

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

CHINA VIEWED AS A MISSION FIELD.

BY J. W. LONGLEY, ACADIA COLLEGE.

(Concluded.)

They are quite ignorant of the condition and circumstances of Western countries, and therefore wholly unable to appreciate the latter's superior enlightenment, attainments in science, and zeal in commerce. "What," say they, "are these worth in comparison with the wisdom of our ancient writings?" And their minds are so well constituted for indulgence in feelings of self-sufficiency, that they never take the pains to examine and ascertain the comparative merits of other and more enlightened countries. Thus it seems painfully evident that although having, by reason of immense population and gross errors in morals and religion, the highest claim to Missionary labor, and presenting at once to the world an unlimited field for Missionary operations, yet China possesses fewer attractions, and very many more grave obstacles, in the way of Missionary work, than any other nation of idolaters.

But this cannot surely be consistently nor justly urged as a plea for the avoiding of effort for Chinese redemption. By no means; just the contrary. It is painful to see the creeping in of selfishness and the lower features of our nature even in matters of such an elevated and divine character as Christian missions. It is a sad fact that many in authority in the Church are guided very often in their plans and efforts by a consideration of self-ease, or perhaps it may be more leniently interpreted, short-sighted views of political economy, as it were. For instance, some declare China an uninteresting field, and the Chinese an uninteresting people, and so pass them by in their sympathies, in their labors, and in their prayers, as did the Levite and Jew pass by the man who had fallen among thieves. Judging by the standard presented in the Holy Scriptures, should Missionary candidates decline going to China because it is an uninteresting field? Should Missionary Societies decide not to send recruits to China because its people are an unattractive people, but send them to some other country more attractive, and perhaps already specially interested in the doctrines and principles of Christianity? On the contrary, the very obstacles which impede the rapid reception of the Gospel there, constitutes indeed, when properly considered, one of the most powerful reasons why the work should be carried forward with an energy commensurate with the momentous interests involved. A member of a Christian Church once observed at a Missionary meeting that "it was hard for him to pray for the Chinese, they were so bigoted and superstitious." Poor man! Though comparatively an emotionless and unattractive people, did not Jesus die to redeem the Chinese as well as other heathens? Did he ever intimate that excessive bigotry and superstition made the conversion of a nation almost hopeless, and labors among its people almost useless? How long must the Church wait for a greater interest in the Gospel among the Chinese? Will the Chinese Empire ever become the Lord's harvest-field without the faithful use of appropriate means? These are considerations which demand of Christian men something besides cool indifference?

Altogether this work of Missions is a vast matter. It is, after all, the grand problem of the day. It is wider and far beyond every other enterprise we can think of, and now is just the time to push it forward, for the simple but all sufficient reason that it is now. And to Christianize China is the greatest work, requiring the most gigantic efforts of them all.

Reference has already been made to the necessity of sending missionaries to China. This opens up an interesting consideration in reference to the Missionary enterprise. Perhaps, though a little wider than my subject, it may not be out of place to give it a moment's notice. There are twelve or more ports now accessible to the Missionary enterprise. Of these, in 1865, six were entirely destitute. In 1858 there were eighty-seven ordained Protestant missionaries in the six remaining ports, or an average of one Missionary for between four and five millions of people. In 1865, according to the Missionary Directory, 187 were in the field. But these numbers include females. One man attending to the pastoral wants of two millions of bigoted

Idolaters, most of all renouncing all idea of entering heaven, are engaged in laying up for themselves, according to their own actual view, "treasures in Hell." It seems to me, in view of these facts and figures, that Christians in England and America should give more attention to these foreign fields, even at the expense of home work.

In consideration of the immense contrast between the number of men preaching the Gospel in these Christian lands, and those laboring in distant countries, I am inclined to favor the idea of the total abolishment of Home Missionary Societies and the concentration of all our energies, for a number of years at least, on the foreign field. The lands we seek to Christianize are fertile and adapted to enterprise, wealth and progress. Give them the Gospel, and they will soon become prosperous and flourishing, and begin themselves to take steps for the support of the Gospel. Even now many communities, formerly heathen, are contributing handsome sums for the support of native workers. Late accounts discover a growing disposition in these converted Pagans to devote a portion of their goods towards the spread and establishment of Christianity. We need a vigorous dash in this direction, that some grand, surprising result may speedily appear to the satisfaction and joy of the Christian Church. When Gregory desired to evangelize Britain, he did not dote out now and then a solitary Missionary to fight for an existence alone and forlorn; but he sent forty good men, under the leadership of one of Rome's most zealous champions of the Christian faith, and these to a country of only a little over one million of inhabitants. The result was manifest in the speedy conversion of the whole Island. We want ten times as many men in the field, and then we may confidently expect results a thousandfold more important.

Again, mention was made at the beginning of this paper of certain important developments now in progress in reference to the Chinese. I refer to the flood of Chinese emigration to the United States. Some may be able to deduce certain ideas or foreshadow certain results in reference to this peculiar circumstance; others will take opposite views. Some see in this a rare and providential opportunity of bringing these bigoted idolaters under the influence of the Christian religion. Of course we must not undertake to form very decided opinions in reference to such movements, the ultimate designs of which we are not able fully to comprehend; but it seems to me that even this result would be bought at too dear a price by the United States. I am inclined to believe, and many of the most enlightened of American statesmen have already given expression to a similar opinion, that the continuance of this immigration will result in the overthrow of the customs, civilization and religion, and abase the position of the laboring classes of the country.

I have thus endeavored to put all these various questions in reference to the Chinese in a fair light, neither degrading their character below its just level, nor elevating it higher than is actually true. This is a great age. All the world—Europe, Asia and America—seem to be the scene of constant changes and rapid developments. We know not what a day may bring forth. The Chinese are attracting, to an unusually great extent, the attention of all countries. They are passing through one of their transition periods, and all the knowledge we can gather in respect to their condition only tends to impress us more forcibly of the necessity of praying, working, toiling for their redemption. O what a blessed change would be wrought in the world if the hills of Asia were resonant with the voice of the Gospel and the songs of Zion—if China, with her teeming millions, had come to a knowledge of the Saviour, and an appreciation of his glorious character. This matter comes home to us. Brethren, shall we pray for the Chinese? Shall we feel an undying interest in their precious and immortal souls? Shall we put forward all reasonable exertions for their salvation? Shall we deny ourselves, and suffer privations for the sake of them and their conversion? Shall we let our voice be heard in the world in their behalf? O, if by one powerful conception we could grasp for an instant an idea of Chinese wretchedness—deplorable wretchedness; if we could but catch a faint echo of the groans of the lost and perishing souls, would not our hearts be stirred, our energies aroused, and our efforts put forth in their behalf? O, my dear brethren, in all our plans and purposes in this life, let us constantly have in mind the fearful condition of the Chinese, and endeavor faithfully to develop some scheme for their spiritual enlightenment and conversion to God.

For the Christian Messenger.

DR. SAWYER'S LECTURE.

On Friday evening last the members of Acadia Athenaeum had the pleasure of listening to their esteemed President for the first time in the capacity of public lecturer. The subject chosen by the learned Doctor might not seem to be calculated to evoke very strong interest, as I think it would not be exceeding the truth to affirm that Wordsworth has not of late held a very high place as poet in the estimation of most men. Critics have pronounced him "heavy," most general readers find him dull; some regard him as lacking in imagination and intensity of genius. But it was evident before the Doctor had spoken many sentences that he was thoroughly in love with his subject, and meant to ask for no charity or consideration in dealing with his character and merits. I will attempt to give a brief sketch of the lecture, though it really was so compressed, and contained such an unusual absence of superfluities, that nothing save entire publication would give a just idea of the whole.

The Life of Wordsworth reaches through an unusually protracted period—from 1770 to 1850. At the time of his birth, Grey and Goldsmith had established their places in literature, and were near the close of their lives. Cowper was in the midst of his life and work. Burns was a lad of 11. Johnson, Hume, Gibbon and Burke were at work in their respective spheres. Nearly of the same age as Wordsworth, competing with him for public favor in the same department of literature, and sharing with him, in greater or less degree, the rewards of successful effort, were Scott, Coleridge, Campbell, Southey, Rogers, Bowles, Hogg and Landor; to which might be added nearly as many more names of persons more or less distinguished in special departments of poetry. These three men, who were born after Wordsworth, entered the University, and finished their work while he was still in his prime, made for themselves permanent places in the annals of English Literature—Byron, Shelley, and Keats. These names are enough to show that our Poet was obliged to compete with men of ability and culture, and if he achieved success, it was awarded to him by men who knew how to appreciate greatness. In the eighth decade of his life he was like the sweet-voiced Nestor in the Grecian camp before Troy, of whom Homer says: "During his life two generations of articulately-speaking men have perished—and he was among the third."

Wordsworth was born in Cumberland on the Derwent, in the north of England. At eight years of age he removed to a Grammar School, where he received his academic education. When seventeen years of age he entered St. John's College, Cambridge. He was a fair scholar when he entered the University. He evinced an unwillingness to submit to the enforced restraint of college study. Others, the Doctor very pointedly remarked, may imitate him in this who will imitate a great man in no other respect. He may have owed much to his college life. Here he could gain a knowledge of books, a familiarity with classical models, and enjoy association with men of various abilities. He also became acquainted with rural scenes and rustic people. He was subject also to those influences which surround every seat of learning. Walks, groves, memories and associations—all exciting and educating influences. He made a pedestrian tour to the continent during a vacation in his last college year, and took his first degree when he was twenty-one.

He had already decided to make poetry his pursuit for life. He spent the next few years in studying his art and becoming acquainted with the world. In the account of his mental life, given in "The Prelude," he notices especially his residence in London. Like all other young men, he enjoyed the opportunity of taking the measure of men and things. Want, and the loss of rural scenes, sent him from the great city, and he made a home for himself in the West of England. While residing here he first became acquainted with Coleridge. This was destined to have an important influence on our Poet. He received about this time a legacy of £900 from a friend, by which he was raised above immediate want and had leisure for his chosen pursuit.

Coleridge, who had already made some ventures in poetry, drew Wordsworth to himself as a congenial spirit. They studied, discoursed and planned together. They agreed to produce a volume of short poems together. O was to write the pieces having the supernatural and romantic elements, and W. compositions exhibiting various scenes of

common life. The book was published in 1828, and unceremoniously condemned by reviewers and critics. But the Poet, possessing his soul in patience, went into Germany. Returning soon, he prepared a new edition of his book, and manfully defended his work.

Soon after he prepared "The Prelude," a poem tracing the growth of his mind. This he dedicated to his friend Coleridge. How much Wordsworth owed to this friend it is difficult to determine. Coleridge was more versatile and brilliantly imaginative—more of a creative genius, commanding force of spirit. He possessed keener insight and greater stores of learning, but withal buoyant and facile to all circumstances. He could play like a child and talk like Plato. Wordsworth talked and played like a philosopher. His massive mind needed to be quickened by the electrical influences of the great magician. And he had wrought so much under these influences. But he could hardly tell when he was moving by his own energy and when from impulse received from his other self.

After the publication of this poem, for nearly forty years, he continued to live and work in this neighborhood. At first his works were not popular. Still his admirers were increasing. Literary people came to see him, and were charmed by his simple habits and true manliness. Little by little he conquered for himself a place among the masters of his sphere of work. On the death of Southey, in 1848, the Government, as a mark of respect for his acknowledged abilities, appointed him Laureate.

So, having for many years enjoyed the affection and respect of the wise and good, for whom he had patiently and nobly toiled, he died in the Spring of 1850. His body was laid to its rest in the churchyard of Grosseure, under a yew which his own hand had planted, and amidst the scenery of lake, valley and mountain to which he had been so ardently attached.

The lessons we may derive from his life are important. It teaches the value of well directed industry. He was always at work, and work tells. We must admire, too, his good temper and kindness of heart amidst all his persecutions. We have no instance of his ever indulging in revenge or spleen or envy. He made it the aim of his life to keep himself in tune for all the enticements and harmonies of Nature.

The characteristics of his poetry are—First, *His subjects*. These he designedly selected largely from common things. He believed the elements of true poetry were found in the incidents of real life. He preferred to depict the gentler affections and emotions, and took for his study the lives of common people right about him and the scenes associated with them. This was the occasion of most of the ridicule to which Wordsworth was subject. He wished to be true to nature, and was deemed prosaic by readers whose tastes had been stimulated by the artificial and passionate.

Wordsworth believed that poetic language was "the language of real men in a state of vivid sensation." This idea has been much criticized, and Coleridge affirmed that Wordsworth triumphed as a poet by disregarding his own theory. But notwithstanding that some passages from W. invite criticism in this relation, yet on the whole he is a model in the use of language, and can always be studied with profit. He has been called the Quaker among poets, but it might perhaps be well for the multitudes who are pleased with the gaudy and dazzling style of more popular writers to study this author as a means of cultivating a purer and truer taste.

Another peculiarity of his works is that they endeavor to show the predominance of some, particular faculty or affection. He takes great pains, for instance, to indicate the difference between Fancy and Imagination. This feature helps us to understand his works.

W. in his writings gives great meaning to the nouns and verbs. Where you get the words you must pause. Construct the scene and feel the view of it. This requires work; and that is not an element of popularity in a Book.

He was excellent in the Sonnet—perhaps the best in English Literature. "The Excursion" is his greatest work, but we have not time to examine it. It was a continuation of the "Prelude" and has been called a "grand Cathedral anthem."

In conclusion, Wordsworth's work is not yet done. His writings have the elements of immortality in them. There will always be some who love the mountain, the forest and the river—who love the homes of the lowly—the homes of Andrew, and Nathaniel, and Mary, and can feel the poetry in them; some who will feel the quiet but mighty enchantments of Nature and Nature's children—who will feel the power of God always present in the affairs of men, and the benedictions of Religion so gently distilling on city and hamlet—there will always be some such who will rise up from generation to generation to perpetuate the acclamation—All hail to the ever-living Wordsworth!

This lecture was highly appreciated by the students of the College, whose confidence, respect and affection, Dr. Sawyer has been abundantly successful in winning since his assumption of his present position as president.

Acadia College, April 3rd.

For the Christian Messenger.

REPLY TO THE REV. MR. SOMMERVILLE.

Dear Brother,—

Mr. Somerville's letter in your last calls for a reply. I will endeavor to be as brief as possible, and not mix up other matters in my remarks any farther than appears to be absolutely necessary.

1. I am happy to be corrected respecting the Denomination to which Dr. Carson belongs. But I regret that his being a Baptist does not prove that he cannot be mistaken, and so misrepresent, under the blinding influence of prejudice, the people upon whose heresies he descants. I have heard Mr. Somerville complain that he himself has been misrepresented even by Baptists. I have sometimes thought that I too have had cause of complaint from the same source. And I have proof positive in the article before me that Mr. Somerville has sadly misrepresented me—all unwittingly I hope, but he has done so nevertheless. And by what he has said of Dr. Carson's book I am compelled to believe that the Plymouth Brethren would also affirm of Dr. C's. book that he had misrepresented them. I am pretty well acquainted with the doctrinal sentiments of the Plymouth Brethren, and according to Mr. S's statements that book misrepresents them. But I am glad to be corrected on one point.

2. I beg to say that my "decided dislike" to said book was not taken without grounds, nor "merely because I took such dislike" as Mr. S. intimates. My "decided dislike" is based upon an extended and glowing Review from the able pen of the Rev. Wm. Somerville! Pray, if that was nothing, if we cannot form some judgment of a literary work from an extended review and a warm recommendation, then why waste paper and time in writing or reading Reviews? Mr. S. praised the book. He did more. He told us what it contained. From this I infer that it is a poor book, abounding in error and misrepresentation, a book that I need not read, a book that would do neither me nor any one else any good; and I earnestly pray that it may have few purchasers, and fewer readers.

If the Presbyterians and Baptists are heretics on the great fundamental doctrines of the gospel, then, not otherwise, are the Plymouth Brethren heretics, so far as I can learn from their own statements, their own writings, and their own express summaries of gospel truth. I am sorry they should be misunderstood and misrepresented. I am sorry that many other bodies and individuals are in this respect like them.

There is no question that absurd and contradictory and unorthodox expressions may be culled from their writings by a diligent "heresy hunter," and more especially when such expressions are wrenched from their connection. But is it fair to do this? My eyes and my memory have served me badly if I have not read some things written by the venerable brother, whose letter I am commenting upon, that would not bear sanctuaries weight.

I can assure Mr. Somerville that "Mr. R." would not excuse the lying and hypocrisy of any one, on any account whatever. But suppose some zealous Baptist, or some "old Kirk Doctor," were to attack the "Reformed Presbyterians," or supposing some worthy "Cameronian," say in Western Cornwallis, were to come out against the Baptists, would it, think you, be a very difficult thing to find cases of gross inconsistency between profession and practice among the people attacked? But as I am *defending* and not *attacking* (belligerents almost always plead that they are simply standing on the *defensive*), I am not, on the present occasion, I think, called on to say all the bad things I know