czar Alexander while the shattered remnants of Napoleon's Grand Army were engaged in their fatal retreat from Moscow. Dark as those times were, they were great days for the spread of God's Word across northern Asia. Auxiliaries of the Russian Bible Society were then springing up right across the breadth of Siberia. The Soviet influence to-day presents a sad contrast to those Napoleonic times.

The first translation was of the Gospel of Matthew into Kalmuk, or western Mongolian. This was made by Dr. I. J. Schmidt, who for a long time had been in touch with the Moravian missionaries who had laboured among this people before their flight from Russia.¹ The translation was completed

¹ There are few events in history to compare with the flight of the Kalmuks from Russia. They had revolted from China in 1616, but sought to return *en masse* in 1761. It was like a modern version of the Exodus, save that the Russian Pharaoh did not perish in any Red Sea. Of the 600,000 who set forth on January 5, only 260,000 were alive when in the following September the

MONGOLIAN: Kalmuk.

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St. John, iii. 16

by 1809, but the manuscript was unfortunately destroyed by fire when the Russians burned Moscow to defeat Napoleon. In consequence of this it was not printed until 1815, the year of Waterloo. Subsequently the whole of the New Testament was translated, and was printed in 1895, a smaller edition, reproduced by photography, being printed in Shanghai a year later.

The circulation of St. Matthew's Gospel in Kalmuk had a remarkable sequel. Copies were sent to the Governor of Irkutsk, and these were circulated among the Selenginskish Mongols and the Chorinian Buriats. As the Governor expressed a desire for the opinion of the priests regarding the contents of these books, they were examined with care. But this proved a difficult task, for the Kalmuks had discarded the ancient Mongol writing for an improved style. Two learned Buriat nobles were therefore commissioned to study the books. The result was wholly unexpected and amazing. The head lama and the Prince of the Buriats made a collection, amounting to £550, which they placed at the disposal of the Russian Bible Society on condition that the same Gospel, and if possible the whole of the New Testament, should be translated into Buriat and printed in their own script.

In response to this request Prince Galitzin asked for the assistance of two learned Buriats, and the two men who had been deputed to examine the Kalmuk version were sent to St. Petersburg. They reached the city in December 1817, and had the honour of being presented to the Czar. The result was that not only was the New Testament translated into Buriat Mongolian, but these two men were converted themselves. From St. Petersburg they wrote to their own Prince:

'We have discovered the pearl of a devout heart. We are

Chinese Emperor Lien Lung took them under his protection. Russian cavalry and artillery inflicted terrible slaughter upon their ranks during their eight months' flight, through winter and summer. It was almost like another French retreat from Moscow.

fully and firmly resolved to receive the doctrine of the saving God, Jesus Christ. Although we are not yet acquainted with the manners and usages of His religion, and when we return home should find no teacher upon whose breast we could lean our head, neither any house of God, yet after the conviction we have obtained of the truth of the Word of God, we can no longer endure the want of it; we must abide by this doctrine.'

The whole of the New Testament was printed in St. Petersburg in 1827, though only the four Gospels and the Acts were published, as the Russian Holy Synod refused the British and Foreign Bible Society the right of publishing the New Testament as a whole. The reason for this action was that they said they might need the books themselves.

But this is not the end of the story. Probably in consequence of the interest which had been awakened among the Mongols, the London Missionary Society was urged to begin work among them in Siberia. The result was that in the same year that the two Buriat nobles reached St. Petersburg the Rev. Edward Stallybrass set out for Siberia, and ultimately settled at Selenginsk, a town some two hundred and fifty miles north of the Mongolian capital. Here he was joined by several workers, his chief helper in Bible translation work being the Rev. W. Swan. Their homes were log-built, with the seams caulked with moss, after the Russian manner. Amid much trial and difficulty they mastered the language, the local Russians, mostly exiles from their own country, despising them for mixing so much among the degraded and uncultured Buriats.

For nearly twenty-five years these missionaries continued their self-denying labours. They translated the whole of the Old Testament into literary Mongolian, a language which could be understood by Buriats and Mongols both of Siberia and Mongolia itself. By the end of 1840, the whole of the Old Testament was finished. It was revised by Dr. Schmidt at

St. Petersburg, and printed at Selenginsk by means of a press sent out from London by the Bible Society, and published under Imperial licence.

In high spirits the devoted missionaries at Selenginsk set to work upon the New Testament, when, like a bolt from the blue, the Mission was suppressed by Imperial ukase. The workers were not actually commanded to leave the country, but they were forbidden to teach religion. James Gilmour, in his great story *Among the Mongols*, says that the converts were looked upon as more loyal to the English missionaries than to Russia, and this may have been the reason for checking their activities. 'The converts knew better,' said Gilmour, 'but the mass of the people, Russian and Buriat, seemed to have regarded conversion to Christianity as a desertion of Russia and a going over to England.'

The work of translation was resumed in England. With the translation of the New Testament made by the Russian Bible Society as basis, a revision was made which was virtually a new translation. But unfortunately there was no Mongolian type, so the book was printed with Manchu type, the difference not being serious. The Manchu script was modelled on the Mongol, and that in its turn had been borrowed from the Uigurs, who had adopted the old Syriac introduced by the Nestorians. The difference is said not to be greater than between French and English writing. Ultimately the New Testament was printed with true Mongolian type.

Many years later a revision of this version was felt to be necessary, but the question was: Who is to do it? At length Mr. F. A. Larson of the British and Foreign Bible Society, assisted by Mr. A. F. Amblad of the Scandinavian Alliance Mongol Mission, undertook to revise the Gospels and the Acts. In a hut at Tabor, on the Mongolian plain, they toiled all through the summer, and then in the autumn crossed the Gobi desert to submit their work to one of the ablest Mongol

scholars at Urga. This man, Ponsok Searim, was Secretary to the Mongolian Department under Peking. Under conditions of a rigorous Mongol winter, every verse in the four Gospels and in the Acts was subjected to a rigorous criticism.

In this connection an incident possibly unique in Bible translation happened. While this work of revision was in progress, the northern Mongols, following the lead of China, hoisted the flag of rebellion against the Manchu dynasty, and ordered the Manchu Amban and Chinese garrison to leave the city. This was in the winter of 1911. Northern, or Outer, Mongolia was organized into an independent State with the Bogda, or Incarnate Buddha, as Emperor, and Ponsok Searim was appointed Commissioner of Customs. This unexpected event brought the work of Scripture revision to a standstill. An appeal was made to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Hanta Dorchi, and he graciously released Ponsok Searim from his official duties until the revision was finished. This was an altogether extraordinary courtesy from the Holy City of Lamaism, where formerly there had been undisguised hostility to the Gospel.

The only other Mongolian version is one in Khalkha Mongol, which is a vernacular spoken by about four million persons. This was the work of a Lama, and was based on the earlier translations mentioned above. Only the Gospel of Matthew was finished, and this, after having been revised by Dr. Edkins and Bishop Schereschewsky, was published in 1873. A photographic reprint was made in 1894.

Mr. Stenberg, of the Scandinavian Mongolian Alliance, and his colleague, were encouraged to proceed with other parts of the New Testament, but the Boxer outbreak cut their work short, for Mr. Stenberg was killed.

In addition to the sad loss of life during the Boxer persecutions, much useful linguistic work was destroyed. The only dictionary of Mongol was Dr. Schmidt's, and this gave the

MONGOLIAN: Khalkha.

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'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.'—
 Matthew, iv. 10.

meaning in German and Russian. With much labour Mr. and Mrs. Larson translated the whole book into English and Swedish. Mr. Larson was much at home in Mongolia, and had crossed the Gobi thirteen times by 1910. Unfortunately his English and Swedish translation of Dr. Schmidt's dictionary was destroyed during the Boxer troubles, as well as a Vocabulary of some 3000 Mongolian words, with English and Chinese equivalents, prepared by the Rev. J. H. Roberts of the American Board.

More recently, however, Miss Lajus of the China Inland Mission has translated Dr. Schmidt's dictionary into English, and Mrs. Matthews of the same Mission has typed out the whole and copied the Mongolian characters. In this connection it should also be recorded that Mr. Percy C. Mather, of the China Inland Mission, who died in Urumchi, the capital of Chinese Turkestan, in 1933, left behind him the legacy of a Mongolian-English Dictionary, a Mongolian text-book, as well as a Manchurian Grammar and Dictionary. Mr. Mather's Mongolian-English Dictionary and Grammar are based on original works by Professor Kotwicz.

PART II

The Bible in Action

As the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. ISAIAH lv. 10-11

A Chinese Letter

The work of Bible distribution is both precious and honourable. It is a means of bringing men into the Heavenly Way. I remember the great grace I received from God through the Bible distributors. In the year 1886 three men came to our village to sell Scriptures. I was so moved through them that I purchased fifty-two portions to give away. From that small beginning great results have followed. Over a thousand persons have been helped God-wards. Seventeen Churches have been established. Eleven persons have become Evangelists. If we consider that the value of one soul is more than a world, what is the worth of these souls brought in by Bible distribution? I send this to show that I was saved from death and to salute the Agent.

I am his younger brother, *Fong Teh-heng of Hinghoa.*

According to the testimony of the Rev. J. Sadler of Amoy, the writer of this letter was such a peacemaker among a people given to strife, and such a generous giver to the poor, that the erection of a Memorial arch costing ten thousand dollars was proposed in his honour.

The Colporteur's Task

THE end of the translator's labours is the beginning of the colporteur's task. And this is no sinecure. The feet of those who carry good tidings may be beautiful, but they need to be ready for rough roads. It is a work which taxes spirit, soul, and body. Whether it be the missionary or the Chinese, a willingness to endure hardship is essential. The highways and byways are rude, the inns are poor, and the food unpalatable. Here is what one worker wrote of Mongolia:

'The inns cannot be described. All kinds of travellers sleep in one bed, and that is in the kitchen. The fuel is not coal or even good argol, but some substance that smokes and smells beyond description. From the time we entered an inn until we went out again, we could hardly see a fellow-guest until we bumped into him. If we stood up we knocked our heads against one of the log rafters, so we had to lie down all the time.'

Conditions are not less trying among the tribes. As the traveller climbs the mountains or descends into the valleys in south-west China, he passes from hot to cold and then from cold to hot, with danger of chills. Journeys are arduous and even dangerous, the mountain paths are beyond description, and the sleeping accommodation unattractive. This is what one missionary writes:

'The inn accommodation is proverbially bad, even along the main roads. We had to share quarters with pigs and dogs, with cats and fowls and other creatures, amid the smoke of log fires and the dust of ages. At night the guests lie promiscuously huddled upon the floor with a large straw carpet as covering.'

While Chinese inns are better, they are seldom anything to boast of. It is amid such conditions that the colporteur has to live for months on end. And these men are an important

division of the evangelistic army in China. Their place is in the thick of the fight, and more frequently in the van than in the rear.

'I have watched these men in all weathers,' writes one missionary, 'in the frosts and snows of winter, in the keen searching winds of spring, in the scorching heat of summer, and in the pelting rains of autumn, but no complaint of hardship has ever reached my ears. I have seen some return to their lodgings, after a day's hard work, drenched to the skin, their clothes all splashed with mud, their shoes looking like pulp, and when I have expressed my sympathy I have invariably met with the reply; "This is nothing, my clothes will soon dry".'

Nor are physical hardships all. Petty persecutions and untold annoyances have to be endured. Many a taunt must be met with a smile, and many an argument with a reason for the hope that is in them. There is no home life and little fellowship. With a pack over his shoulder the colporteur tramps from place to place, over mountain tops and along fertile valleys, through hostile villages and apathetic towns. He knows too well the dreary inn and the insanitary hovel. Familiar faces and friendly words are few, but it is thus that the Scriptures reach the remotest regions and the lonely hamlets. Many a strange experience enlivens the way. Here are one or two, taken from life.

A colporteur is selling his Scriptures at a fair when suddenly a band of armed robbers bursts upon the scene, and the following conversation takes place between one of the brigands and the man with the books:

'What are you doing?'

'Preaching and selling books.'

'What's in your bundle?'

'Scriptures.'

'Open up, and let me see.'

The bundle is unrolled and the contents exposed.

'Do you come from the Save-the-world Hall, where they extract bullets from wounded men?' said the robber.

'Yes,' replies the colporteur.

Then the robber turning to the crowd cries out: 'Now, look here, you people, buy this man's books'.

The crowd begins to buy, but as payment was slower than the acceptance of the volumes, the robber shouts: 'Out with your money, or I'll put a bullet through you', and suiting the action to the word he raises his rifle.

In less time than it takes to tell the story, the books were all sold and the money paid. It was a rude illustration of the Kingdom of Heaven suffering violence, and of the violent taking it by force!

But where there is no peril there is frequently room for a ready wit. Here is one such case. A company of Communists are trying to brow-beat a humble book-seller, and one of the number opens his attack thus:

'You are a foreign slave, a foreign dog!'

'But these books make no reference to England.'

'But you are helping the English Imperialists.'

'This book was written in Asia and it was printed in China. You accuse me of being in foreign pay, but you are wearing foreign boots, foreign hats and smoking foreign cigarettes.'

Another colporteur in South China, who had formerly been a prosperous fortune-teller, is chided for giving up his successful business. This was his reply:

'Listen to me, honourable brethren. No soothsayer knows his own fate; how can he know that of others? But since I have

read this Book, I know my destiny as a saved child of God, and that insures a future bright with hope. In this Gospel I have found my Saviour.'

The same man was asked by an old lady if the Books he sold would tell her how to secure a good daughter-in-law, since they had become so scarce. 'Perhaps', said the ready colporteur, with a smile, 'in former times, the mothers-in-law were more gentle!' After this sly home-thrust he turned to the first Epistle to Timothy and read what St. Paul says about children showing piety towards their own family, and requiting well their own parents. He knew his Book, and how to commend it. It is interesting to note that this man was first attracted to the Church, not from any desire to find salvation for himself, but rather that he might do something for the souls of his departed parents, for they had appeared to him in dreams exhorting him to find relief for their spirits.

An interesting book could well be written on the adventures of colporteurs. Here is the summary of one story. During the siege of the Legations in Peking during 1900, a gallant colporteur named Yao Chen-yüan braved death many times that he might carry messages to and from the besieged foreigners. Frequently he slept in the Boxer camp, while his hat was lined with secret communications from the British Legation. And not only was he successful in delivering these dispatches, but he was prospered in carrying answers back. Such are some of the men who, year in and year out, endure hardness in their humble but glorious occupation, an occupation which entails sometimes the hazarding of life itself.

But the colporteur is not the only one to engage in this toil. Many a missionary has faced like hardship, sometimes alone and sometimes with a Chinese companion. In this connection it is almost invidious to make selections, but here is one out of a sheaf of illustrations. The writer of the following extract is

Mr. J. H. Edgar of the China Inland Mission, a man who has the intrepid spirit of a born pioneer. For more than thirty years he has explored the wildest areas of the Tibetan marches, enduring more hardship than the majority of men could stand. The following excerpt is typical of scores of similar passages in his journal:

'The roads are not only bad but dangerous. The passes are many, and may reach 17,000 feet, and the tracks along the sun-baked valleys are often only traversed at great risks. Sometimes a rollicking journey in a skin boat is an alternative, not necessarily agreeable. The bridges are narrow planks over foaming rivers and are not always crossed without accident. The robber, like the louse, is the domestic animal in the marches. The entire population of Yiuko are just now professional brigands. In Chos Chia a false report—unknown to us—saved us from ill-treatment at the hands of Asia's Lights. We risked our lives in Drozur and looked into the muzzles of fifty guns in Somo. But the Lord was with us, and we came out from our experiences like men who had been testing out a new and powerful tonic.

'In my work I have been greatly assisted by Yang Ming, a remarkable product of the earth's most terrifying regions. Besides being a faithful friend and entertaining companion, his training from youth has been in the most desperate canyons of Asia, and his occupations those that were brimful of dangers and excitements. He has been a soldier, also, in the frontier wars. As friends may imagine, he is always willing to undertake the most daring adventures with a smiling face and unswerving determination.

'The work that Yang and I are engaged in brings the Word of God to out-of-the-way regions of Asia. There is no parallel in sowing seed, unless it is the seeds dropped into a foaming flood and finding good ground on fertile flats beyond impass-

able canyons. It—the good seed—is certainly taking root; our experience can testify to that. But the faith of God's people is necessary. The Australian natives never sow seed; hence they have no harvests. But why do they refrain from sowing? Probably because they are mentally unable to bridge the gulf between sowing and reaping. May we not suspect an analogy in the spiritual realm?'

As a contrast to these terrible mountain regions we may turn to the plains of Mongolia. Here we find the missionary or colporteur bartering the Gospels for milk or cheese or argol. The milk the missionary uses, the cheese he gives to his Mongol helpers, and the argol is needed for fuel. For meat a whole sheep must be bought at a time, while oatmeal, flour, and sugar must be carried. The Scriptures he sells are frequently used as reading-books in the schools, for the Mongols have no printed books of their own, and manuscript copies are dear and scarce.

While the people met with in the Tibetan marches and on the Mongolian plain are few and scattered, it is otherwise in China proper. Here vast crowds gather at festivals and fairs, while the population almost everywhere is dense. The following is one picture from the Tientsin area. Mr. and Mrs. Woodberry with a company of students in house-boats are travelling around the city.

'Miles of shipping stretched before us [Mr. Woodberry writes], and hundreds of junks from Canton and other centres. For nearly four weeks we sold from ship to ship as fast as possible, also on bridges thronged with passengers, and sometimes in narrow, crooked streets of the city. About four thousand Gospels were sold during the month of August. . . . Later we took a railway trip to Shanhaikwan where we made our headquarters. On the cars and in the cities we sold some three thousand Gospels, and a few among the mountains

bordering Manchuria. Hundreds were sold on the railway trip to Peking, on one occasion more than a hundred being disposed of out of the carriage window during a halt at a station. We were never more happy than when engaged in this blessed work.'

In years past thousands of Scriptures were sold to the students coming forth from the old Examination Halls, and all down the years special and regular efforts have been made to reach the many companies of devout pilgrims as they visit the sacred mountain resorts of China. Many of these hungry souls are prepared soil for the good seed.

There are also millions of Moslems scattered throughout China, some gathered around one of the strongholds of Islam, others in smaller communities. The following lines, written years ago by Mr. F. H. Rhodes, tell their own story of a work which calls for tact and understanding:

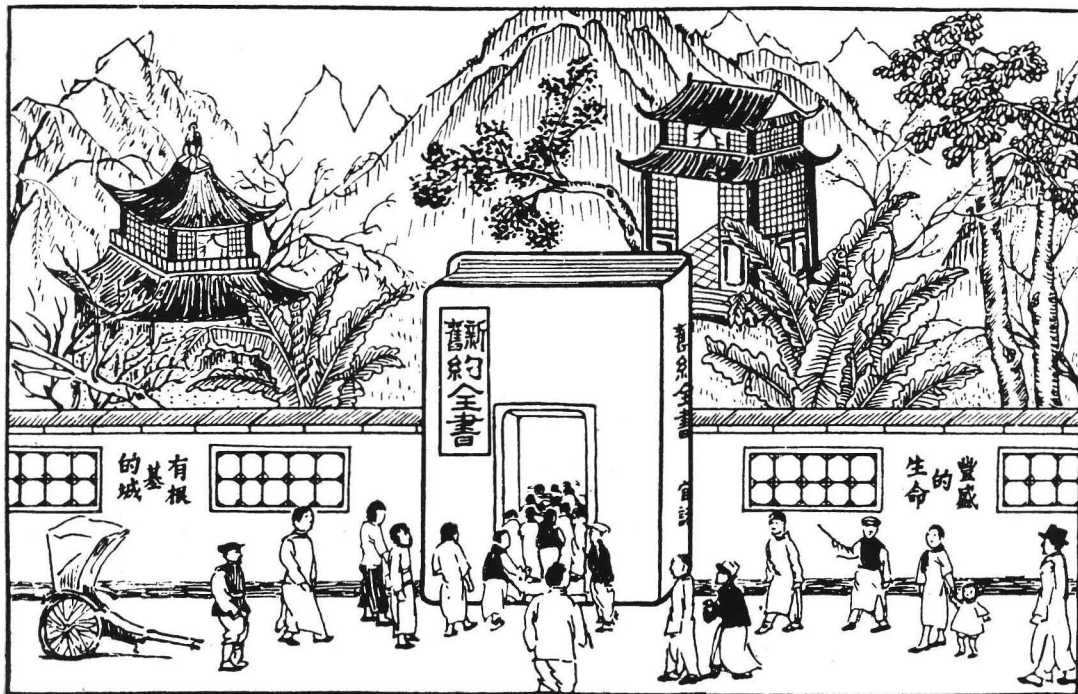
'When I reached the mosque [he writes] I found it a hive of industry, for there were some seventy pupils learning Arabic. All were turbaned in white. Presently an old Mullah appeared and gave me a long interview. I produced a copy of the Bible and he examined it with interest. I asked the leading teacher to translate the Arabic into Chinese. He smiled and at once translated a passage into beautiful Chinese. . . . I next visited Taying, a day's journey from the Capital. I was now in the Moslem Headquarters, for here lives the head Mullah of the province. The Mullah, a tall man with grey beard, eagle eye and a long straight nose, received me politely, but with a good deal of reserve. When he visited our hall he was much freer, but here surrounded by scores of students and pupils he was rather frigid. He seemed surprised that we believed in the Taurat or Books of Moses, and picked up and handled the Arabic Bible in a way that showed that he was a master of the language. Lighting on Matthew he read: "Jesus Christ, the son

of David". "What is the meaning of this?" he asked. "Was not *Urshu*, Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary?" He gladly accepted the loan of the Arabic Bible for six months, and said: "I will return it into your hands and no other". So he has booked me for a return visit in six months' time.'

If we travel away to the far north-west we shall find another type of service, for in that region many races and languages mingle, as will be seen from the following extract from the journal of Mr. George Hunter:

'During the twenty weeks I was away I travelled some two thousand miles and sold Scriptures in eight languages, namely 22 Tibetan Gospels, 24 Mongol Gospels, 20 Manchu Gospels, 178 Chinese Gospels, 21 Arabic Gospels, 37 Kashgar-Turki Gospels, 14 Kashgar-Turki Genesis, 10 Kashgar-Turki Samuel, 64 Qazaq-Turki Matthew, 73 Mark, 16 Acts and 14 Kirghiz-Turki Gospels, besides a quantity of tracts in Chinese, Tibetan, Turki and Mongolian. These were sold mostly in Kobdo, Altai, Zaison and Chuguchak.'

From these few glimpses at the strenuous labours of the colporteurs and missionaries, we may turn with profit and interest to learn some of the results. We shall see that there is abundant evidence to prove that the Holy Scriptures are still able to make men wise unto salvation. Only the limits of this little volume, and possibly of the reader's patience, compel us to exclude many a story which has thrilled the writer.



A Chinese drawing showing people finding entry into the 'city that had foundations' (see Chinese characters on wall) by means of the Book which makes them wise unto salvation.

The Colporteur's Reward

THERE is abundant evidence that the colporteur's task is not in vain. It is true that much of the seed seems to fall by the wayside and be trodden under-foot, but on the other hand there are many who testify that the reading of the Holy Scriptures has made them wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. In this chapter we shall group together a number of stories which bear witness to this great truth. The few that are printed must be regarded as representative of a great host.

The last provincial capital in China to be opened to resident missionary work was Kaifeng, the capital of Honan. But long before the foreigner was able to secure entrance, a little company of believers had been established there as a result of colportage work. The story is in this wise:

'In the year 1881, or it may have been 1882, a certain man named Chu, when about to enter the city of Kaifeng, noticed a man by the road-side selling books. He was a colporteur from the province of Hupeh. Mr. Chu stopped and bought a volume, but no sooner had he done so than a well-known local scholar named Wang rushed up and warned him against the book, saying that if he looked at it he would lose his sight. In his anger the scholar kicked the colporteur's box over, and scattered its contents. He then attacked the man himself and drove him away with blows and curses. When he had accomplished this he ordered the bystanders to gather up the scattered volumes that they might be burned.

'But Mr. Chu did not like the idea of destroying the books, so he secreted as many as he could up his ample sleeve, and took them home. Among the volumes he thus saved were copies of the four Gospels, and some tracts entitled "A Christian Catechism", and "A Guide to Heaven".

‘When Mr. Chu began to read these books, they spoke to his heart, and he felt that they were good and true. In a word they authenticated themselves. He knew that the idols that he worshipped were false, and he gave them up. But he was not content to keep the good news to himself, so he told his neighbours of his newly found convictions. It was not long before the people began to call him Chu the Christian. But he knew that he did not deserve that name, for he still smoked opium.

‘What had become of the colporteur who had been hounded out of the city he never knew, for the man did not return. Nor did Mr. Chu meet any other colporteur, or any missionary, for many years. Meanwhile Wang the scholar, who had destroyed the books, went mad, and as he became dangerous, the local magistrate had him chained to a large millstone in an outhouse. The poor maniac would not allow himself to be clothed, and he remained naked to the day of his death some ten years later. Heaven’s judgment on this man so awed Mr. Chu, that he became afraid about himself.

‘It was about this time that he heard that some missionaries had settled in the city of Weihwei, four days’ journey north. So he journeyed thither to see them, and to ask what he must do to be saved. Here he received instruction and encouragement and returned to his home in Kaifeng well armed with books. The city was still closed against the missionary, but in September 1898 two colporteurs paid Mr. Chu a visit, and found him, with a band of disciples, meeting for worship in a tea-shop. Twelve years had elapsed between the day when he had bought his first copies of the Gospel from the colporteur to the time when he had met the missionaries in the neighbouring city, yet here he was with a little band of men seeking after the truth.

‘In 1899 Mr. R. Powell, of the China Inland Mission, visited the city twice, and found the little company of Christians full of zeal. In Mr. Chu he recognized a fine, warm-hearted and

strong character, one, who from the way he managed his band of followers, might have been a Pastor of long standing. In all there were about thirteen who seemed established in the faith, while others were under instruction. Though some of the original books picked up seventeen years earlier had been given away, two of them were still in use, and these Mr. Powell exchanged for new copies, so that he might possess two of the volumes which had been so used of God, as trophies of the Gospel.

'It was not until three years later, in 1902, that Mr. Powell succeeded in securing premises within the city, twenty years after the discomfited colporteur had been driven away. Who he was nobody knows, but disheartened as he must have been, his labours had not been in vain in the Lord.'

The city of Kaifeng does not stand alone as a centre where little churches have been virtually founded before ever the missionary has arrived. It was in the late 'seventies that a copy of St. Mark's Gospel fell into the hands of a Buddhist bishop near the city of Taning in Shansi. The Buddhist Chang and the scholar Ch'ü pondered and studied this book together, burning incense before it, since they recognized it as a Holy Book. They too gathered a little company of disciples around them, and they actually met within the walls of the Buddhist temple for this purpose. Both men became pastors in the Christian Church in later years, but both had been brought to a definite though imperfect knowledge of the truth before they had met any Christian teacher.¹

Here is another somewhat similar story from the province of Fukien, told by the Rev. C. Campbell Brown:

'Eight years ago [*i.e.* in 1891], a man from Tante, a village outside the south gate of Chinchew, bought some Gospels

¹ For the full story see *In Quest of God*, the life story of Pastors Chang and Ch'ü, by Marshall Broomhall, published by the China Inland Mission.

and among them a copy of St. Matthew. His village with over ten thousand inhabitants was once Mohammedan, but for the last two or three hundred years it has become more or less heathen. The idolatrous customs, however, are fewer, and, if one may put it so, less gross than those obtaining in other places.

‘Well, this man took his Gospels home and read them. He was interested and read them aloud to his friends. Among these was a man we will name Brother Snow, and he was deeply impressed by the beauty of the truth contained in the book.

‘Some years passed and a colporteur visited the village. As he preached and sold books in the streets he came to a certain shop where he was warmly welcomed. When he announced his books, Brother Snow said “Oh, I know your books, they are excellent; come in and tell me more about the teaching contained in the books”. After listening for some time he entertained the colporteur to dinner and sent him home rejoicing, for not only had Brother Snow listened eagerly, but a large crowd had collected to hear the good news and several had purchased Scriptures.

‘Another year or more passed and the colporteur was preaching outside the south gate of Chinchew. A collection was being taken to pay the rent of the hall when a man came forward and offered thirty cents. “But we don’t take money from those who come in to hear the Gospel for the first time”, said the colporteur. “But it isn’t the first time”, said the stranger; “don’t you remember coming to my shop and telling me about God?” It was Brother Snow, who had come five miles to hear the truth once more. The seed sown by St. Matthew’s Gospel was springing into life. Since that day Brother Snow’s face has never been absent from the services.

‘It was not long before he brought a friend, then another and so on. Yesterday he came with a large number to see me in

my house—over thirty men, women, and children having travelled in from Tante to Church that day. I have been three or four times to their village and now the Tante friends, led by Brother Snow, have rented a shop for a temporary church, and we hope ere long to find a preacher to minister to these faithful people.

‘I have seldom met a Chinese with such a sense of sin and with such willingness to sit and learn the truth as it is in Jesus. He has burnt his idols and ancestral tablets and made a clean sweep of all idolatrous customs.’

A thousand miles away from Brother Snow’s home we find the Word of God living and active in the midst of a little group in the province of Honan. Here is the story as told by the Rev. Jonathan Goforth, then of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission:

‘One day, about ten years ago [*i.e.* in 1896], a modest-looking Chinese called to see me. “I have read several of your books”, he said. “What book?” I enquired. “Mark, and John and Daniel”, was his reply. “Do you understand them?” I asked. “Well, no, and my purpose in calling is to ask you to explain that vision in Daniel. The king dreamed that he saw an image with its head of gold, its shoulders of silver, while its feet were of iron and clay. What puzzles me is why such a splendid image should have such poor feet.” I explained the vision to his apparent satisfaction.

‘But being curious to know how much he had learned of the Gospel, I asked him several questions. I was delighted with his clear answers, and asked him where he had heard the doctrine. His reply astonished me, for he said he had not heard five minutes preaching in his life. “When then did you get the books?” I enquired. “I bought them from Dr. McClure and Mr. MacGillivray at Liuchang about two years ago”, he answered. “I am a book-keeper in the pawn-shop there and I

was on my way to dinner when I saw the two foreigners, but being in a hurry I bought the books and passed on."

'About a year ago I was in Liuchang and this Mr. Wu called to see me. It was noticeable that he had clearer and deeper views of the Scripture and was praying. He was then head book-keeper. A few evenings later two other book-keepers from the same pawn-shop called. They told me they had been taught by Mr. Wu, and that they met each night for the study of the Bible and for prayer. They said they had hot debates every night in the pawn-shop, for out of the sixty men employed there they were the only three who believed in Jesus. I was much surprised to hear the arguments they used to meet their unbelieving antagonists. I have heard men with years of experience who could not do better. I have more recently heard that five young men attend the nightly meetings. This is the clearest case that I have met where the Holy Spirit has used the Word of God alone as the means of salvation.'

To the east of Honan is the province of Shantung. In this province there is a place called Taitow, or Lift-the-head village. It is said to be an old settlement or military colony for the protection of the coast from Japanese and Korean pirates. In this place a copy of one of the Gospels and a New Testament had been sold to a man named Chin who was a fortune-teller. This man would sit all day, with his small table before him, offering 'peeps into the future for thirty and sixty cents'. The sequel is told by Mr. Copp, an ardent seller of the Scriptures, as follows:

'Mr. Chin having bought these Christian books began to read them, and was struck by the name of Jesus, and the promise that He would save His people from their sins. Some time after this new Name had impressed him, he was wandering through the streets of Kiaochow and came upon a spot where an old scholar was drying his books in the sun. The scholar's

house was damp, and he had turned his library of the Chinese Classics, and a fine old copy of Kang Hsi's Dictionary, out to dry. Old Chin stopped and looked at the books, then lifting up one of the volumes of the famous dictionary he opened it at random. What should his eyes light upon but the Name of Jesus! There he read the Name which had arrested him in the books obtained from the colporteur, and there was its definition: "Jesus, a Sage of the West, and Saviour of the world". Deeply moved he went on his way. These two testimonies, one from a foreign book, and one from a Chinese dictionary, convinced him of Christ's claim, and he accepted Him as his Lord and Master. On the following Christmas Day he was baptized, holding his Bible in his hand, having taken as his baptismal name *Chin Kwang*, meaning, I have come to the Light. No longer content to tell fortunes, he proclaimed the Gospel instead, and within a year, six others in his village had declared themselves as converts to Christ.'

Our next story comes from the neighbouring province of Chihli, now known as Hopei. It is much condensed from a detailed record sent by the Rev. C. H. Green of Hwailu. It is, he says, the most remarkable case of conversion through the reading of the Scriptures that he has met with in more than forty years' experience in China.

'Mr. Li Ming-wu was a prosperous farmer, who, during the long winter months, engaged in trade. When travelling on business in Shansi he fell into conversation with another wayfarer who presented him with copies of the Gospels by Matthew and John, saying: "Whatever you lose, never let these two Books go. Part with your donkey, your bedding, your wares, but keep these Books as your most precious possession. They will bring into your life the greatest happiness known to man."

'When he arrived at his inn he sat down to read, but alas,

though he knew every character, the more he read the more mystified he became. At length he blew out the light and lay down to sleep, but sleep refused to come, and those words continued to ring in his mind: "Whatever you lose, never let these two Books go".

'For four or five years he clung to these Books, becoming more and more convinced that they were a treasure indeed, though still uncertain as to their full meaning. In following the Confucian idea of Reverence, he wrote a Tablet with the characters *Shang Ti Tsuen Wei*, meaning The Throne of God, and daily prostrated himself before it, having removed the old household gods.

'When the Boxer persecutions broke out he began to realize that the despised and martyred missionaries and Chinese Christians were the people to help him. He hid his Books in a safe place, and suffered much ridicule from those who knew he had possessed some Christian books.

'When the crisis was over he had a vivid dream in which he saw a man selling books. A little later he entered a village where he saw his dream's vision repeated. He drew near and there he met a colporteur selling Scriptures. He recognized the familiar copies of Matthew and John's Gospels, and immediately purchased copies of all the other Books displayed, but he forgot to ask the man where he came from until it was too late.

'Some time after this he was brought to the Hwailu Mission station, but for long he feared to knock at the door. Later when he had read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* he recognized the lions which had stood in his way, for he returned home without entering. Later he came again and that day happened to be a Sunday and he was persuaded to enter with the others.

'From this time onward his progress was rapid. He became the proud possessor of a whole Bible, and was used to bring

other members of his family and clan to the Lord, though not without strong opposition. Within about four years twenty-seven persons from that district had been baptized, and many of them became zealous in spreading the truth and in selling the Scriptures.

'Somewhat later Mr. Li's eldest son and two of his cousins asked to be allowed to become students, at their own expense, in the Hungtung Bible School. When their application was approved, they tramped the whole journey of ten days carrying their books and bedding, and took the two years' course of training. Not only did they endure much gainsaying against themselves, but calamity after calamity fell upon them. Some died through sickness, some by accident, but through their firm endurance entrance was gained for the Gospel into the last of the local county towns to open its doors to the Gospel. Two of Mr. Li's sons and four of his nephews are now among the missionary's fellow-workers in that field, while three others, at their own expense, have been through the Hungtung Bible School before taking up work. Those two Gospels given by that fellow-traveller have given to the Hwailu Mission station nine keen Christian workers, in addition to old Mr. Li himself.

'At the time of writing old Mr. Li and his wife are still living, with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren growing up around them. The name of the man who sowed the seed by the wayside is unknown on earth, but we doubt not it is written in Heaven.'

From Hopei let us pass to the province of Kiangsi, lying south of the Yangtse, a province which has suffered of late years so much from the hands of the Red armies of the Communists. Up in the hills some forty miles from Kanchow city, there lived a man named Liu Kih-chang, a farmer and an incense mill owner. He was a well-known character, a fighter and gambler, often in some quarrel or other. Mr. C. A. Bunting

has supplied us with the details of this story which illustrates what the Scriptures can do.

'In the year 1920 this Mr. Liu, when paying a visit to a friend's home, happened to see a little volume with a green cover, and with the characters for "Happy Sound" as part of the title. It was a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel which his host had obtained some time before from a colporteur. The book had been neglected and left upon a shelf.

'Mr. Liu when he opened it was arrested by the genealogy. Any writer, he thought, who would take the trouble to record such a table must be worthy of being read, so he read on, and so interested did he become that the original owner of the little book gave it to him.

'Returning home he read the book thoroughly, the miracles specially appealing to him. In one of his quarrels he had received some injury to one of his eyes, and he wondered if this Jesus who gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, would not heal him also. With this thought in mind he went to the nearest chapel and asked the door-keeper if Jesus was at home. The astonished door-keeper explained the situation, and said that if he prayed to Jesus it was quite possible that the Good Physician would heal his eye. He did pray and his eye was made better.

'Shortly after this he chanced upon another man in an inn reading the New Testament and through him he was introduced to Mr. Bunting. One result of this talk was that he got rid of his incense-making business. To make a long story short, he was baptized in the autumn of 1923 and became a power for good in the neighbourhood. Many were saved and worship was commenced in a house facing a large and celebrated temple.

'Then came the invasion of the district by the Red Communists. They built a large Memorial hall to Lenin, and established

their centre of Government locally. Among those who suffered at their hands was Mr. Liu. Though he was warned to cease his witness for Christ, he refused to be silenced and was shot in consequence. Thus died one who had been saved through the work of some unknown colporteur.'

But this does not exhaust the story concerning this Gospel of Matthew. Mr. Liu had lent it to a man named Kwoh who was a medium. It led to this man's conversion, and he became a colporteur. The same little volume was lent to another man who was a tailor, and this man also accepted Christ as his Saviour. He is a keen Christian, active in witnessing, but he has had to flee from his home because of the Communists. But the mission of the little volume was not finished, for the tailor lent it to a priest in the big Temple. This priest and another subsequently forsook the Temple and one of them was baptized.

Concerning the little volume itself Mr. Bunting writes: 'I have made enquiries about it, and would pay many times its value to possess it, but the Temple was destroyed, many of the priests killed, and the little book was probably burned with many others. Would that the original colporteur could know the results of his one day's work in this district!'

Wise Unto Salvation

OF the Holy Scriptures it is written, that they are able to make men wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. The Protestant is sometimes accused of Bibliolatry, but the statement given above is well guarded against that. Faith is in Christ as Saviour, though faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. This is no theory. As we write, we have written records before us concerning many scores of cases, and our only difficulty is in the matter of selection. We will begin with the story of the conversion of a man who became a colporteur himself. His name was Yang Ting-kia.

'Yang was born in Shantung, his father and grandfather, both officers in the Chinese army, having been killed in the struggle against the Mohammedans in Hunan and Kiangsu. At the age of nine he had to leave school to become an apprentice. In later years he went to Formosa, as secretary to a military official. When war broke out with Japan, in 1894, this officer fled, but the junk in which they sought to cross to the mainland was wrecked in the Formosan Channel. Made desperate by hunger and despair, Yang leapt into the sea and was cast upon a rock. From this perilous position he was rescued by some fishermen and landed safely on the China coast.

'As soon as he had saved enough for the journey, he hastened back to his home in the north, and opened a school. For the next five years he taught in his native village, but ever since his escape from the raging sea, in the Straits of Formosa, he had had a strong sense of an Unseen Hand guarding and guiding his life. Conscious of this mysterious Power presiding over him, he eagerly welcomed a copy of one of the Gospels, given him by a fellow-villager who had purchased it from a

colporteur in a neighbouring market. Yang soon bought a Bible, and then began to attend the services at a distant hamlet. The laughter and scorn of his fellow-villagers could not dissuade him that at last he had discovered news concerning that Mighty Hand which had landed him on that lonely sea-swept rock. But the rising tide of opposition within the village compelled him to leave his home. Committing himself to the guidance of that Unseen Hand he travelled westward, with his wife, children and grandchildren, until they eventually settled in a village not far from the Capital of the province of Shansi. They were there when the Boxer madness broke out, and the infamous Yü Hsien in that very Capital, Taiyuan, treacherously massacred from forty to fifty missionaries and their children, as well as being officially responsible for many more deaths in other parts of the same province.

'As a man who had faced death before, and was convinced that it was the Hand of God which had spared him, Yang stood firm at this time of trial. But at length the wild waves of local hatred nearly overwhelmed him and the little church in his village. He was in his shop when he heard the tumult in the street, and saw the smoke of the burning chapel. Escaping with his son along a narrow lane, he reached his home to find an anxious family awaiting him. The heavy doors of the little farmyard were shut and barricaded, and prayer was made to God in the besieged home. Though the doors were struck with heavy blows, they resisted the shock, but a low crackling sound soon made it evident that the thatched roofs of the surrounding buildings had been fired. Believing that death might be near, they all knelt down in the narrow courtyard and sought for mercy in their time of need. As Yang rose from his knees, his eyes lighted on an old and disused well in one corner of the court, covered by a millstone. The long drought, which had afflicted the province, and predisposed the heathen to persecute the Christians, had resulted in the well being

almost dry. One by one the family jumped into the well, and for two days and two nights stood in the mud at the bottom. At length when the fire had burnt out, and the noise of their pursuers had died away, Yang and his sons climbed out by means of the precarious foothold of jutting stones, and then by means of ropes, which had not been burned, they drew the women and children out of their watery prison.

'Confronted with the blackened ruins of their former home, they knew that their only safety was in flight, so turning their faces towards the east they travelled by night, and hid themselves by day in the caves and ravines which abound in those parts. Their food was the raw fruits of the earth, and their couch the stones. By turns the elder sons carried their aged mother, who had fallen ill. In the words of Yang himself, "hungry and full of fear we moved along the dark roads and with hearts pierced as with knives". These were days of anguish and of unspeakable hardship. The wild barking of the dogs at night terrified them, and the noise of Boxers by day distressed them, but Yang still felt the Unseen Hand of God was on them. When their destitution and distress seemed too great to be borne, the same kind Hand provided for them. A high official, seeing them sitting by the roadside exhausted and fatigued beyond measure, bade his equipage to halt, gave orders that the women and the children should be given a place in the carts, and when his route departed from theirs, he gave them a kindly word and a present of four ounces of silver.

'By the time their weary journey was done, and their old home in Shantung was reached, conditions had changed. The Dowager Empress had fled from Peking, and a reaction had set in throughout the country. The villagers now were more in dread of what Yang might do to them, than he was in fear of them. Afraid that he might seek revenge, they now sought his favour. But in Yang they found no enemy, only a humble

friend conscious of the guidance of the Unseen Hand. It was after all these painful experiences, that Yang saw a missionary for the first time, and he was the Rev. C. J. Voskamp of Tsingtao.

‘“Thaveseldom met such an awakened spirit among Chinese enquirers”, was what Mr. Voskamp wrote sometime after meeting Yang. The man bought a Bible, having lost his all, and became an applicant for baptism. Somewhat later he brought forward his three sons for the same public confession of Christ. Their father’s teaching, and his manner of life, had done much to prepare them for that rite. Such is the brief story of Colporteur Yang.’

Colporteur Yang gained his first knowledge of Christ from the Scriptures, but it is not always so. Here is the brief record of how one was influenced through seeing the power to die possessed by the Christians during the Boxer persecutions. What follows is part of a conversation between a member of the Berlin Missionary Society and an old colporteur.

‘“Have you ever been to Peking?” I asked.

‘“Well,” he replied smiling, “I should know something of Peking, for I served as clerk to the regiment under the notorious Tung Fu-hsiang, during the Boxer year. The execution of Christians was a common occurrence, and I marvelled at their steadfastness in face of death. One day the Colonel of the regiment stood near me and he stamped his feet when some innocent girls were executed. ‘If I had to kill criminals,’ he said fiercely, ‘I should not hesitate, but what evil have these girls done?’ For this expression of sympathy with the Christians he was dismissed his regiment. It was there that I was first brought face to face with real Christianity. We had power to kill, but these people had power to die.”’

Not long after the Boxer crisis, when Mr. Argento was

beaten and set on fire by the Boxers at Kwangchow, the City of Light, as the name means, Mr. Argento came upon a man who had also suffered for the Gospel. He was a farmer living in a village about two miles from the city. As a consequence of purchasing and reading a copy of one of the Gospels, he destroyed the idols and the ancestral tablets in his home. This so infuriated his family that they treated him as though he were mad. Binding him hand and foot they blinded him in his right eye by the means of needles. They then placed a chain around his neck, and securely fastened him to the walls of one of the inner rooms of the farm compound.

All through the time of his confinement he cherished his precious little volume, hiding it in his bosom, while he continually cried to Jesus for deliverance. Day and night, for over a month, he used the words of blind Bartimaeus, 'Jesus of Nazareth, have mercy on me!' On Whit Sunday it rained in torrents, the rivers rose, overflowed their banks and flooded both city and country. Many houses collapsed and among these the dwelling where the imprisoned farmer dwelt. Released from imprisonment he fled, chain and all, for the city, and ran straight into the mission chapel. While tears of joy rolled down his cheeks, he stood as the evangelist broke the chain from off his neck. Then it was he told his story. This chain Mr. Argento kept as evidence of the man's suffering. The farmer still retained his cherished copy of the Gospel, telling all he met that though that book had cost him the loss of one eye, Jesus his Saviour had opened both the eyes of his heart and had given him peace.

Two or three years before the Boxer crisis, when the Emperor Kwang Hsü was bent upon reform, there was a popular movement towards things foreign, and towards an acceptance of Christianity. There was then a great rush to buy the Scriptures, and the colporteurs seemed hardly to have left the doors of the Mission Houses before they were back for

more. Here is a story written more than thirty years ago by one whose work on earth has long been finished.

'The brightest spot in our colportage work has been the conversion of a man, his nephew and two more of the same family, through the reading the four Gospels sold by one of our colporteurs. The following is a conversation that passed between me and the nephew who visited us:

' "I hear you are a Christian."

' "Yes, I was baptized last year in Long-tsuen."

' "Are any other members of your family Christians?"

' "Yes, my uncle, who was the first to become a Christian, then my wife and my aunt. My uncle and I are the only ones baptized. The others hope to be baptized soon. There are also others interested."

' "As your home is some distance from any chapel, how did you first come to hear the Gospel?"

' "About five years ago my uncle bought some Gospels from a man who was on his way to Fukien. But my uncle when he reached home threw the books on a shelf and forgot about them for some months. In the following year when he was opening a school he remembered the books, took them down and began to read them. He became so engrossed that all his spare time was devoted to them. He destroyed his idols and declared it was his intention to worship God. But he did not know how to do so, but knowing that God was in heaven, he went every morning before breakfast out of doors and knelt on the doorstep to pray."

' "What did he say?"

' "He did not know what to say, but he knelt and knocked his head on the ground before God, and said: 'God, I truly worship Thee, God, I truly worship Thee'. This he did for several months until the people in the Mission Hall at Long-tsuen heard of it and sent someone to instruct us more per-

fectly. Now there is a likelihood of many in our village becoming Christians.”’

Like seed long buried before it fructifies, copies of the Scriptures have in not a few cases been laid aside for many years, though in some cases they have been in use over long periods. It would be interesting to know how many of the millions of Scriptures sold in past years are still available. In 1908 the Rev. F. S. Joyce had given to him one of the million copies of the New Testament which the British and Foreign Bible Society decided to print in 1853, when the Taiping rebellion awakened such enthusiasm at home. The copy was dated 1858 and was thus fifty years old. Again the Rev. C. Campbell Brown came across a copy of St. John's Gospel which was forty years old. It was brown with age and showed signs of much use. Here is the story of a copy of the New Testament which lay unused for thirty years. It has an interesting history.

‘In 1860, when the British fleet was lying off the Liaotung peninsula, at the close of the second war with China, some officer or bluejacket, on one of the battleships, gave a copy of a Chinese New Testament to a local trader who had some business with the fleet. For thirty years that book remained neglected in his home, until one day the trader's wife laid hands upon it for the sake of the paper. At that moment a fellow-villager named Yen, a man who stored up merit by saving printed paper from profane use, offered her new paper in exchange. She accepted the offer, and Mr. Yen went off in triumph with his rescued book. He soon, however, became deeply interested in his new possession, being specially arrested by the Sermon on the Mount. This soon became his subject of conversation with his father and other members of the family. Other books were secured, and when in Moukden for the Government Examination he visited one of the Mission

chapels. In 1898 he openly embraced Christianity and subsequently his whole family joined the Church. In 1913 this Mr. Yen was ordained by the Danish Lutheran Mission in Manchuria as their first Chinese Pastor.'

There can be little doubt that among the many ancient libraries of China there are buried many interesting records, some of them doubtless telling of the influence of missions in bygone centuries. Here is one strange and interesting discovery:

'Among the rugged mountains of Shantung stands the ancient monastery Hwa-yüen-an. Taoist and Buddhist missionaries found their way thither in the seventh century after Christ. Here a missionary of Christ, Mr. Kunze, and a colporteur found their way in 1903 and received a friendly reception. An old priest brought them refreshments and questioned them about the Creation and about God's dealing with men in past ages. In a market-place he had bought some Scriptures and desired to know more. These books were still being passed from hand to hand throughout the monastery.

'The aged Abbot also joined the company and later, after the evening meal, invited the missionary into his own rooms. Seated upon his high chair with some thirty or forty priests around him, he said: "Sir, tell us your message. I am an old man and my memory is failing, but the ears of my younger priests will listen." For more than an hour the missionary preached to an attentive audience and when he had finished he presented the aged Abbot with his own Bible. The Abbot in return gave Mr. Kunze an ancient volume, taken from the high book-cases, filled with ancient manuscripts, which covered the walls of the Abbot's room.

'The book was darkened by age, but bore the title *Holy Men of All Generations*. Pictures of great and saintly men covered its pages, each saint bearing a mark to indicate his

degree of holiness. Some had a moon, and some a sun, and some had two. Among these saints was a figure of *Jesus the Saviour*, drawn in Chinese fashion, and bearing the mark of perfect sainthood—three suns. Whence had this book come? And how had the name of Jesus the Saviour found its way into that ancient monastery?’

At the other end of China, in far-away Turkestan, Mr. George Hunter and Mr. Hans Döring were receiving visitors in an inn. Among those who came was a Shansi man who had been banished to those remote regions. Some seven years before he had obtained a copy of the Acts from a merchant who did not prize the little volume. This man gave evidence of real conversion and of a fair knowledge of the Gospel. This is what Mr. Hans Döring wrote:

‘The little book, outwardly insignificant, and rejected by its first owner, had been to Mr. Wang for some seven years a well from which he had drunk living water. Mr. Wang’s business is dyeing and his modest abode consists of one room on the main street. When he had invited us to sit down on his *kang* he took the book down from the nail on which it hung on the wall. Its original cover had been replaced by a new one on which he had rewritten the title. The smoke of his small mud hearth had toned the book to a grey-black colour, but the inside gave evidence of much reading and of rent pages carefully patched. He had kept this copy of the Scriptures in as prominent a position as his neighbours kept their idols.

‘Alongside the New Testament portion he had hung up two sheets of paper. On one of these he had written as much as he could remember of the Ten Commandments. Seven of them were in the main correct, but for the other three he had substituted precepts based on such Christian teaching as he could remember. For “Honour thy father and thy mother”, he had “Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbour”, and for

the one concerning the keeping of the Sabbath he had written, "Thou shalt not judge". On the other sheet he had written as much of the Lord's Prayer as he could recall. We were glad to help him to complete the Commandments and the Prayer. He bought three New Testaments, one for himself and one for each of his two assistants.'

The Power of the Word

THAT the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword is amply proved by experience. Not only is all Scripture God inspired, but it is God-inspiring, and we are told that the well-known word *theopneustos* may be, so far as Greek usage goes, either active or passive. It really does not matter which it is, for what is inspired will inspire, and vice versa. And there is no more abiding or more conclusive evidence that all Scripture is inspired of God than that the men who read it feel its power and come under its inspiration. In this chapter we shall group together a few illustrations, chosen from a great number, of the living and active power of God's Word. We begin with one, the finding of which has given us peculiar pleasure.

'The following remarkable story is condensed from a written statement made by Mr. Chang Yu-chin, a writer once employed by the Board of Agriculture in Peking. In the year 1905 when at Nanchang, the capital of Kiangsi, he purchased a copy of the Bible, being anxious to examine the much-talked-of religion of the foreigner. In the autumn of the same year he developed a serious ulcer in one of his legs. Despite medical attendance he obtained no benefit and the trouble grew worse. He then remembered to have heard the missionary from whom he bought the Bible say that Jesus was a Saviour who had died on the Cross for man, so he hired a chair and went to seek further instruction from the one from whom he had obtained the book. But he found that the missionary had recently died and that the house was shut up.'¹

¹ We have little doubt that the missionary in question was the late Lieut. H. C. Burrows, who had served on the Royal Yachts *Victoria and Albert* and *Osborne*. He died in Nanchang on September 19, 1905. Mr. Chang says he bought the Bible in the 4th moon of Kwangsü 31st year, that is 1905. Lieut. Burrows sailed for China as a missionary in association with the C.I.M. in

We now quote from Mr. Chang's own narrative:

'There was nothing for me to do but to return home and search the Bible for myself. At that time I knew neither the customs of the Church nor how to pray, so I just prayed to God as best I could. The reply came as quick as a telegram. I felt the influence of the Holy Spirit. When it was time to light the lamp I felt moved to take some of the kerosene oil and anoint the ulcer. That night I slept peacefully, and the next morning when I awoke, the ulcer was covered with skin and there was only one small spot left, which soon healed. It was all beyond expectation and most strange that I should be healed in one night. Afterwards I was baptized and joined the Church. I thought of Lazarus, of how people who saw him and ate with him after his resurrection believed on the Lord, so I wished to be a witness too like him. If anyone wants to ask questions I shall be pleased to answer their enquiries. I am known to the Pastors of six Missions in Peking.'

So far we have condensed his own story. It now remains to be added that this man applied to the Rev. J. D. Liddell of the London Missionary Society for a grant of Gospels. Six thousand copies were given him, and these he posted, with a copy of the testimony condensed above, to scholars, teachers, merchants, and officials in Government offices and to as many others whom he thought he could influence. Not content with this, he undertook to support two colporteurs. Further, he

1892 and died in Nanchang as mentioned above. His house would be found shut up after his death. This story has deeply moved us, for we were privileged one summer to spend a holiday with Lieut. Burrows in Japan. After his death Mr. Orr Ewing wrote: 'Mr. Burrows, who lived alone in the heart of Nanchang, was a most devoted man. I suppose ninety-nine men out of a hundred men, with his poor health and constitution, would have felt justified in giving up all active work. Truly it was an inspiration to see this brother, who might have lived comfortably on his means in England, yet seeking to spend himself to the utmost for the salvation and the blessing of the Chinese.'

continued to give financial assistance to three Churches in Peking, became a deacon of the Kang-We-Shih Church, and, at the date when this story was written, he had a position of influence on the Board of the Peking and Hankow Railway.

And the man who had sowed the seed which produced this harvest died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen and greeted them from afar, and having confessed himself a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth.

When the reading of the Word has caused a man to confess his fault, or to restore what he has wrongfully obtained, or to relinquish a profitable trade, we may be sure that that Word has authority and power behind it. Here are a few instances where such things have happened:

'Mr. Hsü of Kian in Kiangsi was an earnest idolater and vegetarian and a man with a good business reputation. When passing a street chapel, after the death of two of his sons, he spoke to the Chinese evangelist, a Mr. Yao, and a son of one who had laboured in earlier years with Hudson Taylor. After a time of conversation he left enriched with a few Scriptures.

'At a later period he returned and asked if fortune-telling was discountenanced by Christianity. When he learned that it was, his countenance fell, for this was with him a profitable business. After having been shown the passage in the Acts where such books were burned, he went away. A few days later he returned with a pile of books, about a foot high, under his arm. At his request these were burned amid rejoicings at the power of God. For over thirty years this man served God and had the joy of seeing his mother, his wife, his sons and daughters baptized. He prospered in business and died only a few years ago rejoicing in God his Saviour.'

Another man of the same name, when visiting relatives in the same neighbourhood, used to drop in to the Mission house

to read the books. As a scholar he derided the simple style in which they were written, as compared to the classical language he admired. But when reading Ecclesiastes he was arrested by the emphasis laid upon the word Vanity. A voice seemed to say to him: 'It is true, education and pleasure and all that this world can give are Vanity. Seek the Eternal things.' And that word from the Old Testament brought him to a saving decision.

Here is another illustration of the convicting power of the Word. Colporteur Liang, when selling a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel to a man in Canton, received a counterfeit ten-cent piece. Not noticing that the coin was spurious, he gave the buyer change in good copper cash. A few days later he received a letter which read as follows:

'Greeting. Your servant purchased from you, honourable teacher, a copy of Matthew's Good-tidings book with a view to cheating you and receiving good cash in exchange. I obtained the book and returned home. I opened the book and read and all night I was not in peace. I perceived that I had great sin and much wickedness. Unfortunately your servant is but a day labourer and has no leisure to attend a chapel and learn the doctrine. I urgently beg you to pray Jesus to forgive my sins.

'I am writing these few lines that I may enclose a ten-cent coin for you. Please accept this and do not lay blame upon me. At a later day surely I shall meet you and exchange greetings.'

In the year 1911 a young silversmith named Kuh bought a copy of St. John's Gospel and began to read it. The word went home to his heart and he was convicted of his dishonesty, for he had secretly been purloining and hiding small pieces of silver which belonged to his master. He decided that he would confess his wrongdoing, and did so to his employer's astonish-

ment. His master had previously been an enemy to the Gospel, but he felt that any teaching which could bring forth such fruit was worthy of attention. 'If all my workmen were like this,' he said, 'I should not need to weigh the silver for them, nor watch them when at work.' The result was that he purchased a Bible and a Hymn-book and became a regular attendant at the services.

There are few more searching tests than the power to forgive a wrong. Here is an illustration of the spirit of Jesus Christ received through reading the Scriptures. It happened in the province of Hunan nearly thirty years ago, and is told by a Mr. Clinton who died some years later.

'Two years ago, at a week-night service, when we were kneeling in prayer waiting for someone to lead, a strange voice repeated the Apostles' Creed. We took note of the man, and after the service got to know something about him. He came again, and bought books, and gave evidence of interest in the truth. His Bible and hymn-book seemed to be his constant companions.

'One evening, after the regular service, he handed me a little bundle bound up in a handkerchief, saying he could not speak about it then, but that he would come again and tell me. When I opened the parcel I found his Bible and hymn-book torn in tatters. A week passed before I learned his story. It seemed that some of the neighbouring boat people became enraged at hearing him read the Bible aloud and snatched the books from him and tore them up. As a soldier he was much disposed to complain to the official, but an experience which followed almost immediately softened his heart.

'He was living on a river gun-boat and fell into the river where the water was three fathoms deep and was nearly drowned. When in the water a verse in the Sermon on the Mount flashed through his mind: 'If ye forgive not men their

trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses'. No sooner was he delivered from his dangerous position than he decided that, considering God's mercy to him, he would obey the voice which had spoken to him in his time of peril. There and then he stepped across to the other boat, told them the story of the text which had come to him in the water, and frankly forgave them the injury they had done to him in destroying his Bible. They were altogether taken by surprise and sought to make amends by tendering him a "red apology"—quite a ceremonious affair when tea and sweetmeats are provided as a token of restored harmony.

'Though it is only three months since this man enlisted, every man in his Company knows that he is a Christian; in fact he persuaded them to allow him to conduct worship among them, and his commanding officer, who was in another part of the building, heard the service. He has now introduced three of his Company to us as enquirers and he also presented himself for baptism in full dress uniform.'

And what shall we more say? for time would fail us to tell of Li the scholar, who through reading Genesis and the Gospels brought many to Christ, though his name never appeared on any Church roll; of Hsiao the Taoist priest, who through rescuing a cast-away copy of the New Testament found a Saviour, and dropped his Taoist robes to become a humble follower of Him Who is the Way, the *Tao* he understood not; of Yang the doctor, who, through reading St. Luke's Gospel discovered in an inn, came to believe in the Good Physician; of Wu the filial son, who for a whole year slept by his father's unburied coffin, but through reading the Scriptures came to know Him who is the Resurrection and the Life; of the maker of idols who, through reading one of the Gospels, came to know the true God and Jesus Christ whom He had sent; and of Mrs. Yao, the gambling fortune-teller, who became a power for

good and so successful a seller of the Scriptures that the col-porteurs complained when she appeared at a market. These all, and countless more, are representatives of that great cloud of witnesses, who have been 'begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God which liveth and abideth.'

PART III

The Bible a Uniting Force

Give yourselves to the reading of Holy Scripture; not merely hearing it in Church, but when you return home take your Bible in hand and dive into the meaning of what is written therein. . . . Divine Providence ordained that the Scriptures should be written by publicans, fishermen, tentmakers, shepherds, goatherds, in order that the things written should be readily intelligible to all, that the artificer, the poor widow, the slave might derive advantage from them; as says the prophet, 'They shall be all taught of God'.

A Great Fellowship

WHILE French troops under Napoleon were massed across the Channel, waiting for a brief six hours' mastery of the Straits to invade our shores, a little company of God's people met in the city of London to devise means for giving the Bible to the world. The times were far from propitious, but, as one speaker said, 'the present is the only period of which we are sure'. It was fourteen months from the day when the Rev. Thomas Charles had made his memorable appeal for Wales, and the Rev. Joseph Hughes had added: 'Surely a Society might be formed for the purpose. But if for Wales, why not for the Kingdom? Why not for the World?' Evidently, with that company, confidence in God was stronger than any fear of Napoleon. And who shall say that Trafalgar and Waterloo were not God's answer to the faith of His servants? Has He not promised to honour those who honour Him?

In the spirit of Luther's great battle-cry, 'God's Word, for all their craft and force, one moment shall not linger', the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded on Wednesday, March 7, 1804. In the following year, just prior to the crowning victory over the French fleet, Nelson wrote:

'May the Great God, whom I worship, grant to my country, and for the benefit of Europe in general, a great and glorious victory; and may no misconduct in anyone tarnish it; and may humanity after victory be the predominant feature in the British fleet!'

The issue is known to the world. And let it be added that, of thirty million Scriptures which are circulated in the world annually to-day, twenty-nine millions go forth from organizations supported by the British and American peoples. Verily God is good to those who serve Him.

was no monopoly, the printing presses of Philadelphia, of New York and Boston, and of many another centre began to be busy with this sacred business.

Four years after the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, the Philadelphia Bible Society was formed, and although some thought that it should suffice to serve the whole country, it preferred to advocate the establishment of similar organizations 'from Maine to Georgia and from the Atlantic to the Mississippi'. Within six years more than one hundred Bible Societies had been organized in the United States, and to aid these expansive offshoots, the parent Society in London contributed more than £3000 in eight years.

But it soon became evident that such a wealth of organizations for one country was undesirable, and in May 1816, in spite of some divergence of view at first, a National Society was welcomed by a unanimous vote. It was a time of deep emotion when the eyes of strong men were filled with tears. It was in this way that the American Bible Society came to birth in the city of New York.

In China, as we have already seen, there were no Union Translation Committees prior to the great Conference of 1890. It was only natural therefore that the three Bible Societies found co-operation difficult, for the one-man translations, or the sectional versions, had a more or less limited appeal to one or other Bible Society. There was therefore, almost inevitably, during those earlier years, a certain amount of overlapping and even of friendly rivalry. But the decisions of the Missionary Conference in 1890 altered all that, for so soon as Union versions were decided upon, the three Bible Societies were able to unite in the support of these standard translations. That story has been told in an earlier chapter and need not be repeated here.

But even after co-operation in the support of translation work was possible, there still remained certain diversities of

operation respecting methods of distribution, the use of explanatory notes, and other details. Further, in the process of time, problems arose in connection with the desire to make the work of Bible distribution an indigenous undertaking. For the discussion of these and other cognate questions a Conference of the three Bible Societies met at the Bible House in London in July 1932. Among the various resolutions then passed, the following is the one which most concerns us here:

'This Conference recommends that the three Societies should work together with a view to encouraging the formation of a China Bible Society which, having the same basic principles as the co-operating Societies, shall share with them in the world-wide work of the distribution of the Scriptures.'

Already in China action had been taken in several centres towards the formation of local Bible Societies. In 1927 one had been organized at Canton, and there was another one at Hongkong. At a later date a similar desire found expression at Hankow for Central China. It was clearly time that steps were taken to meet this movement, and to this end a meeting of an Advisory Council of the three Bible Societies met in Shanghai in June 1933. Thus just within one hundred years since Robert Morrison's death we see the beginnings of what it is hoped may become a National Bible Society for China.

We have already seen that the desire to give the Bible to China has proved an efficient means of drawing the representatives of the many Home Churches in Europe and America into a great fellowship, irrespective of denomination. The Episcopalians and Methodists, the Presbyterians and Baptists, the Congregationalists and Friends and the Plymouth Brethren, have all alike been moved with the great desire to give the Word of God to the Chinese in their own tongue. And the Bible Societies of Great Britain and America have been generous and willing partners in this great and blessed work.

We cannot doubt but that the continuance of this noble ambition will help to draw and bind together the Chinese Churches also. What better rallying centre can there be? To quote the Protestant *Formula Concordiae* of 1580, 'the only standard by which all dogmas and all teachers must be valued and judged is no other than the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and of the New Testament'. This is not bowing down before a Book, but rather knowing that 'Beyond the sacred page, we seek Thee, Lord'.

In one of its pamphlets the American Bible Society gives the names of seventy-eight missionaries, of a score of different societies, whom it has aided or supported in the work of Bible translation or revision. And that one list may speak for others. If the reader will turn to the Appendices he will find a list of more than two hundred names of those who have engaged in translation work, and many of these have in one way or another been assisted in their responsible labours. Let us give the bare names, without titles, of those who participated in the preparation of one subordinate version, the Ningpo dialect. Here they are: W. A. P. Martin, Russell, McCartee, Cobbold, Gough, Way, Quarterman, Rankin, S. N. D. Martin, G. E. Moule, Morrison, Hudson Taylor, Lord, Butler, Laurence, Hoare, Galpin, Bates, Goddard, W. S. Moule, and Smith. There are twenty-one names for one dialect, three of them Bishops, then or later, and several others distinguished and outstanding men. And there are forty versions in use in China. What a fellowship this has established around the Word of God! The missionaries have needed the Bible Societies, and the Bible Societies have needed the missionaries. And this need has drawn all together around the best of Books.

So far we have limited our remarks to the inner circle of Europeans and Americans, representatives of the Home Churches, who had been animated with the one desire to give the Bible to China. But it must not be forgotten that each

missionary-translator had his Chinese colleague without whom he would have been hopelessly crippled. For the most part these Chinese scholars have been unknown to the English-speaking public, yet their co-operation has been indispensable. The missionary has needed the Chinese scholar, and the Chinese scholar has had need of the missionary. The one has generally had a better knowledge of the original languages of the Bible, and of the spirit of the Scriptures, by reason of his godly heritage, but the other has had a more intimate familiarity with Chinese, because it was his mother-tongue. So here again there has been a wider fellowship. And because the names of these Chinese scholars have not been recorded, this book is dedicated to their memory. East and West have united for the one grand purpose of causing a Book written in the Near East to speak again in the languages of the Far East.

Of the inner circle of missionaries who have been spared for long years to make translation work their main task, in one or other of the forty versions in use, the number must be well into the second hundred. And all these have had their Chinese partners, year in and year out, striving with them to secure a worthy rendering of the Scriptures. What an education this alone has been for the Chinese Church! As they have laboured to give the Word of God to their fellow-countrymen, that Word has become their own portion and inheritance.

But there have been many more, who have given part time, in addition to their other labours, to this sacred task. In every way it has been a great fellowship, uniting various denominations and men of different races, in the one common and glorious enterprise of placing the Word of God within easy reach of one-quarter of the human race.

In drawing our story to its close we cannot do better than quote the eloquent words of William Arthur, the author of *The Tongue of Fire*, as he rejoiced over the translation of the Bible into one of the languages of India which had hitherto

been wholly dumb concerning the Good Tidings which are for all people. His words are equally applicable to China.

'I cannot utter, nor yet repress, the veneration with which such a boon to mankind inspires me. He that benefits his species is greater than he that pleases or astounds them. But to be the benefactor of millions and that to the end of time is a dignity conferred on few. Let others pay their honours where they will. The profoundest reverence, the liveliest thanks I may offer to creature, shall be reserved from genius, grandeur, heroism, but cheerfully rendered to him by whose godly toil a wide-spoken tongue is first made to utter the words whereby my Redeemer may be known, my fellow-sinner may be saved. The deed is too vast for the chronicles of earth, too pure for the praise of men. Every letter of its record will be a regenerated soul, every stone of its testimonial a redeemed family, every note of its paeon an angel's joy. He who can pursue the sunbeams, and trace, without one omission, every lineament of beauty they pencil on tree, and flower, and living thing, may tell the blessings that accrue when the light of life is flung on the pathway of millions, whom the darkness bewildered and destroyed.'

APPENDICES

The Nestorian Tablet

THE mention of Twenty-seven Scriptures, written after the Ascension, raises some, at present, insoluble problems. Westcott, in his *Canon of the New Testament*, tells us that, 'Like the Latin Vulgate in the Western Church, the Peshito became in the East the fixed and unalterable Rule of the Scripture'. But the Peshito has only twenty-two Books, the omitted works being 2nd Peter, 2nd and 3rd John, Jude, and Revelation. It is true that in A.D. 616 an Alexandrian monk revised the Syriac translation of the New Testament, and with the aid of Greek manuscripts included the seven Catholic Epistles. But *The Revelation* would still be missing.

The problem thus raised we referred to the Rev. A. C. Moule, Professor of Chinese at Cambridge, and he has kindly consulted Professors F. C. Burkitt and J. F. Bethune-Baker, but without obtaining any light on this obscure question. Professor Burkitt says that 'from the earliest times to the present, the Syrian and Nestorian Canon has been 22 books, and that the Jacobites are aware of the other five only as we are of the Apocrypha'.

Little good would be obtained by fuller discussion here. One question opens up another, and only those specially equipped are qualified to investigate this matter. The arguments in favour of the genuineness of the Monument are so strong that this anomaly is not sufficient seriously to challenge them.

Westcott in his *The Bible and the Church*, p. 233, tells us that 'there is a MS. of the Syriac Bible in the University Library, at Cambridge, which was found in one of the Churches of the Syrian Christians in the interior of Travancore, at the foot of the mountains, and presented to Dr. Buchanan by a Syrian Bishop. This is written in the Estrangelo character, without points, but its date has not yet been accu-

rately determined. With the exception of a copy at Milan, it is probably the only complete ancient MS. of the Syrian Bible in Europe; and offers a complete example of the enlarged Syrian Canon.' But this copy has 26 Books and does not include *The Revelation*.

A List of Chinese Versions

WITH THE NAMES OF THE CHIEF TRANSLATORS

MARSHMAN'S VERSION. Joshua Marshman and Joannes Lassar.

MORRISON'S VERSION. Robert Morrison and William Milne.

MEDHURST'S VERSION. W. H. Medhurst, J. R. Morrison, C. Gutzlaff, and E. C. Bridgman.

DELEGATES' VERSION. W. H. Medhurst, J. Stronach, W. C. Milne, E. C. Bridgman, and A. W. Cribb.

BRIDGMAN'S VERSION. E. C. Bridgman, M. S. Culbertson, Bishop Boone, Otis Gibson, and H. Blodget.

GODDARD'S VERSION. Josiah Goddard, E. C. Lord, and H. Jenkins.

GUTZLAFF'S VERSION. C. Gutzlaff.

DEAN'S VERSION. William Dean.

HUDSON'S VERSION. T. H. Hudson.

PEKING VERSION. W. A. P. Martin, Joseph Edkins, S. I. J. Schereschewsky, J. S. Burdon, and H. Blodget.

SCHERESCHEWSKY'S VERSION. Bishop Schereschewsky. *Wenli* and Mandarin.

JOHN'S VERSION. Griffith John. *Wenli* and Mandarin.

UNION WENLI VERSION. John Chalmers, Joseph Edkins, John Wherry, D. Z. Sheffield, Martin Schaub, T. W. Pearce, and L. Lloyd.

UNION EASY WENLI VERSION. J. S. Burdon, H. Blodget, R. H. Graves, J. C. Gibson, I. Genähr, A. P. Parker, and J. W. Davis.

UNION MANDARIN VERSION. C. W. Mateer, J. L. Nevius, H. Blodget, Chauncey Goodrich, George Owen, J. R. Hykes, T. Bramfitt, F. W. Baller, Spencer Lewis, and S. R. Clarke.

AMOY DIALECT. E. Doty, J. H. Young, J. V. N. Talmage, A. Ostrom, J. Stronach, W. Macgregor, W. S. Swanson, H. Cowie, J. L. Maxwell, J. Macgowan, and T. Barclay.

CANTON DIALECT. C. F. Preston, W. Louis, G. Piercy, A.

- Krolczyk, J. Nacken, H. V. Noyes, B. C. Henry, A. P. Happer, A. B. Hutchinson, R. H. Graves, C. Bone, O. F. Wisner, E. B. Beauchamp, W. Bridie, and Mrs. Horder.
- FOOCHOW DIALECT. W. Welton, M. C. White, L. B. Peet, C. C. Baldwin, J. Doolittle, R. S. Maclay, C. Hartwell, J. R. Wolfe, S. F. Woodin, Ll. Lloyd, J. E. Walker, W. Banister, and N. J. Plumb.
- HAINAN DIALECT. C. C. Jeremiassen and E. P. Gilman.
- HAKKA COLLOQUIAL. R. Lechler, Ph. Winnes, C. Ph. Piton, G. A. Gussman, G. Morgenroth, H. Ziegler, and A. Nagel.
- HANGCHOW COLLOQUIAL. Roman Letters. G. E. Moule.
- HINGHUA DIALECT. Roman Letters. W. N. Brewster.
- KIENNING COLLOQUIAL. Roman Letters. Miss L. J. Bryer, Miss H. R. Rodd, and H. S. Phillips.
- KIENYANG COLLOQUIAL. Roman Letters. H. S. and Mrs. Phillips.
- KINHWA COLLOQUIAL. Roman Letters. H. Jenkins.
- NINGPO DIALECT. Roman Letters. W. A. P. Martin, R. H. Cobbold, F. F. Gough, Wm. Russell, D. B. McCartee, R. Z. Way, J. W. Quarterman, H. V. Rankin, S. N. D. Martin, G. E. Moule, W. T. Morrison, J. Hudson Taylor, E. C. Lord, John Butler, Miss M. Laurence, J. C. Hoare, F. Galpin, J. Bates, J. R. Goddard, W. S. Moule, and J. N. B. Smith.
- SAM KIONG COLLOQUIAL. Miss Eleanor Chestnut.
- SHANGHAI DIALECT. W. H. Medhurst, W. C. Milne, T. McClatchie, Bishop Boone, E. W. Syle, P. D. Spaulding, C. Keith, R. Nelson, E. H. Thomson, S. R. Gayley, J. S. Roberts, J. M. W. Farnham, and Wm. Muirhead.
- SHANGHAI DIALECT. Committee Version. E. H. Thomson, J. M. W. Farnham, J. W. Lambuth, J. H. Roberts, Wm. Muirhead, C. F. Reid, J. N. B. Smith, J. Ware, D. H. Davis, J. A. Silsby, W. B. Burke, E. Box, G. E. Partch, and E. F. Tatum.
- SHANGHAI DIALECT. With Baptist Terms. M. T. Yates, J. Summers, C. Keith, J. M. W. Farnham, Miss Haygood, and J. A. Silsby.

- SHAOWU COLLOQUIAL. Roman Letters. J. E. Walker.
- SOOCHOW COLLOQUIAL. Adapted from the Shanghai Version.
G. F. Fitch, A. P. Parker, J. W. Davis and Mrs. Davis, and
D. N. Lyon.
- SWATOW DIALECT. S. B. Partridge, W. Ashmore, and Miss A. M.
Fielde.
- SWATOW DIALECT. Roman Letters. G. Smith, H. L. Mackenzie,
W. Duffus, J. C. Gibson, P. J. Maclagan, and J. Steele.
- TAICHOW DIALECT. Roman Letters. W. D. Rudland, C. Thomson,
C. H. Jose, W. I. Wallace, J. G. Kauderer, and Miss Rudland.
- WENCHOW DIALECT. W. E. Soothill.

Tribal Dialects—

- CHUNG-CHIA. S. R. Clarke.
- KOPU. A. G. Nicholls and A. Evans.
- LAKA. A. G. Nicholls and G. Porteous.
- LISU (Eastern). A. G. Nicholls and G. E. Metcalf.
- LISU (Hwa or Western). J. O. Fraser, C. G. and Mrs. Gowman,
and A. B. Cooke.
- MIAO (Heh or Black). H. M. Hutton.
- MIAO (Chuan). H. Parsons.
- MIAO (Hwa). S. Pollard, J. R. Adams, A. G. Nicholls, G.
Porteous, and W. H. Hudspeth.
- NA-HSI. Miss Elise Scharten.
- NOSU. G. Porteous.
- TIBETAN. H. A. Jaeschke, F. A. Redslob, W. Heyde, Y. Gergan,
Jor Puntsogs, Dr. Francke, Bishop Peter, and Mr. Macdonald.
- MANCHU. S. Lipofzoff, George Borrow.
- MONGOLIAN (Western or Kalmuk). I. J. Schmidt, A. Pozdneyeff,
and D. Kutusoff.
- (Buriat). Two natives.
- (Khalkha). J. Edkin, Bishop Schereschewsky, and a Lama.
- (Literary). I. J. Schmidt, Ed. Stallybrass, C. Rahmn, W. Swan,
R. Yuille, A. F. Amblad, and F. A. Larson.

KASHGAR-TURKI. G. W. Hunter, O. Andersson, G. Raquette,
L. E. Högberg, and J. Awetaranian.

NOGAI-TURKI. G. W. Hunter.

QAZAQ-TURKI. G. W. Hunter and P. C. Mather.

VERSIONS FOR THE BLIND

MANDARIN. Numeral System, based on Peking Version by W. H.
Murray.

Moon System. Mark only.

Hankow Braille, based on Union Version. G. A. Clayton.

Tsinchow Standard System. Miss S. J. Garland.

Union Braille. Four Gospels.

AMOY COLLOQUIAL. W. Campbell. Braille and Roman.

CANTON COLLOQUIAL. F. Hartman. Braille.

FOOCHOW COLLOQUIAL. Braille.

CHINA

“Think on These Things”

Of China's 400 Millions not more than 1 Million are professed adherents of the Protestant Christian Church. The vast multitude are still without an intelligent knowledge of the Gospel.

Although there are probably 300 Millions in China who cannot read, more Scriptures are sold in that land every year than in any other country. During the last two years more than 25 Million copies of the Scriptures have been sold—not given away—in China.

There are many Millions of Mohammedans scattered throughout the provinces for whom little has been done. This field is almost untouched.

There are also Millions of Aborigines, of many tribes, speaking their own tongue. Many have no written language. Though thousands have been brought to Christ, there is endless scope here for the pioneer.

Immeasurable sorrows have of late been China's lot. Civil war, wide-spread brigandage, floods of unprecedented magnitude, famines affecting millions, earthquakes and pestilence, and not least Bolshevism, which has poisoned men's minds. These calamities have, like waves and billows, gone over this people.

Yet amid all this the Chinese Church has accepted larger responsibilities for the evangelization of her own people and for the oversight of her own Church. The Word of God is not bound. We can still say, “So mightily grew the Word of the Lord and prevailed.”

Past results are rich in proof that the Gospel is still the power of God unto Salvation. More than 149,000 have been baptized in connection with the China Inland Mission alone. Last year more than 7000 publicly confessed Christ in baptism, each one verily having been sifted as wheat.

The China Inland Mission is to-day engaged in a strenuous Forward Movement to reach the unevangelized. Fuller information will be gladly supplied by any of the Home offices. The chief Home centres are:

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*A MAP of
CHINA*

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MANCHURIA

SINKIANG
OR CHINESE TURKESTAN

INNER MONGOLIA

JEHOL

CHINGHAI

Kalgan

TIBET

Peking

Chefoo

SIKANG

ANSU

SHANSI

HOPEI

SHANTUNG

KOREA

SHANSI

HONAN

KIANGSU

Nanking

Shanghai

ZECHWAN

HUPEH

ANHWEI

Ningpo

Taichow

Wenchow

HUNAN

Kienyang

Kienning

Foochow

YUNNAN

KWEICHOW

KIANGSI

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Swatow

KWANGSI

Wutingfu

Canton

KWANGTUNG

FORMOSA

HAINAN




Hakka Area