

## Messenger and Visitor

The Maritime Baptist Publishing Company Ltd  
Publishers and Proprietors.

TERMS } \$2.00 PER ANNUM.  
          } \$1.50 IF PAID IN ADVANCE.

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85 Germain Street, St. John, N. B.

Printed by PATERSON & CO., 92 Germain St.

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### China's Awakening.

Statements made from time to time by those connected with missionary work in China go to show that there is a very significant intellectual movement among the *literati* or educated class of people in that country. This movement, it is represented, portends a radical break with the unprogressive past and an adoption of the ideas and methods of western civilization, after the example of Japan. In China, to a greater degree than in any other country, it would appear, the educated classes are directly influential in the affairs of the Empire. They are the ruling classes and from them come those who administer the government. The aristocracy of China is not one of blood, but of cultivated brain, the question of rank is determined much less by family descent than by education. The Chinese who have pursued regular courses of study and taken degrees corresponding to Western University degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, &c., are estimated to number more than half a million.

The methods and results of Chinese education are of course, from a western point of view, far from satisfactory. But prolonged study is necessary to the taking of the degrees, involving very considerable mental discipline and culture. A result of the system, however, has been to make the educated, and therefore the ruling, classes in China self-satisfied, arrogant and contemptuous toward all foreigners, as well as toward their methods in education and in other matters. Here and there in China a man, like Li Hung Chang, has been great enough to perceive that this blind complacency of the "Higher Classes" was a very foolish and dangerous thing, but the Chinese lords generally were not to be wakened from their pleasant dreams except by some very rude shock. Such a shock came with the war with Japan, and there appears to be good evidence that it has not been without effect. In an article in the *Missionary Review*, of October last, Dr. J. T. Gracey, says: "That the failure of China in the conflict with Japan has put the nation into an attitude of enquiry as to 'how it happened' is abundantly evidenced throughout the empire. To a degree perhaps never known before, China is willing to take a seat on the school-benches of western nations." The arrogant conservatism of the educated Chinese is in a measure broken down, and thanks to the work of Christian missions, the means of enlightenment as to the outside world and of education in accordance with western ideas is available to the Chinese student. From the article above quoted we learn further that the Education Association of China has for some years sought to aid in the production of suitable text books designed to promote the general educational interests of China. Valuable works have been issued covering almost the whole field of mathematics, natural science, mental and moral philosophy and other departments of western learning, until there is no reason why a Chinese pupil may not be given a general education, through the medium of his own language, equivalent to a college education in Europe or America.

In the *Boston Watchman*, of January 13th, is an article entitled "China Made Willing," by Dr. V. T. Allen, of Shanghai, editor of *The Review of the Times*, a periodical published by the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge. Dr. Allen speaks emphatically as to the effect of the late war—"a war which," he says, "has been the most decisive, most significant and potential event that has happened in the far east for many centuries, and

which may be appropriately described as China 'made willing,' and I might also devoutly add 'in the day of thy power.'" China's attitude toward foreign nations has been revolutionized, or in a word she has been converted to our civilization, made willing to accept it, and is evidencing the same by many and unmistakable impulses and enterprises.

What I desire to make clear and to emphasize is the fact that the *literati*, as a class, including the officials and the literary centres of China, are the persons and places most directly and powerfully affected by this new attitude of China. In fact it might be said that they were the first to accept the situation, and are now committing the whole country to an abandonment of the old for the new learning, and transforming all the former literary centres into nurseries of reform and progress. "All this comes of that little formula 'made willing.' There is nothing now that China cannot do, and nothing that she will not forthwith attempt. And meanwhile there is, and will be indefinitely, such a demand for books, periodicals—in fact literature of all kinds, and schools and colleges, literary, scientific, technical, professional, &c.—as shall tax all our resources to the utmost and beyond. Nothing even approaching the present activity of the *literati* and literary centres was ever seen before in China."

In connection with this great literary awakening among the Chinese a fact of special significance is the prominence into which it is bringing the Christian missionaries. It does not appear that as yet the missionary is being sought because of the spiritual hunger of these ruling classes in the Chinese Empire. The movement for the present is intellectual rather than religious. But the missionary has the knowledge that is now in so great demand. He is acquainted with western civilization, modern schools and methods of education, modern industrial life and civil government. And so it has come to pass that the missionary is being much sought unto. But every department of missionary life, Dr. Allen says, is feeling the influence of the revival in the intellectual life of the nation. The sales of the American Bible Society have trebled in the last two or three years, all the missionary colleges are crowded and pupils have to be turned away, the Tract Society, the Diffusion of Knowledge Society and other publishing societies are taxed to supply the orders that come to them, and newspapers and periodicals are being multiplied and circulated everywhere. Such an attitude as has been indicated among the most influential classes in China is surely of great significance from a Christian and evangelistic point of view. It must mean the opening of a great door for missionary effort, and a great responsibility for the Christian peoples of the western world, who know that incomparably the best thing which the West has to give to China is the gospel of Christ.

### Christ Teaches Men to Pray.

In the few sentences of Matthew's Gospel, which form the Bible lesson for next Sunday, we have a teaching wonderfully luminous and revelatory as to the true spirit and method of prayer. These words of our Lord are remarkable not only for what is expressed in them, but for what is implied. Jesus does not spend any time in showing that prayer is consistent with the constitution of the Universe, and that it is reasonable and logical for men to pray. He seems to take it as a fact that needs no proof that men may speak to God and be heard of him, and that it is as natural and necessary for them to do so as for little children to tell their wants to their parents. Prayer was to him as vital breath, and from his standpoint it no more required to be proved that men's life is nourished by communion with God through prayer, than that their life is nourished by pure air and wholesome food. The one grand argument as to the value of prayer is prayer itself. Christians may be content to leave the argument for prayer where Jesus left it. Prayer is its own justification. It is not the learned men, with their many weighty arguments to show the reasonableness of prayer, who convince the skeptic, but the great host of devout souls who constantly call upon God. It seems impossible that any sane and thoughtful man can believe that prayer is not an essential factor in the highest human development, that this world is not a better world than it would have been without prayer, that every nation and community are not the better for the praying

men and women who have been and are in them; but if anyone can so believe, he certainly will not be convinced by arguments, however weighty, in support of the reasonableness and efficacy of prayer. To hear Jesus speak with the Father was doubtless to his disciples a more convincing demonstration of the reality and value of prayer than volumes of arguments could have been; and in the case of many a man today, there is no influence so strong to keep him from utter unbelief as the memory of his father's or his mother's pleadings at a throne of grace.

But not everything that passes by the name of prayer is in reality prayer. To be of any value prayer must be more than the ostentatious posturing of the self-righteous and self-conscious Pharisee who prays standing in the Synagogue and at the corners of the streets that he may be seen of men. It must be more than the vain repetitions which the heathen uses, and the thought that by his much speaking he shall win merit from his god. It must mean the uplifting of the soul to God and the outgoing of the human spirit in its need to Him who is the Father of our spirits and in whom is the supply for the wants of every living thing.

In nothing has Jesus more convincingly demonstrated his right to be regarded as a divine teacher than in this short prayer which he taught his disciples. The more one contemplates it and the more he endeavors to make it his own, the more he feels how wonderful it is, how satisfactory in its answer to the soul's profoundest questionings, and how comprehensive and full in its expression of the spirit's deepest needs and highest aspirations. It answers questions we say, such questions as these. "May I come to God, may I speak to him, or is he forever withdrawn into infinite distance and secrecy that no human eye or voice can ever penetrate?" And the answer is "You may come to God, His ear is open to your cry." And the soul asks: "How shall I think of God, how shall I address Him; what is He to me, and what am I to Him?" And the answer: "God is Father, and when you pray, say, 'Our Father, and you, if you truly pray, you are His child.'" "But I am a sinner; may a sinner come, is there forgiveness with God?" And the answer is: "There is forgiveness to the penitent and humble; if you forgive you shall also be forgiven." "But this world seems full of evil; is it Satan's world?" "No, but God's world. His kingdom is advancing; pray that it may fully come. His will divine is working to its fulfillment; pray that it may be done in earth as in Heaven." Then, what boundless room for aspiration in the assurance of the divine fatherhood and the human sonship and in the coming kingdom which the prayer recognizes, and what assurance that daily bread will be given, and every need supplied by the hand of the Almighty and all-loving Father in Heaven. It is surely a great thing to have our questionings, our needs, our aspirations so recognized and answered as they are here in this short prayer which Jesus taught His disciples.

### "Ye are Brethren."

A sad case of division in a church has recently been brought to our notice. As the matter is represented to us there is a considerable minority of the church who are not walking in fellowship with the majority and who maintain that they have grievances which justify their course. The matter we are told, was presented to the Association to which the church belongs, and the Association advised the calling of a mutual council by the majority and minority parties in the church. This the minority is anxious to have done, but the majority decline to consider the proposal of the minority to call a council, or even to permit a statement from them in the matter to be read in a meeting of the church. The MESSENGER AND VISITOR is asked to advise in the matter. It is hardly possible to advise in such a case without a larger and more definite knowledge of the circumstances than we possess. But, on the assumption that the facts are as represented, it would seem to be a matter of wisdom and Christian courtesy for the majority to accept the advice of the Association and unite with the minority in calling a council, in the hope that the cause of trouble may be removed and harmony restored. A council of wise and disinterested brethren is not likely to advise anything opposed to the best interests of the church or of any of its members, and if the advice should not appear good in the eyes of the brethren, they would be under no compulsion to accept it. But dissension and division in a church are so unchristian and so fruitful in evil results that every true follower of Christ will surely be willing to accept any honorable proposition that has a promise of removing the trouble and restoring true Christian fellowship.

—The enterprising spondents of Am... ful. One of the... was not the Port... and his govern... murder Armen... was actuated b... necessary to kee... on the Levant a... France, carrying... until Japan sho... and be in a posi... formidable navy... schemes of the... Congregational... absurd story. ... that it was Mr... who persuaded... menians.

—The honor... gospel to the... Presbyterians... two missionar... McEwen—were... Mission Board... the Board has... aries, a letter... laboring for th... not without en... be supposed, n... encouragements... arrangement... seven months... floor they had... upper part wer... difficulty in su... miners. The... one. But one... whisky, lit a... which was bur... however, did n... The missionar... to observe Sar... had been used... is now the chu...

—St. John's... two visitors, l... widely differ... were heard wh... founder and... spoke on Tues... packed house... which the gre... is engaged, a... largement of... his former vi... years ago. T... of funds to ca... prises in whic... and salvation... the cities. T... what the effe... converted at... fifty-two year... speaks with... audiences in... following ev... Halifax, and... continue wes...

—The othe... Bourinot, of... lectured und... society, on t... city where so... connection w... subject, of I... could not f... The audien... Dr. Bayard... a Loyalist f... set forth wi... discourse w... Loyalists in... their attach... sufficiency... redress of g... a consequen... success of t... portant inf... northern ha... Britain in t... part which... have played... subject was... evident tha... very high a...