

The Chinese Puzzle.

"What is the real condition of China politically?" "What are the real opinions of the dowager concerning reform?" "What will be the result of the present unrest?" "Will there be another Boxer outbreak worse than the first?" These are the questions that are being asked by our correspondents in America, and they are questions that are being asked here in China, for that matter.

The most ably edited paper in China, the North China Daily News, predicts a speedy rising worse than the one of 1900, while the members of the diplomatic body brand these utterances as the veriest absurdities. And yet we remember that in 1900 the North China Daily News predicted disaster and the diplomats pool-pooled the idea and lived on "curried" horse and stale biscuit for some months for their folly.

In the meantime there is no lack of wars and rumors of wars. In the South there is a full-fledged war in progress which has been gaining volume for nearly a year. All the efforts of the government to stop it have been futile. The authorities at Peking are anxious to put an end to the rebellion, for it is not a Boxer outbreak directed against foreigners, but, like the great Tai-ping rebellion, it is seeking to overthrow the Manchu dynasty. With the exception of the large cities almost the whole of Kuang-si and parts of the neighboring provinces are in the hands of the rebels, and the imperial troops dare not stir from their strongholds. Daily the news is anticipated that the rebels have captured most of these cities.

In the west Boxer movement brought on by famine and misgovernment was making great headway when it was apparently crushed by the appointment of a new viceroy. Now it has again flared up and no one seems to know just what is the condition of affairs in Sz-Chuen. But it seems to have been all a mistake that the new viceroy even made much headway against the rebellion, all because he was unsupported by the government at Peking.

From Kan-su, in the northwest, came reports of preparation for another outbreak to be headed by those arch-Boxers, Prince Tuan and Tung-fu-siang. Whether this uprising materializes or not, there is no doubt in any one's mind of the desire of these two bloody-handed villains to renew the attempt of 1900 if an opportunity should offer.

Periodically there comes news of rebellions, sometimes anti-foreign, sometimes anti-Manchu, sometimes a whole district, sometimes a neighborhood; now from Chih-li with the empress strictly ordering her officials to keep the rebellion away from the capital even if it has to be driven into another province, now from Fukien, and even from our own province of Chekiang, and the latest from Honan. If China was the world (and it does comprise one-fourth of the human race) we would think the end of the world was near, for the wars and rumors are abundant. But since no harm has come near us we have leisure to speculate as to whether it is the beginning of the end for long-suffering China.

Reforms are in the air. The people want them. They are mad after western learning. The question that all are asking is, "What of the dowager?" She has ostentatiously promulgated a few reforms, and then, whether by her own connivance or on account of the indolence and opposition of the officials, they have nearly all been defeated. The cut-and-dried classical essay was abolished and foreign subjects substituted for it. But it is whispered that no one knows enough about things foreign to write a decent composition has been able to pass. Many schools have been founded for western learning, but those having them in charge, evidently inspired from Peking, have compelled all in attendance to attend the worship of Confucius, thus excluding many students and causing most of the foreign professors to resign. Thus have all attempted reforms fallen of their own weight because unsupported by the dowager and her coterie of Manchus, headed by her relative, the notorious Yung-lu. The real ruler of China has not been the dowager, but Yung-lu. There is no doubt in any quarter that he was the real leader in the Boxer outbreak. There is less doubt that if he could have found the opportunity he would have started a more disastrous outbreak than the one of 1900. So the predictions were on every hand that the terrible days of 1900 were to be repeated. But we have all been startled by the news that Yung-lu is dead. There is no other anti-reform leader beside the empress who can stay the onward march of events and plunge the empire into another war against civilization and the world.

There is one man in the ranks of the reformers with a hand strong enough to guide the empire in this time of crisis. That man is Chang-chih-tung, late viceroy of the two Kwangs. He is slightly visionary but far-sighted and absolutely incorruptible, incorruptibility being a virtue well nigh wanting in China officialdom. The crisis is upon the empire. If there is a man for the hour, that man is Chang-chih-tung. If he is not put in power the worst may be feared. If he is given the reins of government there is hope for an absolute change in direction. Instead of hastening on to dismemberment and destruction, China will take up her march of progress with the nations of the earth. If I were to say that, given the right men at the helm, China would make much progress, that it would make Japan's regeneration child's play, I might not be believed. But those who are acquainted with China and her people are agreed that

the time is ripe for an entire break from the past that has held this great people in its grip of iron. The people are ready, as evidenced on every hand by the eagerness for the acquisition of western knowledge. All that is needed is enlightened and progressive rules to remove the restraint that still holds China back.

The prospects for the advance of the kingdom of God in China are darker and brighter than ever before. Multitudes are coming to listen to the gospel and asking for preachers and schools. But we know that the most of these are drawn only by the insatiable desire that has seized China for foreign knowledge, and the power that it begets to amass wealth. Yet even though they come from wrong motives they listen to right teaching and therein is the cause for hope. More care is being used in most sections in receiving members, yet the churches are increasing so rapidly that the missionaries do not desire more converts so much as better facilities for educating, and more help from God to render the Christians faithful exponents of the gospel of Jesus Christ.—Standard.

The Holy Spirit.

BY THE REV. ARTHUR F. KITTREDGE, D. D.

The more one studies the Word of God, the more clearly he sees the folly of all Christian labor for the consecration of souls with the promised power from above. It is possible, by argument and persuasion, to change the opinions of another, but you cannot reach your thought down into his heart, and change that. You may make him see the folly of a worldly life, but your words cannot implant a love for spiritual things. You may even lead one to acknowledge intellectually the truth of God's love in Jesus Christ in the atonement for human sin, but you cannot, with all your reasoning, make him love God and consecrate himself to his service. The profoundest need to-day is in men's characters more than in their lives, and just here we are utterly helpless. But God can move the hearts of men. He can recreate, can implant new principles.

A new love, a new governing motive, make one a new creature, turn the face heavenward, and liberate Satan's slave and make him an heir of everlasting life. And all this God promises to do by his Holy Spirit. Your thoughts may be crude your words feeble, and you may have no eloquence in uttering them, but if you only lay hold of this promised omnipotence, there is no limit to your power as a workman with your God. Is not this a glorious truth? Take that promise in Isaiah, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob," and there is nothing on earth so mean and so despised as a worm, but God says, "Fear not, thou worm Jacob, I will help thee, saith the Lord." And this is the message to every believer, "I will help thee." You do not need to trouble your mind with definitions of the Holy Spirit or of the Trinity; I have long ago ceased trying to understand these incomprehensible doctrines, but this much we can understand, that God by his spirit is at our side, ready to work mightily through our weakness, ready to transform that weakness into supernatural power, so that our words and acts will bring forth miracles for results. But if we break the connection with the arm of omnipotence, we are helpless to win one soul to Christ or to lay one stone in the walls of His kingdom. Again, we see in what rests the faith of the Church, that Jesus will one day reign, the universal King. Not in the orthodoxy of the church's creed, nor in the numbers of church members, nor of the wealth poured into the sacred treasury, but only in the promised Holy Spirit. The children of Israel could never have brought down the walls of Jericho with their arrows, but God made them fall in a moment, when the shout of faith burst from the lips of an emancipated people. And there have been many periods in the last 1,800 years when Jericho's walls have obstructed the marching of God's host, dark days and dark ages, when the church has seemed crushed and destroyed, and sinners have held a jubilee over their victory, such as Nero celebrated in Rome. But in every instance, where believers have turned away from man to God and faith has shouted "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge," "My soul, wait thou only upon Him," then light has sprung up in the darkness, mountains of difficulty have disappeared like mist before the rising sun, and the despised handful of Christians have become a conquering army, and one has chased a thousand and two have put ten thousand to flight.

So to-day, the church is not much more than holding her own, because only a few here and there believe in the Holy Ghost. Jericho's walls are high and solidly built, and hymn singing and Sunday Schools and elaborated sermons will never bring them down. Law faithfully executed can accomplish a great deal, Christian benevolence can and is doing a blessed work, sweeping corrupt men out of office and destroying political organizations that threaten the stability of a city or a state by a wave of popular indignation expressed in votes. This checks at least the designs of wicked men, but the church, armed with prayer and faith and filled with the Holy Spirit, can overthrow iniquity and resurrect sinners to the liberty and holiness and joy of the sons of God. Our religious machinery cannot do it, but God can when that machinery is all laid at his feet.

I have had persons say to me, "When is the millennium to come, at the present rate of religious progress?" Why, it

can never come at this rate, and any man is foolish and wild to think that it can. The church is not like any army to-day; she is only skirmishing; she is only a picket line, robbing the enemy's host of a few souls every year whose loss is imperceptible. But when the church puts on her beautiful robes of righteousness, comes out from the world, and looks to God in wrestling, believing prayer, then there will be consternation among wicked men and devils in hell, then the fortresses of sin and vice of every kind will come thundering down, and sinners will come flocking into the kingdom like clouds and doves to their windows, as the pentecostal showers fall and keep falling, because the church keeps trusting; and then the dark places of our city will be purified, criminals will become happy believers, burdens will roll off thousands of hearts, eyes red with weeping will grow bright and clear with joy, and poverty and hatred and shame will be swept away forever by the great waves of salvation.

—Even so come, Lord Jesus!

—Christian Intelligencer.

Cheerful Living.

The happiness of which children dream, bright with the morning sunlight and fresh with its dew, is out of reach for most of us. It is the sad secret of the bliss earth gives that it can never wholly satisfy the heart. The overflow of joy is for occasions, as the stream pours its flood of tide down the valley after rain. But the witness of good cheer is the opportunity of every day. Christ gives us peace of heart, and out of peace springs the serenity of cheerful living.

Men want deliverance from trouble, but they begin at the wrong end with the wrong ambition. It is not the outside world that matters. No man can be wholly master of his environments wholly secure against sorrow, pain, and loss. When a man's heart is not set on any gift, possession, strength, or hope of earth he is secure against the grief-bringing forces of the earth. But here too many stay their steps, as in the old rhyme the old miller sings:

"I have set my heart on nothing, you see,

"—And so the world goes well with me."

or, as in the old Stoic thought men armed against despair by courage to endure.

The Christian message brings a higher thought. We are not called to mere endurance, but to cheerful life. We resign, but we obtain. If we deny ourselves, it is that we may share life with our heavenly friend. Our attitude toward gifts that other men desire is not indifference, but independence. The faithful Christian neither despises comforts and enjoyments nor depends upon them. He lives with Christ and has the glad serenity of those whom Christ makes free. His peace is rest of confidence wedded to joy of service. The world did not give it; the world cannot take it away. The world possesses the self-seeking man; but the Christ-seeking man is master of the world.

This cheerful living is a matter for every day's experience. It is not a series of lightning flashes, each succeeded by a gloom of dark; it is a steady glow such as the lamp continually fed and tended makes because it is a lamp. It is and must be ever in this troubled life, the great attractive quality for disappointed and despairing men. To proclaim Christ's invitation with good words is much, but to be ourselves Christ's invitation by a life of cheerfulness is at once the noblest and the commonest of all earth's opportunities.

Since cheerful living is a light, the time of darkness is its opportunity of shining. To be happy in life's happy days is as easy as breathing. The opportunity of help comes in with trouble, sorrow, loss. And it comes most, perhaps, with petty troubles, cares, anxieties, vexations. To be cheerful with it is easy to be vexed or sad is to win a victory for Christ and hold a light for men. One lamp in the city's glow counts little; but how men in the darkness of the woods follow one lamp that shows the way toward home and peace!—The Congregationalist.

July.

The sultry days have come, the breezes die
At panting noon, and fainting with the heat
The flowers droop until the dewy feet
Of evening pass, the thistle birds so shy
In ecstasy of song go fluttering by.
And everywhere the waking flowers greet
The ruddy, smiling dawn with incense sweet,
In mist upcurling, for it is July.
The mower whets his scythe again at morn,
The nodding clover sweet and daisies fair
In every field and meadow now are shorn,
The scent of new-mown hay is in the air,
And youthful memories issue from the haze
Of vanished summers filled with happy days.

—Arthur D. Wilmot.

"Having bought truth dear, we must not sell it cheap."
—Roger Williams.

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year.—Emerson.

The thoughts of the coming of the Lord are most sweet and joyful to me. It is the work of faith and character of his saints to love his appearing and to look for that blessed hope.—Richard Baxter