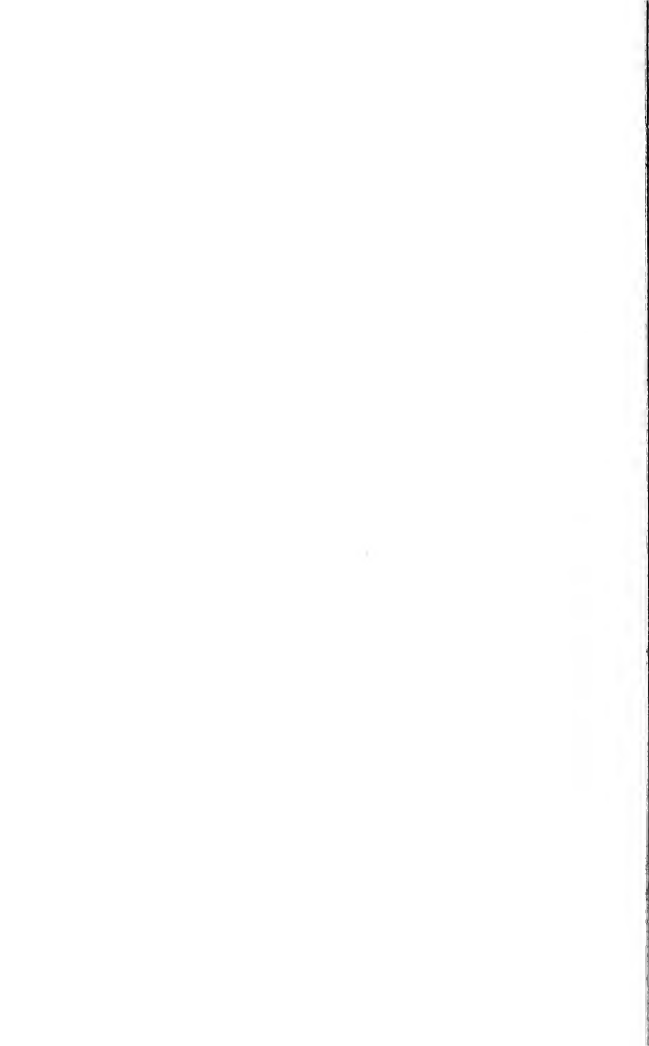


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THE
LAND OF SINIM

OR AN

EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH XLIX. 12.

TOGETHER WITH

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE

JEWS AND CHRISTIANS IN CHINA.

~~~~~  
BY A MISSIONARY IN CHINA.  
~~~~~

PHILADELPHIA :

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS little work appeared originally in several numbers of the Chinese Repository of the year 1844. It was written by one of the Missionaries of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, in China; and it is now republished, without the knowledge of the author, in the hope of gratifying and perhaps increasing the interest of the Christian community in the evangelization of the Chinese.

MISSION HOUSE,
New York, 1845.

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THE LAND OF SINIM.

AN

EXAMINATION OF ISAIAH XLIX. 12.

CHAPTER I.

THE COUNTRY DESIGNATED.

THE prophecy of Isaiah, (chapter xlix. 12,) "Behold these shall come far: and lo these from the north, and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim," has given rise to much speculation among biblical students, and is particularly interesting to those who watch the progress of the gospel in China. This empire is doubtless included in each of the numerous prophecies that foretell the world's conversion. Her superstitions shall assuredly vanish away—already they are old; her ancient temples shall crumble into dust, and her people shall yet bow the knee to Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world. This we believe, even though no special prophecy be found to confirm our faith. And if so, why seek additional proofs? Why ask whether this or that prophecy has special reference to China, when already assured of her conversion? Such questions are often,

but improperly asked. It is the Christian's duty to investigate, and if possible, discover the meaning of every portion of God's word. He is not at liberty to neglect the special confirmations of faith which special prophecies afford. He who speaks no idle word has not given his revelations without design, and if among them there be one intended for the Chinese, it is both pleasant and profitable to know it.

It has been remarked that, "on a cursory examination of the prophecy in question, one is apt to suppose it refers to China, but a more thorough investigation leads to a different opinion." How much truth there is in this remark, will appear in the sequel. Certain it is that the diversity of opinion as to the meaning of this prophecy, and that from the earliest ages, is not a little remarkable. The versions of the Scriptures and the commentators both differ in their explanations. The Septuagint translates *מֵאֶרֶץ סִינִים* by *ἐκ τῆς Περσῶν*, *from the land of the Persians*, in which it is followed by the Arabic. The Chaldee Paraphrase, and the Latin version of Jeromè, render it *from the land of the south*, in which they are followed by the Spanish translation of bishop Miguel, and the earliest English version—that of Coverdale—who render it, *and some from the south*. On the other hand, the ancient Syriac, the most literal and perhaps the best of all the versions, retains the Hebrew word, merely substituting sea for land, *and these from the sea of Sinim*.

The German of Luther, the French of Martin, the Italian of Diodati, and the authorized English version, all retain the Hebrew word, *and these from the land of Sinim*. This difference shows that when these versions were made, it was still uncertain what particular country was meant. It is worthy of notice that none of the authors of those versions supposed their own country to be intended. The authors of the Septuagint lived in Egypt, and of the Arabic, either in Arabia or Babylon, and they supposed that Persia was intended. The authors of the Chaldee Paraphrase living eastward of Judea, gave the preference to a "southern land," while the versions on which we place the most reliance leave the particular country undetermined. An argument of weight is hence derived to show that neither Egypt, Arabia, nor Chaldea is intended in the prophecy, for it can scarcely be supposed that the authors of a version living in the very country referred to, should so utterly fail of perceiving it as to give the preference to other lands.

The opinions of commentators are equally varied; some, as Jerome, Jarchi, Grotius, Pfeiffer, and Forerius, suppose that by the land of Sinim is meant the peninsula of Arabia, and particularly the Desert of Sin, and the region around Mount Sinai. Others prefer to understand Egypt, two of whose cities are called, in Scripture, Sin and Syene. Some of the most respectable names among commentators uphold this opinion; among

others, those of the Jewish writers Aben Ezra, and Kimchi; and of the Christians, Bochart, Vitranga, Hiller, Secker, Munster, Clarius, Michaelis, Orton, W. Lowth and Thomas Scott. There is another class composed of those who think that the land of Sinim means China, among whom are Manasseh Ben Israel, Arias Montanus, Dorsch, Langles, Gesenius, Calmet, Dr. Hagar, Dr. Morrison and others. Probably the truth lies between these opinions, and to them our attention may be confined.

Before examining these in detail, it is desirable to glance at the meaning of the separate clauses of the prophecy. All the versions disregard more or less the punctuation of the original, though that is important to a correct understanding of the passage. Literally translated, and pointed according to the Hebrew, it reads,

Behold these! from afar they shall come.

And behold these! from the north, and from the west:

And these! from the land of Sinim.

There is a full stop after the clause, 'from afar they shall come,' and also at the end of the verse.

The expression in the first clause *from afar*, (מרחוק *merahog*), is indefinite. In three places, Jer. xxx. 10, xlvi. 27, and Hab. i. 8, it seems to refer to the Chaldeans; in one, Deut. xxviii. 49, to the Romans; and in one, Joel iii. 8, to the Sabeans. Yet even in these, its definite signification arises from the context, while elsewhere, there is nothing to in-

duce us to suppose that one part of the world is intended, to the exclusion of any other. Thus, in the passage in Isaiah xliii. 6, 'Bring my sons *from afar*, and my daughters from the ends of the earth,' the expression is, we think, evidently to be understood as comprehending all the distant parts of the earth. Consequently, the assertion of Vitringa, 'by *merahog* the east is to be understood,' is quite gratuitous. There is no other place in Isaiah where it has this signification, and why should this be an exception? By *the north*, in the prophecies of the Old Testament, Babylon, and the countries adjacent, are almost always intended. Thus, in the prophecy so often repeated by Jeremiah, 'I will bring evil from *the north*, and a great destruction,' (Jer. iv. 6; also, l. 9-41,) Babylon is evidently meant. By *the west* (צַיִת literally, *from the sea*, the Mediterranean sea lying west of Judea), is generally to be understood, all the countries west of Canaan, particularly the maritime countries around the Mediterranean. In Dan. viii. 5, Alexander is predicted under the figure of 'an he-goat that came from *the west*.' The *land of Sinim** is the only clause as to whose meaning there is much doubt. The word does not occur elsewhere, so that little direct assistance is gained from parallel passages. The name *Sinite*, Gen. x. 17, and

* This name is commonly pronounced with the first vowel short; the analogy of other Scripture names, Sidon, Silas, Sihon, Sinai, &c., shows that it should be long, like *i* in *pine*—Si-nim.

1 Chron. i. 15, belongs to a Canaanitish tribe north of Palestine, and cannot be intended here. The only other names resembling Sinim are, Syene and Sin, two cities in Egypt, and Sinai and Sin in Arabia.

This verse is the central point of the prophetic discourse in Isaiah xlix. 1: l. 3. Its first clause predicts the conversion of the world to God, under a figure drawn from the existing dispensation, when worshippers of the true God came up to the temple at Jerusalem to offer their sacrifices. The person who speaks is Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, and his object is to confirm his covenant with the Son, and thus console the church mourning over her desolations. He declares that even from the most distant nations shall his people come, to pay homage to the true God, and to the Saviour whose appointment is so fully set forth in verses 1-12. *Behold these! from afar they shall come.* The succeeding clauses divide the world into three great parts, and predict the conversion of each, under the same figure.

Behold these! from the north, and from the west:
And these! from the land of Sinim.

Thus, there is a general declaration, *from afar*, including the parts, *the north, the west, and the land of Sinim.* The interpretations of the last, as already remarked, are three;* 1. Mount Sinai, and the Desert of Sin. 2. Egypt. 3. China.

* The only other interpretations I have seen, are those of M. Henry and Adam Clarke. The opinion of the former, that 'some province of Babylon is meant,' is untenable.

I. The chief arguments to prove that Sinai, and the region adjacent, is meant, are that the context requires a southern country, while the similarity of the names Sinai and Sin with Sinim, makes it probable that this is the region referred to. It is assumed, that 'from afar' means 'from the east;' having thus the north, east, and west, the south must also be contained in the prophecy, and as the Desert of Sin lies south of Judea it must be the land of Sinim. There would be some force in this argument, were it certain that the four quarters of the earth are referred to; but this is by no means certain, and as it is gratuitous to assert that 'from afar' means 'from the east,' it is equally so, to say that 'the land of Sinim' must be a *southern* land. The second argument is quite as weak: a similarity in the names there is, but nothing more; Sin and Sinai are not Sinim, and it is quite irrelevant to say, that Sinim is the plural of Sin, for there were not two Deserts of Sin, and why should the plural be used? The objections against

ble, as the whole of Babylon is included in 'the north.' Dr. Clarke shall speak for himself: '*Sin* signifies a bush, and *Sinim*, bushes, woods, &c. Probably this means that the land where several of the lost Jews dwell, is a woodland. The ten tribes are gone no one knows whither. On the slave coast of Africa, some Jewish rites appear among the people, and all the males are circumcised. The whole of this land, as it appears from the coast, may be emphatically called ארץ סיני *erets sinim*, the land of bushes, as it is all covered with bushes as far as the eye can reach. Many of the Indians of North America, which is also a woodland, have a great profusion of rites, apparently in their basis Jewish. May not these be the countries intended?'

this view are serious. 1. If the remark already made be correct, that 'from afar' is a general term, including those that follow, then the north, the west, and the land of Sinim, must also be afar off. But the Desert of Sin was near to Jerusalem. A few days' journey brought the Arabians to Jerusalem, and a few days' journey carried them thence to the extreme limits of their land. 2. The prophecy is of great things, the conversion of many nations unto God. But Arabia, and especially the region around Sinai, has few inhabitants, and its political importance is small, while the Desert of Sin would never have been heard of, but for its connexion with the history of Israel in their wanderings; how then can we suppose a country so insignificant to be singled out in a prophecy whose scope is so comprehensive? 3. Nor is it unworthy of notice that this opinion has never been general in the Christian church; excepting Jerome and Grotius, the writer has observed almost no names of note in its favour. That the Chaldee and Vulgate versions suppose a *southern* land to be meant, (while it does not show that even they thought Arabia to be that land,) only proves that the authors of those versions were as ill informed, as were the authors of the Septuagint and Arabic versions, who decide in favour of the Persians.

II. The opinion that Egypt is meant, is more probable than the preceding, and has the support of more eminent names; the weight of authority is certainly in its favour.

But the arguments are nearly the same as those just answered. 1. The context requires a southern land. 2. Sin, Ezek. xxx. 15, which certainly is a city of Egypt, very nearly resembles Sinim, while Syene, also a city of Egypt, is a cognate word. 3. Sinim being the plural form, is used in reference to the division of Egypt into two parts; 'from the land of Sinim,' is from the land of the two Sin, that is, from upper and lower Egypt. The objection against the previous view, that the inhabitants of Arabia are few, and its political importance small, is not applicable to Egypt, for its population has been immense, and its rank among the nations high, while its conversion is foretold in the Scriptures as an event of great importance. It does not appear, however, that the arguments in favour of this position are sufficient, while the objections are certainly strong. That the context requires a southern country has already been shown to be incorrect. As to the second argument: Sin (Ezek. xxx. 15, 16,) is not a name of Egypt, but simply of one of its cities, nor does it appear to have been often used, for we meet it only once. Syene is also the name of a city or fortress in Egypt, but neither of these names was ever applied to the country itself. Even had they been used to denote Egypt, this also would not be sufficient, for though they resemble the word used in the prophecy, they are not the same. The remark that the plural form has reference to the division of Egypt into upper and lower is merely fanciful:

there were not two places named Sin in Egypt.

The objections against this view are, 1. Egypt was never called by any name resembling Sinim. A sound reasoner will not argue that because one of its cities was called Sin or Syene, the country itself bore the same name, and must be intended in the prophecy. It would be easy in this way to prove that China is the country meant, for here not merely one or two, but many cities, districts, and departments, are called by names resembling Sinim. 2. Even granting that Egypt was called Sin, it was not *afar off*. A little more distant than Arabia, the Egyptians were still the near neighbours of the Israelites, and the latter were prone in every emergency, to 'go down to Egypt,' for help. 3. The context appears to point in another direction. It speaks of remote nations, and arranges them in three divisions. Egypt falls as naturally into the western or maritime, as into the southern. But if Egypt be the land of Sinim, the division is very unequal. We shall then have the north, the west, and the land of Egypt, but where is all the vast population eastward and southward from the land of Canaan? Nearly half the human race is thus left out of a prophecy, whose scope includes the whole.

III. That the land of Sinim means China, will not be readily admitted by all, as may be inferred from the manner in which the learned and pious Vitringa alludes to it, declaring it 'contrary to all appearance of

probability.* The objections urged by Vitrunga and those who think with him, are,

1. The context requires a southern land.
2. The Chinese were not known by any name allied to Sinim so early as the times of Isaiah.
3. There is no sufficient evidence that even the existence of the Chinese nation was known to the prophet; how then can he be supposed to have prophesied definitely of that which was unknown to him? The objection that the context requires a southern land, has already been shown to be unfounded, and needs no further remarks. An examination of the others will show how much weight is to be attached to them.

That the Chinese did not call themselves by that name, either in the time of Isaiah or afterwards, is freely admitted, for they have never used that name; but there is evidence to show that other nations have always called them Cin, Tsin or Tshin (Chin,) names closely allied to Sinim, and approaching it, as nearly as the genius of their respective languages admits. At present all foreigners call them the Chinese, and a person using the Latin language (the learned language of the civilized world,) uniformly writes *Sinæ* and *Sinenses*, which approach as nearly to the Hebrew word *Sinim* as the nature of the Latin tongue allows. As far back as authentic records extend, we find them thus denominated. They were called *çin* or *chin*, by

* *Miris merito esse qui hic de Seribus, sive Chinensibus cogitarint, ut Arias Montanus contra omnem probabilis rationis speciem. Vit. in loc.*

the Japanese in the time of Marco Polo, and are so called by the Siamese and Cochinchinese. In the Journal of Cosmas Indicopleustes, published A. D. 540, they are spoken of as the Tzinistæ, *περαιτέρω δε Τζινιστας ουδε πλεεται ουδε οικειται*. "Beyond the Tzinistæ, there is neither navigation nor habitable country."* In the Armenian history of Moses of Chorene, A. D. 450, China is called *Tsenia* and *Zenastan*, and is characterized by the production of silk, the opulence of the nation, and their love of peace above all other nations of the earth.† They are spoken of by Ptolemy as the *Sinites*, A. D. 150.‡ Aristotle and Eratosthenes, who heard of them through the expedition of Alexander, describe them as the *Θινας* or *Thinæ*,|| and in the Institutes of Menu they are spoken of as the *Chinas*,§ while to the Arabians and the Persians they have been known from time immemorial under the names *Jin*, *Chin*, and *Sin*.¶

It is thus apparent that from a very early age the Chinese have been known to other nations by names resembling that used in the prophecy, and it remains to be ascertained,

* Montfaucon, Nov. Cod. Patrum, ii. 138, quoted in Vincent's History of the Commerce and Navigation of the Ancients, vol. ii., p. 575.

† See Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, ch. 13, note 58.

‡ See his Geography, lib. 7, chap. ii. It should however be said that it is disputed among scholars whether by the Sinites, Ptolemy means the Chinese, or the Cochinchinese. See Anthon's Classical Dict., and Vincent loc. cit.

|| See Vincent, loc. cit.

§ Gesenius Lexicon, art. סין.

¶ D'Herbelot, Biblioth. Orient, article *Sin*.

when or why they were so called. The probability is that these names are derived from the family of *Tsin*, the first that reigned over the whole of China, and which from the building of the Great Wall, and other remarkable events, must have been known to surrounding nations. It is true that the first emperor of the Tsin dynasty commenced his reign B. C. 246, long after the times of Isaiah; but previous to that time his family was widely known. According to Grosier, the empire was at first composed of many petty states under various rulers, among which was the family of Tsin, which took that name under Feitsz' about B. C. 900. The princes of this family were powerful and ambitious, and took part in all the wars and great occurrences of the empire.* The following remarks by Claude Visdelou are important here.

“The family of the kings of Tsin was illustrious by its nobility and power. Its founder was Teye, son of emperor Chuen Hú. It existed in great splendour more than a thousand years, and was only inferior to the royal dignity. Feitsz', a prince of this family, had the superintendence of the stud of the emperor Hiauwang, and as a mark of favour, the emperor conferred upon him the sovereignty of the city of Tsinchau in mesne tenure (*en titre d'arrière fief*), with the title of sub-tributary king. One hundred and twenty-two years afterwards (about B. C. 770,) Siang-

* Grosier, *La Chine*, vol. i. p. 96.

kwan, *petit roi* of Tsinchau, (having by his bravery revenged the insults offered to the emperor Pingwang by the Tartars, who slew his father Yewwang,) was created king in full tenure, and without limitation or exception. The same emperor abandoning Sigán fú the capital of his empire to transport his seat to Lohyáng, (now called Hónán fú,) rendered him master of the large province of Shensí, which had composed the proper kingdom of the emperor. He thus became very powerful, but though his fortune changed, he did not change his title, retaining always that of the city of Tsinchau, which had been the foundation of his elevation. The kingdom of Tsin soon became celebrated, and being the place of the first arrival of the people of the western countries, it seems probable that those who saw no more of China than the realm of Tsin, extended this name to all the rest, and called the whole empire Tsin or Tshin.”†

Such is the statement of the learned Jesuit, which alone is sufficient greatly to weaken the objection that China was not known by any such name in the days of Isaiah. The empire has been long and widely known to other nations, by names, in all probability derived from princes who ruled before the birth of the prophet. These names are closely allied to the Sinim of the prophecy, while no other nations (certainly not Egypt or Arabia) have been thus called.

† D’Herbelot, *Biblioth. Orient.* tome 4., p. 8.

It is however still further objected that China could not have been known to the prophet under any name, because there was so little intercourse between the east and the west in those early ages. On this point our knowledge is indefinite. There is no proof that Isaiah had heard of China, and there is none that he had not. In the absence or destruction of all records of those ages, it is scarcely fair to assert, that there was no intercourse because we know of none. The probability is that there was intercourse. In the times of Pliny and Virgil, the matrons of Rome were clothed in the silks of China, but luxury was no more extravagant in Rome in the days of Augustus than it was in Assyria eight hundred years before. Why may not the intercourse that taught Rome in the Augustan age who the Chinese were, have communicated the same knowledge to the Assyrians in the days of Isaiah? "Westward the course of empire takes its way," and the eastern empire of Assyria may have taken the place of a monarchy still further eastward. The Persian histories tell us that one of their ancient monarchs ruled over China,* as well as his own country, and though this may pass for an exaggeration of national vanity, it is still an evidence that in very ancient times China was known to the nations with whom the Jews had intercourse. Besides, it is known that there were Jews in China as early as B. C. 258,† and what reason

* D'Herbelot, Bib. Orient. art. *Sin* and *Fagfour*.

† Edin. Encyc., vol. vi. p. 95.

is there for supposing them to be the first of that wide spreading race who entered China? Why may we not suppose that the "merchant princes" of Tyre, that ancient Venice, had dealings with China; or how can we be assured that the ships of Solomon sailing from the Red Sea, and spending three years on their voyages, (1 Kings ix. 26, 2 Chron. ix. 22,) did not visit ports which if not in China, were at least frequented by the busy and trading Chinese?

These considerations remove much of the force of the objection that China was unknown to the prophet. It is however admitted that our proof of his knowledge of this great and ancient empire is imperfect, and this is the more readily done, because there is a strong reason for supposing China to be intended in the prophecy, though both its name and existence were unknown to the Jews. If known, our position is all the stronger; if unknown, the strongest argument is still in force.

The Hebrew prophets often spoke of men and of nations, before those men and nations had an existence, and when they themselves could not know with certainty whereof they spoke. They were the agents of the Holy Spirit, who by their mouth revealed things dark at first, but clear in after ages, and thus the faith of God's people in all ages receives new and striking proofs of the Divine wisdom and foreknowledge. A nameless prophet foretold the name and actions of Josiah king of Judah, more than three hundred years

before his birth; 1 Kings xiii. 2. Isaiah predicted the conquest of Cyrus, mentioning that monarch by name, full two hundred years before his birth, and long before the nation over which he was to rule, was celebrated in history; Is. xlv. 28; xlv. 1. The Romans were described and their victories predicted hundreds of years before they existed as a nation. Lev. xxvi.; Deut. xxviii.; Dan. xi. Jeremiah foretells the downfall of Babylon under the mystic name Sheshach (Jer. li. 41); and Zechariah the overthrow of Persia under that of Hadrach; (Zech. ix. 1); although those countries were never known by those names; and a large part of the prophecies of Daniel relates to kingdoms not in existence when he wrote.

The connexion of these remarks with the subject in hand is obvious. Granting that Isaiah knew nothing of China, by that or any other name, why may we not suppose him inspired to predict the success of the gospel there? Why should not the omniscient Spirit of God, when foretelling the conversion of a populous empire, use the name by which it should afterwards be universally known? There is nothing in the analogy of prophecy that militates against this supposition, for other nations had a place in prophecy before their national existence commenced. This then is our position. It has been shown that China was anciently known by the name Sin or Tsin. It has been shown to be possible, if not probable, that it was known to Isaiah by

that name. The analogy of prophecy has been adduced to show, that even if unknown to the prophet, he might have spoken of it by name. These considerations remove every objection urged against the supposition that China is intended in the prophecy, while the following remarks are advanced to prove that it is intended there.

(1.) There are strong objections against supposing either Egypt or Arabia to be the "land of Sinim;" we are therefore led to think of China.

(2.) The name in the prophecy is almost precisely the common and long established name of China.

(3.) The supposition that China is meant agrees with the context in three particulars: 1. A distant land is spoken of. The worshippers of God shall come from the distant north, the distant west, and the far off land of Sinim. 2. These distant parts of the earth are spoken of in three divisions, which may be supposed to be nearly equal,—the north one-third, the west one-third, and the land of Sinim one-third. The common estimates of the population of China give this empire one-third of the inhabitants of the globe. 3. The geography of the prophecy, so to speak, favours this interpretation; including in "the north" all the countries north and northeast of Palestine, (as is always done in the Old Testament, when the north is spoken of,) we have geographically one-third of the world. Including in "the west" all the maritime

countries west of Judea, we have another third. Including in the "land of Sinim," China and the countries adjacent, we have the remaining third. Thus if the land of Sinim means China, then both in distance, population, and position, the separate clauses of the prophecy are coëxtensive with the first member, and comprise the circuit of the world; but if it means Egypt or Arabia the prophecy has not that symmetry in its parts, nor completeness in its scope, which is given by the interpretation we prefer.

The missionary in China finds peculiar difficulties in his path, and a special promise of God to this empire is a support and encouragement in labour not to be lightly regarded. It is manifest also that the prophecy is one concerning glorious things, for it is immediately followed by an ascription of praise to God, couched in emphatic language: *Sing, Oh heavens! and be joyful, Oh earth! and break forth into singing, Oh mountains! for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy on his afflicted.* Such songs of praise often follow the predictions of the triumphs of the gospel, (e. g. Ps. lxxviii. 31,) for however little these may be regarded among men, they are greatly esteemed in the church, and among the angels of God.

CHAPTER II.

FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH
CONCERNING THE LAND OF SINIM.

AN attempt has been made to show that the land of Sinim, Isaiah xlix. 12, is China, and that that prophecy contains a distinct prediction of the conversion of this nation to God. It is a question of no small interest whether this "great and precious promise" has been either in whole or in part accomplished, or whether we must still look forward to the time when it shall be said "Behold these! from the land of Sinim."

The prophecies of the sacred Scriptures are of various kinds. Some are fulfilled in a single event, while others require years, and even ages for their accomplishment. The birth of one individual may exhaust the meaning of one, while the revolution of centuries shall fail to show all that another contains.* Prophecies of the latter class are

* This is well exemplified in the twofold prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, till Shiloh come: and to him shall the gathering of the nations be." The first clause was completely fulfilled at the birth of Christ, the second is still in its course of accomplishment.

gradually fulfilled, and he who would understand such fulfilment must study the whole history of the nation or object to which they refer, and selecting the appropriate events, must so combine them, as to form a picture of what the prophet saw. Of this kind is the prophecy in question. Its complete fulfilment has not yet been seen, but an account of what has already occurred may assist to an understanding of what is yet to come.

The scope of the context allows us to think of nothing less than the conversion of the whole land of Sinim. It is evident that it includes the conversion of each one of her inhabitants, from the time when the first rays of truth entered a Chinese heart, till that glorious period, when none but true worshippers shall stand on all her mountain tops and fertile plains. Does a company of her sons, however few in number, renounce idolatry and worship Jehovah? Then it is justly said, "Behold these, from the land of Sinim;" and surely when the whole empire shall have received the gospel, "the heavens shall sing, the earth shall be joyful, and the mountains shall break forth into singing." An inquiry therefore into the fulfilment of this prophecy, must include an examination of every effort to extend the knowledge of the true God, and of the success of those efforts, however small; and it will also include a just appreciation of what has been done, by all who possess a knowledge of the truth, however much of error may be mingled in their creed.

First in the order of time, we must consider the history of

THE JEWS IN CHINA.

It is not certainly known when the first seeds of divine truth were planted in China. We shall not go back with those who maintain that this country was peopled by the immediate descendants of Noah, who possessed the knowledge of Jehovah in its purity, and thus founded the comparatively pure system of morality taught by the Chinese sages. Nor need we linger long in considering the opinion that some wandering companies of the ten tribes of Israel, after their dispersion by the Assyrians (B. C. 742, see 2 Kings xvii.) found their way to the Celestial empire. To believe this would well agree with the ancient threatening, "the Lord shall scatter thee among all nations, from one end of the earth even unto the other," Deut. xxviii. 64. Admitting its probability, we might readily explain the excellence of many of the Chinese rules of morality. Some of these wandering Israelites, doubtless brought with them the law of God, and "called it to mind among the nations whither the Lord their God had driven them," Deut. xxx. 1. As they came to China (on this supposition) but a few years or perhaps generations before Confucius lived, he may have been more indebted to their examples and instructions than is commonly supposed.

It is well ascertained that certain Jews did

enter China as early as B. C. 258.* Their descendants still remain a "peculiar" race in the midst of those around them, and even yet distinguished by the trait which took its origin in Jacob's time. "The children of Israel ate not of the sinew which shrank." Gen. xxxii. 32. They call themselves the *Tiáu-kin kiáu*, "the sect which plucks out the sinew." Their residence is at Káifung fû the capital of Honán. Some of them have attained an honourable rank in literature, and several have been governors of provinces and ministers of state, but at present they are few in number, degraded in condition, and their wisest men are very ignorant of their own religion. Yet that they have existed a separate people so long with nothing but their religion to hold them together, is a sufficient proof that they were once thoroughly imbued with its principles. When they entered the country, B. C. 258, theirs was the true religion. It has lost none of its truth since that time, though it may not now claim to be the only true religion, or to be alone sufficient for salvation. It is unreasonable to suppose that a community possessing and valuing *the truth*, should live for hundreds of years in the heart of China, and yet exert no beneficial influence on those around them. Their influence is now small; it may have been always small; but it could never have been totally unfelt. Philosophers

* Edinb. Encyc. vol. vi. p. 98. Grosier however, tom. iv., p. 484, says it was under the Hán dynasty which acquired power about the year B. C. 266.

say that the breath of an idle word mingles with the moving air and leaves its small but certain impress, not merely on the flying sand and changing waves, but on the solid rock; and surely, the truth of God, even though held in ignorance or unrighteousness, cannot be wholly bound. It is not for us to say, what is the limit or extent of its influence in the present case, but the eye of God sees it, and in his book it is recorded, to appear when the secrets of all hearts are made known. In the influence of that truth as diffused by the Jews in China, even though it extended to the saving illumination of but a single soul, we may yet recognize the first fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah.*

The fact of the existence of a colony of Jews in China, is one of much importance, and gives rise to interesting conjecture. If the opinion be well founded, which is of late gaining ground in the church, that the Jews are to be restored to their own land, then undoubtedly the Chinese Jews as well as all others are to be brought back. It may be this to which the prophet specially refers. In vision he stood upon the walls of Jerusalem. Lifting up his eyes round about, he saw her long lost children gathering themselves together, and coming unto her. From each

* For a fuller account of the Jews in China, the reader is referred to Grosier, *La Chine*, tom. iv., p. 484. Dr. Morrison and Mr. Milne have also given short notices, agreeing substantially with the accounts of the Roman Catholic Missionaries. See *Indo-Chinese Gleaner*, vol i. p. 16.—*Chin. Rep.* vol. xii. p. 79.

point of the compass they came flocking as clouds, and as doves to their windows. In amazement the desolate Jewish church exclaims, "Behold I was left alone, these where had they been?" And the answer is, "Behold these! come from afar; and lo these! from the north and from the west: and these! from the land of Sinim."

Whether this restoration is to be before or after, whether it is to be the cause or the consequence of the conversion of the gentiles, does not seem to be certainly known; but in either case it shall be the cause of great additions to the happiness of the church, and the glory of God. It may be that the arousing of the Chinese Jews from their long lethargy, and their emigration in a body to their own land, is one of the means by which God designs to awaken the Chinese nation, and to bring them also to a knowledge of Messiah the prince. "If the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness!" Rom. xi. 12.

EARLY CHRISTIANS IN CHINA.

Little is known with certainty as to the period when Christianity was first preached in China. Tradition goes farther back than historical records, but the accounts of both are so indefinite that we scarce know how to estimate them. It is the constant tradition of the Syrian church, that the apostle Thomas not only preached the gospel in India, but that

he also carried it to China, and after establishing it there, sent other labourers to perfect what he had commenced. "The Christians of Malabar celebrate this in their ordinary worship, and when the Portugese first knew them, their primate styled himself "Metropolitan of India and China."* It is the opinion of Mosheim that neither Thomas nor any other apostle entered China. There is no proof on this point, yet we are strongly inclined to think that the gospel was preached in China, by some of the witnesses of our Lord's resurrection. The books of the New Testament record the labours of Paul and Peter, and James and John alone, and they speak of none others as labouring in the same districts. It was the constant effort of Paul to preach the gospel, *not where Christ was named*, lest he should build upon another man's foundation. Rom. xv. 20. Where then were Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbeus whose surname was Thaddeus, Simon the Canaanite and Andrew the brother of Peter, and Matthias chosen to fill the vacant seat of Judas Iscariot? These all were apostles. They all were commissioned "to go into all the world;" they too could speak with tongues. Is it not fair to conclude, that they laboured as diligently as the others, and that, since we hear little of their labours, they went to many places from

* Mosheim, *Ecc. History* (by Murdock), vol. ii., p. 422, note 2. See also the testimonies from the churches of India, quoted in Kircher's *China Illustrata*, pp. 56, 57.

which no account of them has reached us? Mosheim, who does not believe that Thomas went to China, and even doubts whether he went to India, says "notwithstanding, we may believe that at an early period the Christian religion extended to the Chinese, Seres, and Tartars. There are various arguments collected from learned men to show that the Christian faith was carried to China, if not by the apostle Thomas, *by the first teachers of Christianity*. Arnobius, writing about A. D. 300, speaks of "the Christian deeds done in India, and among the Seres, Persians, and Medes."* There can be little doubt that the country of the Seres included the province of Shensí in China, and the mention of them by Arnobius, (who died A. D. 326,) shows that before his time, the gospel had been carried there. We may well believe, that in China, as elsewhere, the efforts of the first preachers were attended with success.

It is well known that there were Christian monks in China, in the time of Justinian. It was to the enterprise of two of them, who brought the eggs of the silkworm in a hollow cane to Constantinople, that western nations are indebted for their knowledge of the cultivation of silk. They reached Constantinople in the year of our Lord 552.† They had then resided long in China, and it is natural to suppose they were neither the first, nor the only ones who went to that land, while it is almost

* Mosheim's *Ecc. Tart. Historia*, pp. 6, 7.

† Gibbon's *Hist. Dec. and Fall*, ch. 40, note 76.

certain that their chief object was to spread the gospel there. The success which attended their efforts must be left to conjecture.

Such are the faint rays which show us the state of Christianity in China in the first six centuries of our era. The light is dim, but if such beams have travelled down to us through the darkness of so many ages, it is reasonable to believe that they emanated from a brighter source.

NESTORIANS IN CHINA.

The monks who in A. D. 552, carried the silk-worm from China, were Persians. There is every probability that they were missionaries of the Nestorian church. It had its theological school at Edessa, from which its trained bands of devoted men were sent into all the East; and when the school at Edessa was destroyed, A. D. 489, another was erected at Nisibis, farther to the east, and not less distinguished for activity and zeal.*

There are several testimonies which show that at a very early period the Nestorians had extended their efforts as far as China. Ebed-jesus Sobiensis in his *Epitome Canonum*, says, "Salibazacha the Catholic (i. e. the Nestorian patriarch) created the Metropolitan sees of *Sina* and Samarkand, though some say they were constituted by Achæus and Silas."† This is an important testimony to the early

* Gieseler's *Ecc. Hist.* vol. i. p. 239. Mosh. *Ecc. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 363.

† Mosh. *Ecc. Tart. Hist.*, p. 8.

progress of the gospel in China, for its date is prior even to the time when the monks went to Constantinople. Achæus was archbishop of the Orthodox Chaldeans at Seleucia, A. D. 411—415, and Silas was a patriarch of the Nestorians, A. D. 505—520. It is very certain that the Nestorians had a firm footing in China, long before the time of Salibazacha, (A. D. 714—727,) as will presently appear.

Another interesting evidence on this point is found in the list of metropolitan sees subject to the Nestorian patriarch, which is published by Amro. In this, the metropolitan of Sina is mentioned along with that of India. But according to Ebedjesus, “the cause of the precedence of the metropolitan sees among themselves, is owing to the priority of their foundation.”* As the great antiquity of Christianity in India is not to be denied, we have thus a strong proof of its having at an equally early period taken root in China.

Our fullest account of the early efforts of the Nestorians in China, is derived from the celebrated monument discovered at Singán fú in Shensí, in 1625. Doubts have been expressed as to its authenticity, about which a violent controversy prevailed for several years after its discovery. The enemies of the Jesuits charged them with having fabricated it to serve their own purposes; but this is unlikely. The internal evidence of its authenticity is good, and the fact that for several

* See the list in Mosheim's *Ecc. Tartarorum Historia*, p. 8, note.

ages the Nestorians had their missionaries in China, is sufficient to vindicate for them, the honour it gives them. But though the Jesuits did not fabricate this monument, they deserve reproach for claiming it as a monument of the success of the Roman Catholic church, as Le Comte, Du Halde, and Kircher have done. Le Comte, who would never have given the term *Catholic* to the head of a sect condemned by the council of Ephesus as heretical, says that the monument "records the history of a Catholic patriarch in China." The statement of Kircher is yet more objectionable. "The Nestorian heresy having infested Asia with the poison of its pestiferous doctrines, and the Mohammedan sect having arisen about the same time, the faithful followers of Christ were driven away from their own lands, and spread the doctrine of Christ even to China."* Later Roman Catholic writers do the Nestorians the justice to admit that the monument in question commemorates their exertions.†

The Síngán fá monument is a marble tablet ten feet long and six feet broad, having on the upper portion a large cross handsomely engraved, and beneath, a long discourse in Chinese, with numerous names in Syriac on the side, and a Syriac inscription at the foot. A fac simile is given by Kircher in his *China Illustrata*, with a translation. A literal and

* See Le Comte's memoirs, p. 342, and Kircher's *China Illustrata*, p. 92.

Annales de la Propagation, vol. ix., p. 308.

also a free translation is given by P. Visdelou in D'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale*. After some remarks on the principles of religion, the fall of man, the birth of Messiah in Judea, together with some of the ceremonies and laws of Christianity; the author gives a sketch of its introduction and progress in China.

In the year 635, during the reign of T'ait-sung, the second emperor of the T'ang dynasty, and one of the greatest monarchs that ever sat on the Chinese throne, Olopun, after a long journey arrived at the capital and was received with honour by the emperor.* To quote the monument, "the emperor T'ait-sung illustrated and adorned the empire by his administration; clear, discriminating, and sacred, he ruled the people with condescension and kindness. From Tá Tsin there was a man of exalted virtue named Olopun. Observing the clear heavens, he brought the true Scriptures; watching narrowly the courses of the winds, and the laws of the seasons, he proceeded on his difficult and dangerous journey. In the ninth year of Chinkwan, (T'ait-sung,) he reached the imperial city Chángngán (now called Síngán fú.) The emperor sent the honourable Fáng

* "The Chinese annals report that in the eighth year of the emperor T'ait-sung, there came to China ambassadors from foreign nations, whose air, shape and habits were altogether strange to the Chinese, who had never seen the like before; and the emperor himself rejoiced that in his reign, men with fair hair and blue eyes arrived in his empire." Du Halde, vol. i., p. 196.

Hiuenling, a minister of state, with the insignia of his office, to the Western suburbs of the city to receive the guest, and conduct him to the palace. He examined the Scriptures in the royal library, and sought the nature of the new religion in the sacred hall. He found that Olopun was thoroughly acquainted with truth and uprightness, and gave him a special command to make it widely known. In the twelfth year of Chinkwán, and seventh month, in the autumn of the year, the royal decree proclaimed, "Truth hath not an unchanging name, nor are holy men confined to one unchanging form. In every place true doctrine has been given, and with reiterated instructions, the crowd of the living have been blessed. From the distant region of Tá Tsin, the greatly virtuous Olopun has brought the Scriptures and the pictures to offer them to our high court. If the intent of this doctrine be examined, it is profound, excellent, and pure. If its noble origin be considered, it produces that which is perfect, and establishes that which is important. Its phraseology is without superfluous words. It holds the truth, but rejects that which is needless. It is beneficial in all affairs, and profitable to the people, and should therefore pervade the empire. Let the officers therefore erect a temple for the religion of Tá Tsin, in the street of the capital called I'ning, and appoint twenty-one ministers for its oversight."

By the favour of Táitsung and his successors, Olopun and his fellow-labourers pro-

ceeded prosperously in their work. Under Káutsung, A. D. 678, "the illustrious religion spread itself in every direction, and temples rose in a hundred cities." In the year 698, the Buddhist priests commenced a persecution against the new religion; and in 712, the literati and the lower classes combined against it. But far from being destroyed, it rose again and flourished with renewed vigour under succeeding emperors, and the monument which was erected in 781, in the second year of Títsung, seems to have been composed and engraved in a time of great outward prosperity. The Syriac names around the Chinese inscription, are those of the Christian ministers who lived in China during the period to which it refers. After making large allowances for its inflated oriental style, enough remains to show that it speaks of no ordinary conquests of Christianity.

Timothy the Nestorian patriarch sent Subchal-Jesus, a zealous missionary, in 780, who laboured with success for several years, both in Tartary and China. He returned to his own country for additional labourers, but was assaulted on the way, and slain by a band of robbers. Others were not wanting to supply his place, one of whom, Davidis, was not long afterwards, consecrated metropolitan of China.* The success of these various labourers was such as to excite persecutions against them more than once. In

* Mosh. Hist. Tart. Ecc., pp. 14, 15.

the year 845, an edict of the emperor Wút-sung, commanded the priests that belonged to the sect that came from Tá Tsin, amounting to no less than three thousand persons, to retire to a private life.* The Arabian voyagers who visited China in the ninth century, speak of the Christians whom they saw, and it appears that in a persecution in 877, many of them lost their lives.† Yet notwithstanding all opposition they maintained their ground. According to the explicit testimony of Gibbon, “the Christianity of China between the seventh and thirteenth centuries is invincibly proved by the consent of Chinese, Arabian, Syrian, and Latin evidence.”‡ Those who have read the travels of Marco Polo, must have observed how often he speaks of the Nestorian Christians whom he saw,§ and his mode of referring to them leads us to suppose that they were both numerous and respected, as well as long established.

It would be interesting to know exactly the history of the famous Prester John, and the amount of his influence in favour of Christianity. His existence as a Christian prince in Central Asia, may be considered as tolerably certain, and also his high standing with the Tartar rulers of China. Gibbon sneers at him as the prince “of a horde of Koraites,” but the testimonies of Marco Polo and of

* Du Halde, Vol. i. p. 518.

† Mosh. Hist. Tart. Ecc., p. 12.

‡ Gibbon Hist. Dec. and Fall, chap. 47, note 118.

§ See inter alia, pp. 404, 424, 501. Marsden's Edition.

John de Monte Corvino, are worthy of more respect.

During the dominion of the Tartars, the Nestorians as well as all other foreigners, had full liberty to propagate their opinions when and how they chose, and down to the end of the thirteenth century, numerous bodies of them were scattered over China. Towards the end of the Yuen dynasty difficulties arose. Controversies with the emissaries of the court of Rome, who now penetrated those remote regions, and the progress of Mohammedanism, sapped the foundations of their ancient churches. When the Tartars were expelled, and the Ming dynasty came into power, A. D. 1369, all foreigners were excluded from the empire, and we gradually lose sight of them. Yet so late as the fifteenth century, the Nestorian patriarch sent bishops to China, and some obscure traces of their churches are found even in the sixteenth, but after that period, they totally disappear.*

Such is a brief and imperfect account of Nestorianism in China. Fuller accounts might be given by those who have access to Asseman, and other sources of information, but enough has been presented to show that in ancient times Christianity made great progress in these ends of the earth. It is a question of deep interest, "what benefit resulted to China from all this?" Those who look on the Nestorians as heretics, will of course

* Mosh. Ecc. Hist., Vol. ii., pp. 276, 361, 419.

Do not see account of Nestorianism in China. + * Mosh. Ecc. Hist. Vol. ii. pp. 276, 361, 419.

find little pleasure in accounts of their successes, though it must be thought strange that many of the Roman Catholics who anathematized them as the spreaders of a pestiferous doctrine, did not scruple to claim for their own church the credit of their successes in China.

For our own part we consider Nestorius to have been as free from error as the haughty Cyril who condemned him, and the Nestorian church to have been as pure as any other that flourished when it was in its prime. We are willing to believe that many of its devoted missionaries were men of as pure a faith, and as holy a zeal as their generation saw. That the blessing of God accompanied their efforts can scarcely be doubted, and in their success, if not sooner, the prophecy of Isaiah began to receive its fulfilment, "Behold these from the land of Sinim."

It may excite surprise that no traces of these churches have been found, but this fact should not weaken our belief in their existence. Chinese architecture is not of the kind which covers the ground with massive buildings, whose very ruins remain for ages as monuments of their former uses. The church which in one century may have been crowded with worshipers, shall totally disappear in the next, and the light bamboo wave where the equally slender column had stood. Where did Christianity ever flourish in more vigour than along the shores of Northern Africa? The annals of the church are adorned by no

name brighter than that of Augustine, bishop of Hippo. Yet where now are those churches? What traces yet remain? If they have so totally disappeared, it cannot be deemed strange, that a like fate attends those once founded in China. Probably like too many others, the Nestorian churches left the fervour of their first love, and the purity of their first faith, and sunk beneath the weight of infirmities within, and oppressions from without. They have passed away, and on earth their memorial does not remain. But it is recorded in heaven, where the proofs of their zeal, and the good they have accomplished shall endure. And the consideration of their history gives us encouragement for the future. If Christianity once made its way in China, we may hope that under more favourable auspices, it shall again revive, and be established on a more solid foundation.

CHAPTER III.

ROMAN CATHOLICS IN CHINA.

THE history of Roman Catholic missions will form an important chapter in the history of nations and of religion. Perhaps the time has not yet come for the preparation of such a work, but all may derive instruction from the careful study of what has already occurred. A few sketches are all that can be introduced here.

The Roman Catholic missions in China have had three distinct epochs. 1. In the thirteenth century. 2. In the seventeenth. 3. In the eighteenth.

Respecting the first of these we have but little information, and that little not very satisfactory. When M. Polo resided in China, about A. D. 1280, he met no Christians there, except those of the Nestorian profession. Soon afterwards, the Romish missionaries began to arrive. Some of these had been preaching among the Western Tartars, and also those of Central Asia, for many years, and several embassies had passed between the princes of those tribes and the pope. It was particularly during the reigns of Hulagu khan, and Argonus, that they met with most success. In the words of Mosheim, "we can

scarcely declare how prosperously the Christian religion flourished in these days among the Tartars, and what great additions it constantly received. The Nestorians built churches in innumerable places, and many Franciscan monks, *et mendicabant et prædicabant*, both begged and preached.”*

Among the latter was John de Monte Corvino. He was born in 1247, in Apulia, and was sent in 1288, by the pope into Tartary. Two letters of his are still extant, in which he gives a simple and pleasing account of his efforts to preach the gospel. He first entered India in 1291, and after preaching there for more than a year, and baptizing about one hundred persons, proceeded to China, where he was kindly received by the emperor Kublai khan. But the Nestorians threw many obstacles in his way, so that for five years, he was greatly impeded in his work. “Eleven years he was in his pilgrimage alone,” and then he was joined by only one associate. Yet so indefatigable and successful were his labours, that by the year 1305, he had baptized nearly six thousand persons. He had also purchased one hundred and fifty children, whom he baptized, instructed in Latin and Greek, and taught to sing the services of the church, with which the emperor was greatly pleased.†

His exertions were confined principally to

* Mosheim's Hist. Tart. Ecc., p. 76, et passim.

† “Dominus Imperator delectat multum in cantu eorum.”

the Tartars, whose language he had learned, and into which he translated the New Testament, and the Psalms of David.* He had also some intercourse with a Tartar prince, a descendant of Prester John, who, by his means, was induced to join the Romish church, and who not only brought many of his people with him, but also called his infant son by the name of the zealous missionary. But the death of the prince, while his son was in the cradle, blasted the fruit Corvino had hoped to gather, and his people returned to the Nestorian communion.

In 1307, pope Clement V. constituted John archbishop of Peking, and sent seven suffragan bishops to labour with him. These were all Franciscans, and seem to have spread themselves through several northern provinces, where they laboured with diligence and success. Corvino died about A. D. 1330. The little we know respecting him, (though some might doubt the impartiality of a man's account of himself, and of his own labours,) gives us pleasing impressions of his character. It is affecting to hear him say, "It is now twelve years since I have heard any news from the west. I am become old and grey-headed, but it is rather through labours and

* In this his course differed widely from that of Roman Catholic missionaries in modern days. So far from thinking the translation of the Scriptures, a work to facilitate their exertions, they ridicule the Protestants for the pains they take in it, and declare it a work "evidently contrary to the principles of Christianity." *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 1828, p. 48.

tribulations than through age, for I am only fifty-eight years old. I have learned the Tartar language and literature, into which I have translated the whole New Testament, and the Psalms of David, and have caused them to be transcribed with the utmost care. I write and read, and preach openly and freely the testimony of the law of Christ.”*

Nicholas de Bentra was constituted archbishop in 1336, to whose assistance the pope sent twenty-six additional labourers, but of their success we have no accounts. The Ming dynasty came into power in 1369, and being hostile to foreigners, prohibited the missionaries from continuing their operations. Consequently, they as well as the Nestorians lost ground, and we hear nothing further concerning them.

The second period in the history of Roman Catholic missions in China, includes a space of nearly two hundred years. After Francis Xavier had visited Japan, he returned to Goa, and on his voyage passed near the coast of China. His ardent zeal was fired with the idea of preaching the gospel there. Already he had gone to many nations, and crowded into a few short years the work which many ordinary men perform, but the millions of China arose before his excited imagination, and though life was nearly exhausted, he resolved to enter China and close it there. Difficulties opposed his design, and it was

* Mosh. Hist. Tart. Ecc. note XLIV. The letter is also printed in the notes to Marsden's edition of Marco Polo.

only by the most indomitable perseverance that he at last reached San-shan, an island about thirty miles southwest of the present site of Macao. Arrived there, he was doomed to renewed disappointments. The avarice and impiety of the Portuguese merchants who feared that his success would injure them, prevented the accomplishment of his desires, and after many delays, he closed his eyes in death, A. D. 1552, at the age of forty-seven. His remains were at first interred on the island where he died, but were shortly afterwards removed to Goa.*

Several attempts were made in the years 1556, 1575, and 1579, by the Dominicans, Augustines, and Franciscans, to enter China, but they proved unsuccessful.† It was reserved to the Jesuits to establish the mission, which their predecessor Xavier had so earnestly desired to commence. Valignani, the superior of their missions in the Indies, resided in Macao, and often as he walked over her rocky hills, he fixed his eyes on the distant iron-bound coast, and exclaimed, "O Rock, Rock, when wilt thou open!"‡ In furtherance of his desires, he selected three Jesuits of eminence, Paccio, Roger, and Ricci, and trained them for their work; to the last

* Chinese Repository, vol. xii. p. 258. See a spirited sketch of his life and character in the Edinburgh Review, July, 1842.

† See Ljungstedt's Macao, p. 165. Anecdotes de la Chine, tom. i. p. v.

‡ Du Halde, vol. iv. p. 4. Semedo, p. 172.

named belongs the honour of accomplishing the design, and preparing the way for the crowds that speedily followed.

Matteo Ricci was an Italian of noble birth and great attainments, particularly in the mathematical sciences. He reached Macao in the year 1581, being then fifty years old. By persevering efforts he obtained permission to reside first at Sháuking fú, afterwards at Sháuchau fú, in the province of Canton; then at Náncháng fú, and at Nanking, and though several times driven away by persecutions,* as often returned, until he finally succeeded in gaining access to the emperor at Peking. Wánlih, the thirteenth sovereign of the Ming dynasty, was then reigning, and in 1601, he graciously received the presents offered by Ricci, and allowed him and his associate Pantoja to reside at Peking. The pleasing manners and extensive acquirements of Ricci, joined to a liberal distribution of presents,† gained him the favour of the men in authority, and he speedily numbered many of them among his converts. Of these the chief was Siá, a native of the city of Shanghai, and at the time an officer of the highest rank, and

* Semedo reckons up no less than fifty-four persecutions endured from the time Ricci left Macao, until he reached Nanking; a period of less than twenty years. See his account, p. 174.

† Even Du Halde speaks of "the large rewards promised to any one who should procure the re-establishment of the mission in China," vol. ii., p. 4, and the opposers of the Jesuits do not scruple to charge them with using the most underhanded means to gain their purposes.

greatest influence. At his baptism he took the name of Paul, and, with his daughter Candida, proved for many years the most efficient support of the missionaries. They delight to speak of the zeal and energy of this lady. Married at the age of sixteen, and a widow at thirty, she spent the remaining forty-three years of her life in efforts to promote the religion she had professed. At her own expense she erected thirty-nine churches in different provinces, with houses for the residence of the priests, and printed one hundred and thirty books prepared by the missionaries.*

With such zealous supporters, the new religion made great progress, and many churches were founded. The success of Ricci induced others to join him, some of whom were speedily appointed to places of trust and honour, while others scattered themselves over the provinces. Pantoja was employed in finding the latitude of the chief cities, and Terentius undertook to reform the calendar; many of them prepared books on various scientific subjects, and with so much diligence did they labour, that by the year 1636, they had published no fewer than three hundred and forty treatises, partly religious, but chiefly on natural philosophy and the mathematics.† For the better regulation of the missionaries, Ricci published a set of rules of a very time-serving nature. They related chiefly to the rites in honour of ancestors, which he allowed the

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 8.

† Kircher, *China Illustrata*, pp. 109, 121.

converts to practice, because he considered them purely civil in their nature. This was one of the great bones of contention among the missionaries, and a quarrel speedily arose between the Jesuits and Franciscans. The latter accused the former of designs to usurp the supreme power, and alarmed the Chinese authorities in Canton to such a degree, that they seized the Jesuit Martinez, and punished him so severely, that he expired under the bastinado.

Ricci died in 1610, æt. 80, and was buried with much pomp and solemnity. By the Jesuits he was extolled as a man possessed of every virtue; by the missionaries of other orders, he was spoken of in terms of the bitterest censure and condemnation.* No man

* The following character of Ricci is given by a Roman Catholic writer. "This Jesuit was active, skilful, full of schemes and endowed with all the talents necessary to render him agreeable to the great, or to gain the favour of princes; but at the same time so little versed in matters of faith, that as the bishop of Conon said, it was sufficient to read his work *On the True Religion*, to be satisfied that he was ignorant of the first principles of theology. Being more a politician than a theologian, he found the secret of remaining peacefully in China. The kings found in him a man full of complaisance; the pagans a minister who accommodated himself to their superstitions; the mandarins a politic courtier skilled in all the trickery of courts; and the devil a faithful servant, who far from destroying, established his reign among the heathen, and even extended it to the Christians. He preached in China the religion of Christ according to his own fancy; that is to say, he disfigured it by a faithful mixture of pagan superstitions, adopting the sacrifices offered to Confucius and ancestors, and teaching the Christians to assist and to cooperate at the worship of idols, provided they only addressed their devo-

of sufficient talent and established character was left among the missionaries to take his place, but they found protection in Paul Siú, who exerted his great influence in their favour. A persecution raged against them from 1617 to 1621, when by an imperial edict they were charged with "bringing confusion among the people," and were commanded to leave the empire. But the care of Siú obtained a reversal of the edict, and in 1622 an additional body of missionaries joined them.

John Adam Schaal, a German Jesuit, arrived in 1628, and being strongly recommended by Siú to the emperor, was speedily received into favour. His great talents and learning placed him at the head of all his brethren, and caused him to be ranked among the most considerable men in the empire.

In 1631, the Dominicans and Franciscans entered China. According to some accounts they were heartily welcomed by their predecessors the Jesuits, though other writers assert the contrary.* A great loss was experienced

tions to a cross covered with flowers, or secretly attached to one of the candles which were lighted in the temples of the false gods." *Anecdotes de la Chine*, tom. i., pref. pp. vi. vii.

* We learn from the "*Anecdotes*," that repeated efforts were made by the Dominicans to enter China, all of which were frustrated by the Jesuits, who wished to occupy the field by themselves; and the person who succeeded in entering in 1631, did so in a manner "almost miraculous," for the Jesuits had so carefully guarded the usual entrance by Canton, that he was obliged to go to Formosa, and enter by the province of Fukien. *Anecdotes de la Chine*, p. viii. It is evident enough from the account of the Jesuits

the following year in the death of Siú, yet religion continued to advance. But the country was now harassed by the attacks of the Tartars, who finally conquered it, and possessed the throne in 1644. During these troublous times, when one dynasty was passing away, and another was coming in its stead, the missionaries were dispersed, and their churches suffered in consequence.

In Shunchí, the first emperor of the present dynasty, the missionaries found a friend. He appointed Schaal to reform the calendar, into which many errors had crept, and this work was so ably performed that he made him president of the astronomical tribunal, with the title and authority of an officer of the first rank; the ornament he bore on his breast was a crane. By his influence he obtained permission for the entrance of fourteen other missionaries, among whom was Ferdinand Verbiest, afterwards so famous. These dispersed themselves over the provinces, but it would seem that the greatest success attended their efforts in Shensí. It was here that P. Faber was stationed for many years, and the most glowing accounts of his success and miracles are given by P. Le Comte, who afterwards occupied the same province. According to the latter the town of Hang ching, "was overrun with a prodigious multitude of locusts, which ate up all the leaves of the trees, and gnawed the grass to the very roots."

that they did not wish any others to cultivate the same field with themselves. See Semedo p. 246.

The inhabitants after exhausting all the resources of their own superstitions and charms, applied to the father, who promised to deliver them from the plague, provided they would become Christians. When they consented, "he marched in ceremony into the highways in his stole and surplice, and sprinkled up and down the holy water, accompanying this action with the prayers of the church but especially with a lively faith. God heard the voice of his servant, and the next day all the insects disappeared." But the people refused to perform their promise, and "the plague grew worse than before." With much contrition they came to the father, confessing their fault, and intreating his renewed interposition; again he sprinkled the holy water, and the insects a second time disappeared. Then the whole borough was converted, and many years afterward "it was reckoned one of the devoutest missions in China."* Faber "was carried over rivers through the air." He "foretold his own death, and did several other such wonders; but the greatest miracle of all was his life which he spent in the continual exercise of all the apostolical virtues, and a tender devotion to the mother of God."† It is much to be regretted, that in all this eulogy on Faber, by his devout admirer and successor the name of Jesus Christ, the Alpha and Omega of the Christian religion, is not once mentioned.

* Le Comte's Memoirs, p. 357.

† *Ibid.*

While the Papal religion was thus spreading in the provinces, it seemed to be laying its foundations yet more solidly in the capital. The emperor laid aside his usual state when conversing with Schaal, and in the course of two years paid him no less than twenty visits at his own residence. One of his birthdays, when he should have received the homage of his officers on his throne, was spent under the roof of the missionary. He usually called him Maffa, a term of affection and respect, and to show the world how much he esteemed him, he placed a marble tablet at the door of his church in 1650, in which he bestowed on him the highest commendations.*

While Shaal favoured the Tartar invaders in the north, some of his colleagues were equally attentive to the opposing claimants of the throne in the south. The Tartars speedily overran the northern provinces, but their progress was arrested for some time in the south by two Christian Chinese officers, who proclaimed as emperor a relative of the late imperial family, and raised an army in his defence. The mother of this prince, with his wife and eldest son, having professed the Christian faith, were baptized by Coffler, under the respective names of Helena, Maria, and Constantine. It was hoped that he would prove a second Constantine in truth, and establish the Christian Church in China. Helena wrote a letter to the pope, which was gra-

* Kircher *China Illustrata*, p. 105.

ciously answered by Alexander VII.; but the hopes that depended on her grandson were frustrated by three armies of Tartars, which obliged his adherents to disperse, and took possession of the whole empire. We hear nothing farther of the young Constantine.*

The state of favour in the northern capital could not last forever. The emperor died, and Kánghí, a minor only eight years old, came to the throne in 1662. Schaal was at first appointed tutor to the young monarch, but the four regents who possessed the authority speedily threw him and others into prison, loaded them with chains, and treated them with scorn and cruelty. They even condemned Schaal "to be cut into ten thousand pieces," but for some unknown cause, deferred putting their decree into execution, until age and infirmity and suffering removed him. He died A. D. 1669, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. Another missionary also died in prison, and three Dominicans, one Franciscan, and twenty-one Jesuits were banished to Canton.

Their prospects were now dark indeed. After experiencing the abounding favour of the deceased emperor, they were treated with the scorn due to slaves and the punishment of criminals, and might well expect the mind of the youthful emperor to be filled with the constant slanders of his advisers. Four Jesuits still remained at Peking, but what

* Du Halde, vol. i. Kircher.

could they accomplish when their enemies were powerful at court, and their partisans weakened in the provinces? It was the darkest period in their history, but it preceded that of their greatest glory, and a few years saw them triumphant over all their enemies, and going freely throughout the empire. Such reverses mark the course of human affairs.

In 1669, Kánghí dismissed the regents and took the supreme control. The calendars for the year had already been prepared, and according to custom distributed with much ceremony to the princes of the imperial family, and sent into the provinces. There they had been printed and circulated among the people. Kánghí having sent for Verbiest and his colleagues, proposed sundry questions on astronomy which were answered correctly, while the Chinese astronomers were obliged to plead ignorance. Satisfied of the abilities of Verbiest, the emperor commanded him to examine the calendar for the year already in circulation. He soon pointed out so many errors, particularly in the improper insertion of an intercalary month, that the authors who had been the bitterest enemies of the missionaries, were filled with confusion. They were forthwith loaded with chains, while the Jesuits were set at liberty, and Verbiest was appointed president of the Astronomical Tribunal. As soon as he saw himself in that situation, he commenced a series of actions, whose only effect could be

to draw on himself the bitter hatred of the Chinese officers. His first step was to throw out the intercalary month, thus rendering the calendar already in circulation utterly useless, and covering with disgrace, those who composed and sent it forth. The members of the Council felt this deeply, and sent their president to beg him in some way to spare their reputation. The laconic answer was, "It is not in my power to make the heavens agree with your calendar. The useless month must be taken out." And taken out it was, to the great astonishment of the simple hearted celestials, who could not conceive what was become of it, and innocently asked in what place it was kept in reserve?* Du Halde relates this event with great exultation, as a proof of the superior learning and influence of Verbiest, but it may well be doubted whether he acted with the usual prudence of his order, in exasperating the feeling of those in high places. All purposes could have been served by retaining the calendar already in use, and publishing a correct one for the next year, but the opportunity of humbling his persecutors seems to have overcome his habitual caution. After this beginning, all things prospered for a season. In 1678, Verbiest prepared an astronomical work entitled, "The Perpetual Astronomy of the emperor Kánghí," which he presented to his royal master. The emperor received it with such favour, that in a full assembly of his coun-

* Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 133.

sellors, he made the father an officer of the first rank, and gave him the title of *tá jin*, at the same time ennobling all his kindred. He had no relatives in China, but as the Jesuits called each other brothers "they did not hesitate to use the same title. The greatest part of the religious caused it to be inscribed on the doors of their houses."*

The emperor having thus received them into favour, spared no efforts to please them. They were advanced to the highest offices, he even requested them to send to Europe for additional associates, and when in 1689, he visited the provinces of Shántung and Kiángnán, he showed more favour to the Jesuit missionaries in Tsínán, Hángchau, and Nanking, than to his own officers. "He called them into the cabin of his boat, and conversed familiarly with them, when his own officers were not allowed even to approach the imperial bark."† They on their part, rendered him many signal services. In 1636, Schaal had cast a number of cannons for Yungching, and Verbiest performed the same service more than once for Kánghí. At one time he cast one hundred and thirty pieces of cannon "with wonderful success," and in 1681, he cast three hundred and twenty pieces more, "which he blessed in a solemn manner and gave the name of a saint to every piece of cannon."‡ Nor should we

* Du Halde, vol. i. p. 271. † Ibid., vol. i. p. 352.

‡ Du Halde, vol. ii. p. 82, in the 8vo. edition. The other references to this author, are to the folio edition.

omit to mention the treaty made with Russia, in 1689, the principal merit of which seems due to Gerbillon.

It is difficult to conceive how any body of missionaries could be more favourably situated than the Jesuits were, in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Louis XIV. sat upon the throne of France, and both himself and his able ministers, Colbert and Louvois, were zealous to extend the dominion of the pope to China. They selected and sent men of the first talents and most varied acquirements, and spared no expense in providing all they needed, and they on their arrival were received with distinguished favour by the best monarch that ever sat upon the Chinese throne.* When Verbiest died in 1688, the emperor commanded the highest honours to be paid to his remains, and appointed Grimaldi, with equal power, as his successor.

Under such auspices, it is not wonderful that they prospered. In many of the provinces they had their missions, and Le Comte describes in glowing terms the piety of the Christians in Shensí and Kíángnán, and the "wonderful works" that were occasionally seen. Several missionaries baptized one thousand or fifteen hundred persons annually, and the favour of the emperor knew no bounds. The governor of Hángchau threw obstacles in the way of the missionaries, and

* Le Comte's Memoirs, pp. 2, 3.

commenced a persecution against P. Intorcetta. As a last resort they appealed to the emperor, and after some delay, he issued his celebrated edict of 1692, declaring that the Christian religion contained nothing hurtful, but was good and useful, and on no account should be opposed or hindered. Every obstacle was thus removed, and in 1700, having been cured by the missionaries of a disease that threatened his life, he went so far as to erect a church for them within the precincts of the palace, appointing one of his own officers to superintend its erection, and defraying the expenses from the royal treasury. These were the palmy days of Roman Catholicism in China, and it need not surprise us to learn that in 1703, they numbered one hundred churches, and one hundred thousand converts in the province of Nanking alone.*

It was about this time that the geographical survey of the empire was made, with which the emperor was greatly delighted. The account of it forms a very substantial benefit conferred by the Jesuits, not only on China, but on the rest of the world. This work was commenced in 1708, and finished in 1718, by the following persons: The Great Wall, by Bouvet, Regis and Jartoux; Eastern Tartary, Liáutung and Chihlí, by Regis, Jartoux and Fridelli; Shántung, by Regis and Cordoso; Shánsí and Shensí, by

* The Modern Kiángsí, Kiángsú, and Ngánhwui, commonly called "the Two Kiáng." See *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi.*, vol. x. p. 89.

De Tartre and Cordoso; Honán, Kiángnán, Chehkiáng and Fukien, by De Mailla, Henderer and Regis; Kiángsí, Kwángtung and Kwángsí, by De Tartare and Cordoso; Sz'chuen and Yunnán, by Fridelli, Bonjour and Regis.*

But it must not be supposed that all these successes were peacefully obtained or quietly enjoyed. They had enemies, numerous, powerful and bitter among the heathen, but their deadliest foes were they of their own household. It has long been the boast of Roman Catholic writers, that their church is one and undivided, and they freely taunt the Protestants with their varied sects, and bitter controversies. A more unfounded boast, or senseless taunt, it would be difficult to conceive. The annals of all the Protestant churches, furnish no controversies so fierce, and no denunciations so bitter as those of the Jesuits and Jansenists in Europe; and of the Jesuits and Dominicans and Franciscans in China, in the time of their prosperity.† It was these controversies, more than anything else, that led to their overthrow in China, and the same cause, has since that time stirred up other persecutions against them.

The first successful missionaries, in the period of which we are treating, were the Jesuits. The prudence of Ricci, led him, in 1603, to draw up rules to conduct their mis-

* See Du Halde.

† For proof of this see the note on page 53, which is on'y one specimen out of many.

sions without offending the Chinese. He and his successors chose to esteem the honours paid to Confucius, and to deceased ancestors, as *civil* ceremonies; and finding no word in the language to express the name of God, they adopted *T'ien*, a word which to the Chinese conveyed scarce any idea save that of the visible heavens, or else such as were connected with their own superstitious worship. For a while they had the field to themselves, and their contests were with the heathen around. These, pleased with their concessions on points of national superstition, and attracted by the splendour of their ceremonial worship, (which they did not fail to render as gorgeous and imposing as possible,) lent a willing ear to their doctrines. But in 1631, they were joined by missionaries of the order of St. Dominic,* and ere many months the flames of discord were kindled. A missionary who arrived in 1633, soon published his objections to the rules of Ricci.†

The jealousy of the rival orders of Loyola, St. Francis and Dominic, wanted but a slight pretext; and the strife then kindled, ended only with the prosperity of the Roman Catholic missions in China. The Jesuits were charged by the other orders with the most culpable conduct, and time-serving policy; with teaching the Chinese that there was but little difference between Christianity and their own belief; with allowing their converts to

* See note on p. 54.

† Macao and China, p. 189.

retain their old superstitions; with luxury and ambition; and with neglecting the duties of the ministry, that they might meddle in the affairs of state. These charges were made, not by Protestants, but by Roman Catholic writers, and though they were replied to with much asperity, their truth was admitted by some even of the Jesuits themselves.*

The contest after being bitterly waged in China was carried to Rome, and decided by different popes in different and contradictory modes. The Jesuits maintained that *T'ien* was a proper word to express the Christian idea of God, and that the rites in honour of the ancient sages, and deceased ancestors, being purely civil, might be lawfully performed by Christian converts. Innocent XI., in 1645, decided in favour of the Dominicans and condemned the Jesuits. In 1656, Alexander VII., nullified their decision in effect, though not in express terms. Each party claimed his decision, and the question was often agitated afterwards. In 1703, pope Clement XI. decided it in a manner adverse to the Jesuits, but this same pontiff, in 1715, mitigated the severity of his decree by allowing the word *T'ien* to be used, with the character *chú* after it, (*t'ien chú*, which has ever since been used by the Roman Catholics in China, as the name of God,) and permitting the converts to practice their ancient rites,

* Mosheim Ecc. Hist., vol. iii. p. 25.

provided they did so as marks of civil honour merely.*

The edict of 1703 was carried to China by Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon. He was appointed by the pope as legate *a latere* to China, and to give him a title of sufficient dignity was consecrated Patriarch of Antioch. As he was known to be a great admirer of the Jesuits, his appointment was very acceptable to them, while it filled their opponents with equal dismay. He sailed from Europe, in April, 1703. Voyages were not made in those days with the speed that is now so common, and he was six months in sailing from the Canaries to Pondicherry. On the voyage a dreadful storm arose, and they all prepared for the fate that seemed inevitable. But, says a credulous writer, "after a short and fervent prayer, the patriarch made the sign of the cross upon the sea, which immediately obeyed the servant of God. The wind straightway fell, the waves became calm, and a sudden tranquillity following the violent agitation, showed how dear he was to God." At Pondicherry, he lodged with the Jesuits, and it was here, where he spent several months, that the estrangement between them commenced, which led to the failure of his mission. The veneration of the Hindus for the cow, and the multiplied uses which they make even of her dung in their superstition is well known. It appears that the Jesuits

* Mosheim ubi supra, and see a sketch of this contest in the preface to the "Anecdotes sur l'état de la Chine."

in India allowed their converts to continue in all their old superstitions, only taking the precaution *to bless the dung* beforehand! The legate greatly scandalized at this practice, issued a solemn edict utterly forbidding it, which so offended the Jesuits that they never forgave him.* Leaving Pondicherry in June, 1704, he reached Manila in September. Here he deposed the *procureur* of the society of the Jesuits, who, notwithstanding his vow of poverty had enriched himself by traffic, and confiscated his treasures.† These two acts of the legate showed them the spirit of the man, and as they struck a deadly blow at their temporizing course, and avaricious policy, they determined to thwart, at every step, one who promised to become so dangerous a foe.

Tournon arrived at Macao, April, 1705, and was received with great show of honour by the senate, and the bishop. He took up his lodgings in the mansion of the Jesuits or Green Island. He reached Peking in December of the same year, but found innumerable difficulties in gaining access to the emperor. The Jesuits are charged with prejudicing the mind of the emperor against him, and with removing all those who favoured him, so as to leave him almost alone, among enemies and spies. Finally he demanded a

* These statements and those which follow, are taken from the Appendix to Tournon's own account of his mission. See the *Anecdotes sur l'état de la Chine*, App. p. 5-7.

† *Ibid.*, p. 10.

private audience with the emperor, which was granted, but when he reached the ante-chamber he was seized with a sudden and most violent illness. The emperor who was just on the point of receiving him, hearing of it, exclaimed "he is poisoned!" And sent his own physician to attend on him. By great care he slowly recovered, but Perrira and other Jesuits succeeded in gaining the emperor's attention, and he never after was admitted to an audience. He left Peking in August, 1706, and was soon after banished by order of the emperor, and imprisoned in Macao till the return of the Jesuit envoys from Rome. He remained in prison in Macao, till his death, and the spectacles that were during that time exhibited, the intrigues, the deception, the anathemas, and excommunications that followed in close succession, were truly disgraceful. The bishop of Macao, who was completely under the control of the Jesuits, even went so far as to issue sentence of excommunication against the patriarch, which was retorted by the latter in a counter sentence that remained until it was removed by Mezzabarba. The legate died in prison in 1710, having shortly before received notice of his promotion to the cardinalate.*

The decree of 1703 was carried to China by Tournon, and that of 1715, by Mezzabarba, but neither of them satisfied the Jesuits, and both of them offended the emperor.

* See Appendix to the "Anecdotes" passim.

Great as was the favour he had shown to the missionaries, he was too independent a prince to suffer *them* to rule in his dominions, and his action showed that his eyes were at length opened to see their true character. He imprisoned Tournon who brought the first edict, and though he received Mezza-barba courteously, he granted none of his requests. It was about this time that the survey of his empire was laboriously performed by several Jesuits in his employ, with which he was greatly delighted. Yet in the very year in which that survey was finished, he issued an edict forbidding any missionary to remain without a patent from himself, which patent was given only after a strict examination, and a promise to adhere to the rules of Ricci. He also suffered a severe persecution to rage in the provinces of Sz'chuen, Kweichau, and Yunnán in 1707, in which several missionaries (among others Visdelou who had spent several years at Peking) were "driven out of China by order of the emperor, and others were kept in irons until their death."* These were unexpected and fatal blows to the power and prosperity of the Jesuits,† and of all other religious orders. They remonstrated, but in vain, for the em-

* Yet as an evidence of the violence of the controversies then prevailing, it may be stated, that the Jesuits were charged by their opponents with having procured both this order of the emperor's, and the persecution of their brethren, in order that they might have the field entirely to themselves. *Anecdotes de la Chine*, p. 78.

† *Nouvelles Lettres Edifiantes*, tom. i., Int. p. iii.

peror's course was taken. They had reached the summit of their glory, and there is but too much evidence that they were intoxicated with success. By slow and painful steps they had ascended. Swiftly and fatally they fell.

Kánghí died December 20, 1723, and when Yungching ascended the throne, it soon became evident that the chief friend of the Jesuits was gone. In the first year of his reign remonstrances were presented by the literati, complaining that the late emperor had shown too much favour to the foreign teachers, and that they were a dangerous class, because their converts acknowledged no other authority, and in times of trouble were governed by them alone. The governor of Fukien also presented a petition praying for their banishment, and the conversion of their churches to other uses. These petitions and remonstrances were referred to the Board of Rites, and by their advice, a decree was issued in 1724, retaining those already in Peking for the service of the emperor, but sending all the rest to Macao, and strictly forbidding every effort to propagate their religion. Petitions and remonstrances were all in vain. More than three hundred churches were destroyed, and more than three hundred thousand converts left without pastors.* Persecutions followed, and the members of a noble and distinguished family who had embraced Christianity, were loaded

* Ljungstedt's *Macao and China*, p. 177.

with chains, and treated with so much severity that three of them died in prison. The remainder were dispersed through the provinces under sentence of perpetual banishment.

The missionaries driven from the provinces were conducted to Canton, and allowed to remain there, on condition that they gave no cause of complaint. As might have been expected, they spared no efforts to revisit and encourage their scattered flocks, and being suspected they were in 1732, banished from Canton to Macao. Kienlung came to the throne in 1736, but his long reign brought no relief to the banished missionaries. From the accession of Yungching in 1724 until the present time, there have been Roman Catholic missionaries in China, but their efforts have been by stealth. A sketch of them will be attempted in a subsequent chapter.

It is difficult to form a correct and impartial estimate of the success of the Jesuits in China. If their own accounts be received, it would seem that triumphs of the gospel have seldom been witnessed equal to those seen in China. The people were made willing in the day of their power, and their converts in number and sincerity were like the drops of the morning dew. We are told of honour among the people, of overflowing churches, of thousands of converts, and of baptisms innumerable. We are told of self-denial and zeal which the apostles might have been proud to record, and of miracles than which no greater are related in the

Scriptures of truth. Moses with his rod brought locusts over the land of Egypt, but Faber drove them away from Shensi with holy water. Elijah divided the Jordan that he might pass over, but Faber was carried over rivers through the air. When Peter was confined in prison expecting death on the morrow, an angel quietly led him out. Schaal was condemned to be cut in ten thousand pieces, "but as often as the princes of the blood attempted to read his sentence, a dreadful earthquake dispersed the assembly."*

Knowing as we do the character of the Jesuits, which has made their name synonymous with deception, ambition and selfishness, and which led, not only to their expulsion from Japan and China, but to their suppression by every monarch in Europe, and by the pope himself although they were the firmest support of his throne, we receive all their statements with large allowances, and reject their miracles. That good was done by their means in China, we rejoice to believe. That souls were converted to the true God by their instructions, and that in consequence it might be said of some "behold these from the land of Sinim!" we should be sorry to deny, little as we admire their practice or their principles; yet if they preached Christ at all, "whether in pretence or in truth, therein we do rejoice, yea and will rejoice." The praise of perseverance, the praise of untiring zeal, and of steady devo-

* Du Halde, vol. ii., p. 16.

tion to their object, prejudice herself would not deny them. The truth may be held in unrighteousness, but it is the truth still, and it is pleasant to suppose that the truth dispersed by them in the time of their outward prosperity in China, fell occasionally into hearts where it took root, and produced fruits unto eternal life.

But with these limitations, and with the exception of their valuable contributions to science, we find little in the history of their missions to approve. They speak of thousands of converts, and describe in glowing terms their zeal and devotion. But where is the evidence to prove that this zeal and devotion were such as God approves? Zeal and devotion are not peculiar to the true faith. It was no credit to the Jews that they had "a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge." We ask for proofs of *knowledge* of the Chinese converts, but we can find none that are satisfactory. Instructions they certainly did receive, but of what kind? "Catechisms and prayers, solid controversies and Ignatius' exercises," but *not the Bible*. They could translate the great Summa of Thomas Aquinas, but found "weighty reasons for not translating the word of God."* They published an abstract of the moral law, in which the *second* command was left out, the *fourth* changed into "keep holy the *festivals*," and the *tenth* was split in two.†

* Le Comte, p. 384.

† Kircher China Illustrata, p. 127.

They preferred to say mass in the Latin tongue, though their Chinese priests could not frame to pronounce the words aright; and as the Chinese "are fond of sumptuous shows, and magnificent ornaments, pompous processions and the noise of bells, *they took extraordinary pains* to provide them with all that the church allows."* We read these things with pain, but different feelings are roused, when we find Le Comte and Du Halde and others telling us, *first* that the Chinese had "a particular veneration" for the Virgin Mary, and *afterwards* coldly adding, that "they loved the Lord Jesus Christ."

Add to all this, the constant bickerings and open enmities and quarrels (*tantænæ animis cælestibus iræ?*†) of the Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans; and the fact that many of them did conceal or gloss over the distinctive features of Christianity,‡ and it will appear that though good was done, it was mixed up and covered over with a mass of evil. The last day shall separate the precious from the vile, the chaff shall be dispersed and the wheat gathered in. Blessed shall he be whose work shall abide when the fire hath tried it, for he shall receive a reward.

* Le Comte, p. 385.

† [Should such strifes be found in heavenly minds?]

‡ There was perhaps more meaning in the words of Kánghí than the missionaries were disposed to give them. When they besought him to become a Christian and be baptized "he always excused himself, by saying he worshipped the same God with the Christians." John Bell of Antermony.

CHAPTER IV.

ROMAN CATHOLICS IN CHINA.

THE decree of Yungching, in 1724, expelled all the Jesuits and other missionaries from the provinces. Those in Peking were allowed to remain, as their services were needed by the emperor. They were permitted to retain their churches, and to perform their accustomed services; but were strictly forbidden to seek after proselytes. After the first fury of the storm was over, their converts came around them again, and for many years they enjoyed a degree of quietness and peace. But the congregations in the provinces were in a deplorable condition. The experience of the Roman Catholic missionaries in China has ever shown that, however numerous and zealous their converts, the presence of European pastors and overseers is indispensable to their spiritual prosperity. But though driven away, and threatened with the severest penalties if they returned, they did not abandon their flocks. From the number of their converts, in all parts of China, at the time of their expulsion, they found it easy, with due care and caution, to reënter the country, and spend more or less time in different places, confirming the faith

of former friends, and admitting new converts to the ordinances of their church.

They have now for more than one hundred years supplied the churches in the interior in this way; and though some, who were entering, have been detected, imprisoned, and even suffered death, yet they have commonly found others willing to run the same risks in furtherance of their enterprise. The chief difficulty is in the first part of their journey, for they commonly enter the country by way of Canton, and there the custom-house officers are more vigilant, and they have been more in danger of detection.* A trusty Chinese convert is in all cases sent to Canton, or wherever else the missionary first lands, to accompany him to the interior. He adopts the Chinese garb and mode of dressing the hair, and after a little study of the language commits himself to the care of the courier, who seldom proves unfaithful to his trust. Sometimes on foot, sometimes in boats, sometimes like a rich man in his sedan chair, and sometimes under the guise of an officer in his chariot, the missionary pursues his course to his appointed field. If suspected, which is often the case, from the colour of his eyes, the length of his nose, or the fairness of his skin, he "turns his face to the wall:" if addressed with impertinent questions, he either feigns deafness, or professes not to understand

* Since the opening of the ports farther north, the facilities for entering the country are greater, and the danger of detection very much diminished.

the dialect of the questioner. If the case becomes an extreme one, and his conductor cannot browbeat or evade the challenger, he declares him an idiot, whom he is conducting to his friends in another part of the empire; or the party seek safety in sudden flight, and come together again under cover of darkness.*

Arrived at his field of labour, he first consults with those already there, and is guided entirely by their advice. His first duty is to learn the language; and for this purpose, he separates himself and lives in the family of a Chinese convert, where he hears nothing but Chinese.† Occasionally, if the converts are numerous and zealous, he hears confessions with the aid of a manual prepared for that purpose.‡ In this way they find, as all who adopt similar methods will find, that the acquisition of this much dreaded language is not a task of insurmountable difficulty, nor does it require an extraordinary length of time, nor great facility in learning languages to master it. The language being learned, and the customs of the people become familiar, they commence their work. Their fields of labour are often very extensive, and they seldom continue long in one place.

* *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, vol. x. p. 52, vol. ix. pp. 254-264, &c.

† "I was separated from men who spoke Latin or French, as from people whose company was injurious, until I had acquired some knowledge of Chinese." M. Gleyo. *Nouvelles Lettres Edifiantes*, vol. i. p. 38.

‡ *Annales*, vol. x. p. 98.

This constant change of residence, while it diminishes the danger of detection, doubtless tends to the preservation of their health; and cases are not uncommon, where they live twenty, thirty, and even forty years, in a clime which many consider injurious to European constitutions. Perhaps the preservation of their health may also be attributed in part to their adoption of all the customs in regard to dress, diet, and modes of life, which the experience of the natives has shown to be suited to the country.

It is interesting to trace the course of these men, and contrast their condition and exertions with those of their predecessors, in the seventeenth century. *Then* the Jesuits were the lords of the ascendant. The country was opened to them; the nobles of the land bowed before them; the monarch smiled upon them; and the rich and the great flocked to their churches. *Now* they are few; they go through the land in secrecy; they avoid the highways and the crowd; and find their converts among the poor, and "in the country, for in Chinese cities as elsewhere, the spirit of the world is bad for religion."* Rarely too does a year pass in which some of their converts are not carried before the magistrates, and punished by fine, imprisonment, or torture, for embracing a religion forbidden by the laws. Yet it is "during times of persecution that the faith of the converts is most fervent."† Nor are the foreign missionaries exempted from the

* *Nouvelles Lettres Edifiantes*, vol. i., p. 195.

† *Ibid.*, p. 221.

same dangers, as several of them have fatally experienced. "The Jesuits could not succeed in executing the great design conceived by Xavier, of converting the emperor and his grandees: their successors now labour in humility, in obscurity, in the midst of pains and tribulations, and exposed to the dangers of persecution, of prison, of torments, and of death."*

The Roman Catholic missionaries have laboured during the last hundred years in most of the provinces of the empire, but their most successful missions have been in Fukien, Shánsí, and Sz'chuen. The mission in Shánsí, comprising the provinces of Shánsí, Shensí, and Kánsuh, with the oversight of that of Húkwáng, has been chiefly conducted by Italians of the order of the Lazarists. That in Fukien, comprising also the provinces of Chekiáng and Kiángsí, has been under the Spanish Dominicans of Manila. While that of Sz'chuen has been administered solely by Frenchmen.† In attempting a sketch of their missions during the period under consideration, we shall confine ourselves chiefly to that of Sz'chuen, with occasional notices of events that were felt through the rest of the empire.

The mission to Sz'chuen includes the three provinces of Sz'chuen, Yunnán, and Kweichau, and is under the superintendence of

* Annales, vol. x., p. 114. [Since this sketch was written, the Emperor of China, at the instance of the French Minister, has published an Edict giving a qualified toleration to the Christian religion. See this Edict in the Missionary Chronicle, 1845, p. 154, or 308.—*Ed.*]

† Nouv. Lett. Edif., vol. i., Introduction.

the seminary for foreign missions in Paris. Many letters from its missionaries are found in the collection *Nouvelles Lettres Edifiantes*, published in Paris in 1818, and in the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, which we shall often have occasion to quote. This mission is under the charge of a bishop *in partibus*, called "the Apostolic Vicar of Sz'chuen;" another bishop *in partibus*, called his "Coadjutor;" and several European priests, or "apostolic missionaries," besides Chinese priests, catechists, and teachers.

It was commenced by some Italian Lazarists, in 1702, when the Jesuits were in the height of their glory in China, but for some reason, which does not clearly appear, a persecution arose in 1707, and the missionaries in this province were all banished by order of the emperor, except Appiani, who was kept in irons till his death in 1728.* The enemies of the Jesuits do not scruple to charge them with having fomented this persecution, in order that they might have the field entirely to themselves.† M. Mullener one of the banished missionaries secretly returned in 1712, and being consecrated bishop of Myriopolis, continued his labours until his death in 1743. A violent persecution raged in 1747, in which all the foreign priests in the provinces were detected and sent away, and only three Chinese priests were left. The same persecution extended to the other pro-

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. i., Int. p. iii.

† *Anecdotes de la Chine*, tom. i., Appendix.

vinces, and Sanz and five other Dominicans lost their lives in Fukien.* M. Pottier succeeded in entering Sz'chuen in 1755, and being consecrated bishop of Agathopolis in 1769, and strengthened by the arrival of additional labourers, the mission became from that time one of the most flourishing in China. The number of converts in 1755 scarcely amounted to four thousand; in 1769, there were seven thousand, and in a few years after the number was more than doubled.

The missions in Yunnán and Kweichau were also commenced in 1702, but the missionaries being driven away in the same persecution in 1707, they never flourished. In 1755, both these provinces were committed by the pope to the care of the apostolic vicar of Sz'chuen, and have ever since been connected with that mission.†

In 1767, a persecution commenced which continued with some severity for several months. M. Gleyo, who had been about two years in the province, being apprehended, was loaded with irons and cast into prison, where he was kept among the common malefactors for the space of eight years. During this time he was several times subjected to severe tortures to induce him to deny the faith he came to preach. The Chinese officers were loth to report to their superiors that a European had been seized within

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.* vol. i., *Int.* p. iv., and p. 454.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., *Int.* p. iv., seq.

their jurisdiction, and they sought to force from him a confession that he was a Chinese; failing in this they detained him in prison, apparently with the intention of causing his death by neglect and ill-treatment. The constancy with which he endured this long and painful imprisonment, and the fortitude with which he bore repeated beatings with bamboos, compression of the ancles, and kneeling for hours together upon chains, are worthy of all praise. His boldness in professing Christ, and his devotion and sincerity are pleasingly shown in some letters he wrote while imprisoned, and in his subsequent account of his sufferings.* He was not released until 1777, when a Jesuit from the capital passing to Tibet on business for the emperor, employed his influence to have him released, and delivered him to some Chinese converts who speedily conveyed him to his fellow labourers. He was concealed by them, and remained several years longer in the country, though his health never recovered from the effects of his imprisonment and tortures. The courage and perseverance of his colleagues was equally remarkable, for at the time of his apprehension they were obliged to flee from their houses, and lodge in holes and in dens whose possession they disputed with the foxes.† Two of them retired for a few months to Shánsí, where Potier received the episcopal consecration, and

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. i., p. 45, seq.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 101.

when the violence of the persecution subsided they returned and resumed their labours.

About the time of the liberation of M. Gleyo, they were joined by several other missionaries, and for four or five years enjoyed great quietness and much success in their efforts to convert the pagans. A letter written by M. Pottier in 1782, gives the fullest account we have seen of their modes of prosecuting their labours. The number of foreign missionaries at that time was seven, together with six native priests; but these were so few compared with the number of their converts, and their great dispersion throughout the province, that it was "absolutely impossible to preach often enough to instruct them well." In order to remedy this defect as far as possible, they established schools for children of both sexes, which were taught by experienced converts. They also printed books for their edification. Their great means of instruction, and that on which they principally relied, was to prepare catechists and native priests. *The foreigners never showed themselves to the pagans, nor attempted to instruct them in religion.* This was always left to the catechists and native priests, and when these judged their catechumens sufficiently advanced they brought them to the bishop or other foreign priest to receive farther instruction and confirmation.* The education of a native clergy

* In consequence of the peculiar circumstances of the missions in China, dispensations have been granted by the

has always been an object of first importance with this mission, and for this purpose a college was established on the borders of Yunnan in 1780, to which one of the missionaries gave the whole of his time. The number of pupils seldom exceeded eighteen.

Another object, whose importance was so great in the eyes of the good bishop as to merit special notice, was to furnish their converts with crucifixes, medals, and other religious images, to keep up the spirit of their devotions, and "God wrought several miracles among them to authorize this practice." Another object of chief importance (if we may judge by their declarations, and the frequency with which it is noticed,) was to baptize the *moribunds*, or dying children of heathen parents. In 1779, there was a famine in Sz'chuen, in reference to which they remark, "If this plague has taken away many citizens of the earth, it has also carried many to heaven. We have baptized many children of unbelievers. We send everywhere neophytes of both sexes to administer this sacrament to infants in danger of death. In the east of this province where the famine was most severe, twenty thousand were baptized: in the other parts ten thousand more." Once they tell us that in three years time they baptized *one hundred thousand infants*; and soon after, to arouse the compassion and ex-

pope in virtue of which a single bishop may consecrate another, and ordinary priests administer the rite of confirmation.

cite the liberality of their countrymen in France, the bishop writes, "It is certain that in these three provinces there die every year one hundred thousand infants who shall never see God."*

The number of converts now began to increase with some rapidity, and as they increased they were subjected to various petty persecutions. Indeed the majority of the letters in the first of the collections above referred to, are mainly filled with minute details of the grievances to which those who embraced "the religion of the Lord of Heaven," were subjected by their heathen neighbours. The causes of these "persecutions" were various. Sometimes because the converts would not contribute to the erection of idol temples, or to the expenses of idolatrous feasts and processions; sometimes because they would not bury their dead according to pagan customs, or join in the public worship of ancestors; and sometimes because of their breaking off marriage engagements made in infancy when one of the parties or her parents became Christians before it was consummated. This latter was perhaps the most frequent cause of the vexations (or "persecutions," for they are always dignified with that title,) to which they were exposed. When the persecutions became severe, they had various methods of escaping from their

* For the statements of these two paragraphs, see the bishop's letter, *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. i., pp. 347-366; also p. 300.

fury. Sometimes they "fled to another city;" sometimes they prepared a feast for their accusers; sometimes, though they would not contribute to the erection of a temple, or the expense of an idolatrous feast, they would defray the charges of the theatrical exhibition which followed.* If the persecution became yet more violent, they sometimes found relief by applying to the mathematical missionaries in Peking, who had not yet lost all influence, and were able by presents and promises, to calm the rage of the local officers, and obtain peace for the people.† But even they were not always thus successful.

In the years 1784 and 1785, a fierce and terrible persecution raged throughout the empire. It originated in the detection of four European priests going in company to Shensí. They were escorted by three Chinese Christians named Tsai, Bartholomeu Sié, and Peter Sié, and had already reached the borders of Húkwáng, when they were betrayed by an apostate, and being immediately apprehended they were cast into prison, and finally sent to Peking. Tsai with great difficulty escaped to Canton where he was concealed for a time, but the Chinese authorities in Canton, hearing of it, sent to demand him of the Portuguese. The senate after deliberation refused to give him up, upon which the Chinese gave orders that no provisions should be brought into the city, and even threatened

* Annales, vol. v., p. 682.

† Nouv. Lett. Edif., vol. ii. p. 25.

to assail it with military force. The senate however continued firm, and began to arm the forts, whereupon the Chinese withdrew the prohibition on provisions, but continued their efforts to apprehend Tsai. Notwithstanding their searches, he found means to elude them, and finally succeeded in escaping, along with Bartholomeu Sié, to Goa.*

In December 1784, a royal edict against the Roman Catholics was issued and sent to all the provinces, and in every place the greatest efforts were made to apprehend the foreigners and their abettors. In addition to the four whose apprehension gave the first impulse to the persecution, a number of others were discovered, and sent to Peking. M. De la Tour, the *procureur* of some of the missions, was taken in the factories in Canton and carried to Peking, and the hong-merchant who had been his security was glad to purchase his own immunity by the sacrifice of one hundred and twenty thousand taels of silver. MM. Magi and Saconi were apprehended in Shensí, and Otho and Crescencianus in Shántung. In the latter province the father Mariano delivered himself up to his pursuers rather than suffer his converts to be tortured on his account. F. de St. Michael was taken in Fukien, and M. De la Roche, aged eighty years died on his way from Húkwáng to Peking.†

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. ii. p. 44, seq.

† *Ibid*, vol. ii. p. 64-81.

But it was in Sz'chuen that the greatest efforts were made to discover the foreigners, and where the churches suffered most severely. There were then in the province, the two bishops, Pottier and Didier, and six other European priests. Pottier was at one time obliged to conceal himself "for a month in a small house, and in so confined a place, that he hardly dared either to cough or to spit for fear of being discovered." His coadjutor, the bishop of Caradre was less fortunate. He was seized, and such search was made for MM. Dufresse, Devaut, and Delpon, that he advised them to surrender lest their flocks should be persecuted on their account. They immediately complied, and appeared before the officers, who treated them with much civility, but sent them like all the rest to Peking.*

In several of the provinces, the native Christians were cruelly harassed; many of them being arrested, and either imprisoned, tortured, or banished to Tartary. In Sz'chuen they suffered less, as but few of them were called before the magistrates. Their greatest loss was in their foreign priests, for four of them being taken away, there were but four left, and of these, only one possessed the health and vigour to endure much labour and fatigue. Uncertain how long the storm might last, or where its fury should spend itself, they began to fear, that in China, as in Japan

none should be left to propagate the religion of the cross.*

When the missionaries arrived in Peking, they were thrown into the prisons, and loaded with irons; and those already in the capital in the emperor's service were strictly forbidden to render them assistance. It was some time before they were allowed to relieve their most pressing bodily wants, and when permission was received, it came too late, Magi, Saconi, De la Tour, Devant, and Delpon, were already dead from ill-treatment in prison, besides De la Roche who died on his way to the capital. There still remained in the prisons twelve foreigners, besides native priests and assistants. The final decree of the emperor, in October, 1785, condemned the Europeans to perpetual imprisonment, as the penalty of their secretly entering the empire, and preaching a forbidden religion. Their Chinese priests, assistants, and couriers were branded on the face, and banished to Tartary as slaves for life.†

For some unexplained reason, the emperor suddenly altered their sentence, and a royal order dated Nov. 10th, 1785, set all the foreigners free, and gave them their choice, either to remain at Peking in the service of the emperor, or to be conveyed at his expense to Canton, whence they were to leave China by the first opportunity. Such was the state of surveillance under which the missionaries

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. ii. pp. 177, 181.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii. pp. 78, 226.

were forced to live in the capital, that but three of them chose the former alternative, while nine, some of whom at least had determined to embrace the earliest opportunity of returning to their fields of labour, chose the latter. Among these were Didier and Dufresse of the Sz'chuen mission, who left China for Manila with heavy hearts. The lamentations of the latter, which came from a sincere heart, were touching in the extreme. "Alas! China is now deprived of its missionaries. How many infants must die without baptism, and adults without the sacraments! How many righteous must fall, while there shall be none to lead them back! How many heathen must fail of conversion! What superstitions must now prevail! No more sacraments! No more preaching! No more prayers and instructions! No more exhortation to good works, but idolatry resumes its ancient seat!"*

This persecution was heard of with deep interest throughout the Roman Catholic church, and the confessors were treated with all the honours due to those who had almost suffered martyrdom. At Manila, the bishop of Caradre, and M. Dufresse were received with applause. They landed amidst the shouts of the spectators, and the firing of cannon. They were visited by the archbishop, the governor, the senators, and the principal officers, and the authorities of the place pro-

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. ii. pp. 322, 339.

vided a coach and four in which they insisted that the bishop should ride. In Europe the sensation was also felt, and the pope (Pius VI.) published a brief in which he warmly commended the bishops of Agathopolis and Caradre for their constancy and courage, and consoled them for their sufferings.* Many calamities visited China soon after this persecution, in which the missionaries did not fail to see the hand of God avenging their wrongs. Some of their bitterest persecutors came to untimely ends. A typhoon devastated the coasts. The revolt in Formosa was with difficulty quelled. An earthquake in Sz'chuen destroyed a hundred thousand pagans, while not a Christian lost his life; and a famine destroyed many thousands more.†

It was several years, and then only after repeated disappointments, before Didier and Dufresse were able to reënter China. They proposed at first to go by way of Fukien, and then by way of Tongking, but failed in each attempt, and at last succeeded in entering by the usual route, through Canton and Kweichau. They reached Sz'chuen, in 1788, after an absence of four years, and were speedily at their accustomed work.‡

Pottier died in 1792, at the age of sixty-eight. He had been thirty-five years in China, and had been indefatigable in toils and labours. He had frequently been pur-

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. ii. pp. 394, 439.

† *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 430.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 503.

sued, and had once delivered himself up to the authorities, but found means to escape as they were conducting him to Canton, and returned to his post. His self-denial, simplicity, and humanity were admirable. He never wore silk; commonly possessed but three shirts, and lived as the poorer Chinese do. During his administration, the affairs of the mission prospered, and the number of converts increased from four thousand, to more than six times that number. His remains were interred near Chingtú fú, the capital of the province.*

Pottier was succeeded in his apostolic vicariate by Didier, titular bishop of Caradre. It was about this time that the French revolution disturbed all the institutions of France, and the directors of the seminary of Foreign Missions could do little or nothing either in sending additional missionaries, or even funds for the support of those already in the field. They were in consequence reduced to great straits, for they were obliged to depend upon their seminary alone for a supply of priests, and the number thence obtained was very small. This is rather surprising. During a course of twenty years they numbered their converts by thousands annually, and yet out of all these, they found but nine whom they were willing to bring into the ministry. The whole time of one of the foreign priests was given to the seminary.† Yet, notwithstand-

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. iii. pp. 79-84.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iii. pp. 373, 445.

ing these difficulties, the last ten years of the eighteenth century were years of great success, and it was remarked by some that while religion lost ground in France, it gained in China. They had many schools for the young: their European and native priests were indefatigable in labours, and the number of their converts was very great. During the nine years ending in 1801, they increased from twenty-five thousand to forty thousand, and this too, though occasionally in persecutions. In general they were not troubled by the heathen around them, but sometimes a newly appointed officer either to gratify his vanity or his love of power, by persecuting the Christians, threw obstacles in their way. This was particularly the case in Sin-fú, when the magistrate, besides other tortures, forced the Christians to swallow human excrements. This gave the pagans occasion to say, "your religion is very good, but the means with which they nourish you in the offices of the magistrates are not tempting, and we cannot embrace it."*

Occasions to vex them were often taken from their refusing to contribute their quotas of the expense of idolatrous rites, and especially from their refusal to perform the pagan ceremonies at the funerals of the dead. The converts wished their friends to be buried according to the forms of the Roman Catholic church, to which the pagans made great ob-

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. ii. p. 501.

jections, even resorting to violence and dragging them before the magistrates. On one occasion the Christians having no other resource, threatened to carry the body of the deceased into the house of the pagan relatives, and then suffer them to do with it as they pleased. As the Chinese esteem it very unlucky to have a dead body brought into the house, this proposal alarmed them, and the Christians were allowed to take their own course.* They were also often confounded with the Pehlien kiáu, a secret society, whose object was to overthrow the government and restore the power to the native Chinese, which was very active in Sz'chuen at the end of the eighteenth century. In consequence they were frequently brought before the magistrates, and exposed to personal inconvenience and pecuniary loss on this account. But the most common and the most annoying cause of troubles was concerning marriages. It is the custom in China to betroth parties at a very early age, and this custom has all the force of law, even in the public offices. It often happened that the parents of one of the parties became converts after the betrothal, and of course, sought to train up their children in their new belief. When the parents of the betrothed son became converts, there was no difficulty, for the woman he married was so under his control, and the control of his parents, that she was

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. iii. pp. 47, 48.

almost sure to become a convert also. But when the parents of the daughter became converts, and the parents of the son remained pagans, the difficulty became great. The marriage of the girl to a heathen almost ensured her becoming a heathen likewise, and hence her parents made many efforts to break the engagement.

This was sometimes done in a sufficiently unscrupulous manner, and few things drew more odium on the Christians than this. On one occasion when the parents were seeking to break an engagement, a sister of the betrothed suddenly died, and the parents declared that the deceased was the one who had been betrothed. As neither the young man nor his friends had ever seen the betrothed, (according to Chinese custom) the story was believed, and thus the match was effectually ended. It is with pain that we read this remark by the bishop of Caradre at the close of his account of the affair: "I think the faith of the parents and the purity of their motives will readily excuse them before God, for the sin of lying."* This is quite too much like doing evil that good may come. As little do we approve their exhorting some of their converts to a life of celibacy. M. Moyé an early missionary, says, "A member of my flock had a daughter already promised in marriage, but I thought God called her to a life of virginity, to be an example

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. iii. p. 225.

to believers.” Accordingly the missionary sought to break the engagement, which the Chinese considered as valid as marriage itself. The father was unwilling to consent to this proposal, and it was not till he was convinced by a *miracle of healing*, which came very opportunely, that he gave his consent.*

Didier died in 1801, at the age of sixty-one, and M. Dufresse who had been chosen the year before as his coadjutor, with the title of bishop of Tabraca, succeeded as apostolic vicar of Sz’chuen. Of this gentleman’s piety and zeal we are disposed to form a high opinion. His letters abound with remarks written in a Christian spirit. There are comparatively few references to the Virgin Mary, or to other saints: no mention of relics, no parading of miracles, but frequent and delightful allusions to Christ, and appropriate quotations from the Sacred Scriptures. We have been particularly pleased with a letter written by him to some pupils from his diocese, during the time they spent at the mission seminary at Penang. The letter fills ten octavo pages, and with the exception of seven lines, there is scarcely a sentence that would not be readily excused by, or meet the approbation of a Protestant. The pupils to whom he wrote were in a strange land, and surrounded by many dangers and temptations. Their faithful pastor would guard

* Nouv. Lett. Edif., vol. i. p. 412.

them against dangers and point them to the rock where their strength lay. "Be not discouraged; Jesus Christ, who has conquered the world and hell, and broke the sceptre of their power, will give you the victory, if you continue faithful to his grace, which shall never fail you, if you persevere in the love and fear of God so as to give no entrance into your hearts to any mortal sin, and if you wander not from the paths he has traced for you. He will be your consolation in tribulations and labours, your shelter in adversity, your fortress in dangers, the giver of strength in labour, and of resignation in infirmity, the author of light and progress in your studies, your assured defence against all the secret assaults of all your enemies visible and invisible, and a healing balm to soothe the sorrows of your flesh and spirit. He will not suffer you to be tempted above your strength, but in the day of your temptation, he will give you the strength necessary to overcome. Let sin be the only object of your fear."* Could the Roman Catholic churches always boast of priests and missionaries of such a spirit, they would present a widely different appearance, both in Christian and in heathen lands.

During the administration of M. Dufresse, the number of converts increased with great rapidity. Up to 1809, there were frequently fifteen hundred, and even more baptisms of

* *Annales*, vol. i., No. 9, p. 68.

adults in a single year, but since that time the number diminished and has never again been so great. In the early part of his administration, they enjoyed great peace and quietness, so that they even held a *council* of the foreign and native priests, for the purpose of settling principles, and extending their influence. The acts of this council were afterwards published at Rome.*

An event which occurred in 1804, occasioned a violent persecution, and gave the Roman Catholic religion in China, a blow from which it has not yet recovered. The Portuguese and Italian missionaries who still resided at Peking had some dispute about the limits of their respective missions, and being unable to decide it themselves, they referred it to Rome. In order to accomplish their object more readily, P. Adeodat drew a chart of the province of Shántung and sent it with his letters. Unfortunately the messenger was seized in Kiángsí, and the circumstance of such a chart being sent to a foreign power, roused the jealousy and suspicions of the Chinese court, and a searching investigation was commenced. The missionaries at Peking were rigorously examined, and their answers, "which were embarrassed, their reasons weak, and their explanations obscure,"† had no tendency to improve their prospects. The anger of the higher officers knew no bounds. "These wretches, they exclaimed,

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. iv., p. 68.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 137.

dispute about the possession of the country already, though it belongs to our great emperor.”* In consequence of this affair, several Chinese converts were treated with great severity. Thirteen were banished to Tartary, two of whom were members of the imperial family. Three were condemned to wear the cangue for life, two of whom soon died, but Pierre Tsay bore it for thirty years in prison, and was still alive in 1835, when M. Monly passed near Peking.† Adeodat was closely imprisoned, and great restrictions were laid on the other missionaries in the capital. They were strictly forbidden to make proselytes, and were required to confine themselves solely to their mathematical duties. They were not even to send letters out of the country, or receive communications from abroad until they had been translated into Chinese by the members of the Russian embassy, which was an effectual stop to their correspondence. They had also been observed going to the markets to purchase medical herbs, and the Chinese feigning to believe that they wished to use them for magical purposes, commanded them to do so no more!‡

The storm appeared to die away in the following year, and the missionaries in the provinces, who at first feared a renewal of the scenes of 1784, breathed more freely.

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. iv., p. 158.

† *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 152. *Annales*, vol. x., p. 113.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 218.

But the tempest was still brewing, and the calm was deceitful. In 1811, a Chinese priest with letters to his superior was arrested in Shensí, and the court, unable to distinguish between the spiritual jurisdiction claimed by the bishops, and the civil jurisdiction of a monarch, became still more suspicious. The missionaries at Peking found themselves so uncomfortably situated, that all but four decided to leave the city and abandon China. Their departure was viewed with satisfaction by the Chinese, and no new ones have been allowed to go there. In 1833, the bishop of Nanking, who had never been allowed to repair to his diocese, was the only foreign priest in the capital, and he was allowed to remain only on account of age and ill health. Being, in fact, a prisoner, he did no missionary work, and since his decease no foreign priests have resided there.*

In the midst of these changes, the mission in Sz'chuen was still prospering. For several years there were but four Europeans in the three provinces, but the number of native priests gradually increased, and their affairs were perhaps never more prosperous than from 1801 to 1810. The mission suffered a severe loss in 1812, in the death of Hamel. He had spent thirty-six years in Sz'chuen, most of the time as superior of the little college at Loyang kiu on the borders of that province. He had educated twenty-seven

* Annales, vol. ix., p. 270.

priests for the mission, and so great was the veneration in which he was held by the converts, that they insisted on giving him a public funeral, and erecting a monument to his memory. This was done without the knowledge or consent of the prudent Dufresse, who feared that such a display would only endanger the peace of the churches.* Yet at that time there was not the sign of danger. M. Dufresse writing in 1813 says, "we enjoy a peace and tranquillity more profound than ever. '*Post tempestatem, tranquillum facis.*' The government is fatigued with efforts to destroy Christianity, and it almost seems as though religion were expressly tolerated."* How shortsighted are the best of men. In 1814, the tempest broke out with greater fury than ever.

The new governor of Sz'chuen was a declared enemy of Christianity, and as soon as he commenced his government, he began a series of persecutions whose effects are felt to the present time. Almost the first notice of the coming storm was given by a crowd of officers and attendants destroying the college at Loyang kiu. Florens, the bishop of Zela, at that time in charge of it, had barely time to make his escape. He retired to Tongking, but age, infirmity, and fatigue overcame him, and he died in December of the same year. The college was burned, the pupils dispersed, the body of M. Hamel dis-

* Nouv. Lett. Edif., vol. v., p. 32.

interred and buried elsewhere, and most persevering efforts were made to discover the other Europeans in the province. A Christian who was seized, was put to torture, and finding his courage and fortitude to fail, he declared the retreat of the bishop and conducted the officers there. On arriving, he made his excuses to the prelate, declaring it much against his will that he had betrayed him. The latter contented himself with saying, "If you chose to deliver me up, you should at least have sought opportunity to do so without endangering those who entertain me." He was at once led away, and treated with much civility, though kept in close confinement for several months. On the fourteenth of September he was brought before the viceroy at the capital, and by him condemned to be beheaded the same day. The venerable bishop was taken to the execution ground, and several Christians in chains brought thither, and threatened with the same fate, if they did not apostatize. But when they saw their bishop, they fell on their knees, professing their readiness to die with him, and beseeching his blessing. He gave it with a cheerful air, and stretching his neck towards the executioner, was beheaded at a single stroke. His head was exposed in a cage for several days, first at the capital, and then at Kiung chau and Tsungkin chau, where the Christians were most numerous.* This execution of a con-

demned person, on the day his sentence was pronounced, was illegal, but the emperor highly approved of the course of the viceroy, and declared in a public edict that as M. Dufresse had audaciously returned to the country, after the emperor's clemency had granted him life on condition of leaving it for ever, he suffered only the just penalty of his crime.

As might be supposed, the martyrdom of so distinguished and worthy a prelate, excited no little sensation in the Roman Catholic church in other lands. The pope pronounced a solemn address in which he declared himself "reminded of the days of primitive Christianity;" and to honour his memory five new cardinals were consecrated.*

The persecution did not cease on the death of Dufresse. Its violence was rather increased. Multitudes of Christians were tortured and imprisoned, and though many apostatized, yet many continued firm. It was against the native priests that the chief rage of the persecutors was directed, and in four years, ten of them were either put to death or died in consequence of tortures. The storm extended to other provinces. In 1816, M. Tiora was strangled in Húkwáng, and in 1819, M. Clet, after thirty years of labour in China, suffered the same fate in the capital of the same province.†

In these troublous times religion could

* *Annales*, vol. i., No. 4, p. 59.

† *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. v., p. 205.

make but little progress. The churches of Sz'chuen were deprived of both their bishops, and for six years Escodeca and Fontana, were the only Europeans in the three provinces. Their flocks were scattered: the native priests were alarmed and dispersed, and themselves obliged to lie concealed, or to move with the utmost caution. But the persecution gradually died away, and cheered and strengthened by the arrival of new labourers, they recommenced their work. In 1822, M. Perocheau, titular bishop of Maxula, arrived, and immediately consecrated Fontana who had previously been nominated bishop of Sinite, and apostolic vicar of Sz'chuen. The seminary was recommenced in 1824,* and from that time they have gone on with much quietness. The persecutions have been few and unimportant, and they are well supplied with foreign and native priests. In 1839, there were in Sz'chuen two bishops, nine other European and thirty native priests, but the number of converts has not increased in the same proportion. During the administrations of Dedier and Dufresse (1792 to 1815), the number of adults baptized was from eight hundred to two thousand annually, but for the last twenty years, it has seldom exceeded three hundred. The whole number of Christians in 1839 was computed at fifty-two thousand.† There were two colleges to educate native priests, but as it was

* Annales, vol. i., p. 68, vol. ii., p. 255.

† Annales, June 1839.

considered unsafe to collect many pupils in one place, the whole number was but eighteen.* There were also fifty schools for boys, and eighty for girls, and about five hundred persons who had devoted themselves to a life of celibacy and prayer.

Our information of the present state of Roman Catholic missions in China, is not very definite. The following table compiled from the *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, for June, 1839, gives their numbers at that time.

Provinces.	Bishops.	Priests.	Native priests.	Converts.
Kwángtung, Kwangsí,		9	30	52,000
Honán, Kiángnán,		?	?	40,000
Chihlí, Shántung,		?	?	50,000
Chekiáng, Kiángsí,		?	?	9,000
Shánsí, Húkwáng,	4	10	15	60,000
Fukien, Formosa,	2	5	9	40,000
Sz'chuen,	2	9	30	52,000
Totals,	8	57	114	303,000

(* In these provinces there are twenty-four European, and thirty native priests, of the order of the Lazarists, but their precise location is not given.)

Since the conclusion of the war between England and China, and the opening of the new ports, additional facilities have been enjoyed for entering the country, and a considerable number of missionaries has been added to those in the above enumeration.

Before closing this sketch of Roman Catholic missions in China, we add some remarks that have suggested themselves, while pre-

paring it. From this we would willingly be excused, for it is always unpleasant to blame where there is much to praise.

In reading these accounts of Roman Catholic missions in Sz'chuen and elsewhere, we have constantly felt the want of testimony from other sources. They tell their own story, and we have no other witnesses to confirm or qualify what they relate. Even where there is no intention to mislead, poor human nature always tells its own tale in the best manner, and easily passes unfavourable truths in silence. But we fear that a graver charge than this must be made. The Roman Catholic missionaries in China in former times were not famed for an over-strict adherence to the truth in the accounts either of their own success, or of the words and actions of their opposers, and uncharitable though it may seem, we ask, are all these wonderful accounts we now hear strictly true? Until additional testimony be brought we must withhold belief, at least in part. Before this remark is charged to prejudice, let the following paragraph from a Roman Catholic missionary, now in Sz'chuen, be attentively considered. It is extracted from a letter written December 30th, 1834, and signed "Papin, *apostolic missionary.*"

After mentioning his arrival at Malacca the writer adds, "we visited the famous Anglochinese college there, which the Protestants have erected at enormous expense; this establishment so much vaunted in Europe,

is remarkable only for its luxury. Pompous inscriptions sacred and profane cover the walls within and without; but that is all. The school is composed of hardly a dozen of children picked up in the streets of Malacca, and instructed in English, and even these they pay in order to secure their attendance. They have also established a Chinese and Malay printing-press. The Protestant minister who governs this pretended college received us with politeness. Having learned that the Chinese grammar of Premaré had been printed there, we wished to procure a copy, but when we asked for it under that name, the minister appeared astonished. He had never known of the existence of Premaré, nor that he was the author of the grammar, for although their work is nothing but a literal translation of the work of the celebrated Jesuit, the translator has modestly attributed all the merit of it to himself. It was thus also that the late minister Morrison of Canton, after having procured the Chinese dictionary of Basil, and caused it to be printed, announced himself to the learned world as its author.”*

* See *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, tom. viii. p. 585. To avoid every suspicion of mistranslation, we give the original—*verbatim, et literatim et punctuatim*. “*En passant par Malaca nous visitames le fameux college Anglochinois, que les Protestants y ont fait eriger a frais immenses. Cet etablissement, qu'on vante tant en Europe, n'est vraiment remarquable que par son luxe: des fasteuses inscriptions sacrees et profanes couvrent les murs interieurs et exterieurs du batiment; mais c'est tout. L'ecole*

We shall be readily excused from speaking of this paragraph, and its author in the terms they deserve. To say nothing of the paltry effort to rob Dr. Morrison of the just renown acquired by his dictionary, we remark, 1. No *translation* of Premaré has yet been published, either at Malacca or elsewhere; nor has any Protestant assumed to himself the authorship either of the grammar, or of a translation of it. 2. The grammar of Premaré was published at Malacca in 1831, three years previous to the visit of M. Papin, with the name of the author on the title page. It was published in Latin from a copy of the original by the care and at the expense of English Protestants, and all due honour was given by them to the author, while his own countrymen and co-religionists suffered it to remain in manuscript in the Royal Library at Paris. 3. That

ne se compose que d'une douzaine d'enfants chinois ramassés dans les rues de Malaca, auxquels on enseigne l'Anglais, et qu'on est obligé de payer, pour les engager à la fréquenter. On y a aussi établi une presse Chinoise at Malaise. Le ministre protestant qui dirige ce prétendu college, nous recut avec politesse. Ayant appris qu'on y avait fait imprimer la grammaire Chinoise du P. Premaré, nous desirames nous en procurer un exemplaire: mais lorsque nous la demandames au ministre sous ce nom, il parut étonné, n'ayant jamais su qu'il eut existe un P. Premaré, ni qu'il fut l'auteur de cette grammaire: car quoique celle ci ne soit qu'une traduction literale de celle du ce celebre Jesuit, le Traducteur s'en est modestement attribue tout le merite. C'est ainsi, que feu le ministre Morrison, de Canton, apres s'etre procuré le dictionnaire de P. Basile, et l'avoir fait imprimer, s'annonca au monde savant comme en etant lui-meme l'auteur.

Mr. Evans, at that time in charge of the Anglochinese college, could have been ignorant of the existence of Premaré, or of his being the author of the grammar, passes belief. "Credat Judæus Appella, non ego." With these remarks we dismiss M. Papin. Should the editor of the *Annales* ever see this work, we would ask him how he could suffer such a letter as that just quoted to appear in its pages, with his express sanction,* and send it forth to the readers of the eighty thousand copies of the *Annales* then circulated, without correcting what he must have known to be false? It might have been called an oversight had but one fact been erroneously stated, but when a series of charges implicating the moral character of different persons are strung together, it is too much to ask us to attribute all to carelessness or want of design. With such an example of veracity, we shall be pardoned if we ask for additional testimony before we believe all that is recorded by men who sign themselves "apostolic missionaries," and sanctioned by the editors of the journals in which *avec approbation des superieurs*, their letters are published.

In reading these accounts the attention is painfully arrested by many things that recall the *pious frauds*, and the doing evil that good may come, which have been witnessed in the Roman Catholic churches of other

* See "*Annales*," loc. cit.

lands. In all their letters nothing is referred to and boasted of so often as the baptism of the dying children of heathen parents. Believing as we do, that all infants dying before they come to years of discretion are saved by the merits of Jesus Christ, we do not attribute much importance to the baptizing of thousands and tens of thousands. But were it as profitable and meritorious as they profess to consider it, the question might well be asked whether baptism by laymen and women could be considered valid? And even granting this, (which we do not grant,) it would still be a question whether baptism performed by stealth and under feigned pretences could be counted valid? Such is the baptism of ninety-nine out of every hundred of which they boast. Even the excellent Dufresse tells us, that "the women who baptize the infants of heathen parents announce themselves as consecrated to the healing of infants, and to give remedies gratis that they may satisfy the vow of their father who has commanded this as an act of charity."* M. Verolles in 1835, describing the manner in which so many baptisms are performed, writes, "It is done by women of a certain age, who have experience in the treatment of infantile diseases. Furnished with innocent pills, and a bottle of holy water, whose virtues they extol, they introduce themselves into the houses where there

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. v., p. 52.

are sick infants, and discover whether they are in danger of death; in this case they inform the parents, and tell them that before administering other remedies, they must wash their foreheads with the purifying waters of their bottle. The parents, not suspecting this "pieuse rule," readily consent, and by these innocent frauds we procure in our mission the baptism of seven or eight thousand infants every year. O what a conquest! What glory is this to our divine Master!"* We have already referred to their frequent breaking of espousals, which in China are almost as binding as marriage itself, and to the bishop of Caradre's *justifying a lie*, when the parents could find no other means to accomplish their object.

These letters speak much of relics and rites and miracles. Many pages might be filled with the signs and wonders they narrate, but our readers will be satisfied with a few specimens. M. Gleyo, writing from Sz'chuen in 1767, says, "This country is filled with superstitions, and has many sorcerers, diviners, &c. Many narrations equally curious and certain are related showing the tyranny exercised by the devil in these unfortunate regions. It frequently happens that pagans become Christians solely to escape the cruel vexations of the devil to which they see that the Christians are not subject. It is but four months since a man was con-

* Annales, vol. ix., p. 456.

verted in this neighbourhood. He declared in presence of an assembly of Christians weeping with joy and gratitude on his behalf, that when he was on the point of giving himself to God, seven devils appeared in his chamber one evening to intimidate him, and made many reproaches and menaces for his hardihood in wishing to abandon their service. Remembering the sign of the cross, he made it. Immediately the devils fled away, and with so much precipitation, that they broke down the door of his house in their haste to escape. There are many other accounts even more striking and interesting, but it is prudent not to mention them on account of the fastidiousness of some persons who do not enjoy such anecdotes.”*

During the administration of Dufresse, we hear almost nothing of such tales, but speedily after his death we are regaled with the following account of “a miracle performed by the bishop Maxula,” in 1821. “Mgr. de Maxula was giving the confirmation in a little church; at the moment of the imposition of hands, the church appeared filled with fire. The people were so much alarmed that they fled out of the church, and could be induced to return only when reassured by the bishop. I could scarce believe it, but everything is possible to a man who passes

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. i., p. 39. Those who “do enjoy such anecdotes,” will find them in abundance, in the *Lettres*, vol. i., pp. 136–151, 292, vol. iii., pp. 56, 73–75, &c.

for a saint in every place, even among heretics and heathen.”*

But enough of these: although we believe the age of miracles has passed away, yet we have no objection to believe that they *may* occur again. But let them be better authenticated than any we have seen in the Edifying Letters, or the Annals of the propagation of the faith.

The point on which we have been most desirous of information, and regard as the most important, is that on which we have obtained the least satisfaction. The great complaint against the Jesuits in China was that they confounded the distinctions between Christianity and the worship of the Chinese, and allowed their converts to retain many of their ancient superstitious customs: that in fact they merely baptized the Chinese religion, and suffered its most objectionable features to remain. We have been anxious to find whether the modern Chinese converts are more sensible of the difference between Christianity and paganism, whether they understand the character of Christ, and whether they have added to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge. But on these points we are left to the most unsatisfactory inferences.

The letters abound in declamations about the zeal of the new converts, and their devotion, *especially to the holy mother*, about

* Annales, vol. i., No. 4, p. 21.

their fervour in the performance of the ceremonies of the church, and various similar eulogies, but what does all this amount to? What do they know of the God they profess to worship? Even the educated Chinese are profoundly ignorant of the character of their Creator, they constantly confound the Supreme Ruler with the visible heavens, and need much and long continued instruction before they can rightly know him. How much more ignorant are the peasantry and common labourers from whom the mass of the Roman Catholic converts are made. It is no reproach that their converts are from that class, for "to the poor the gospel is preached," and "of such is the kingdom of heaven." Nor are we so unreasonable as to require of any converted pagan the same degree of illumination that would be necessary in a Christian land. But still there are limits below which ignorance is incompatible with salvation, there are boundaries which separate Christianity from idolatry. We have a right to expect where there is zeal that it be "according to knowledge," otherwise we cannot praise it.

With the few labourers employed in the Roman Catholic missions in China, their numerous converts can be but very imperfectly instructed. One of their most zealous missionaries, after enumerating the native and foreign labourers, writes, "*It is absolutely impossible, considering the dispersion of the people, and scarcity of missionaries,*

to visit each place frequently and instruct the people well. It is much when a missionary can visit each of his congregations twice in a year, many can be visited but once, and some only once in two years.”* This was written sixty years ago, but it is true now as it was then; it has always been a correct description of the state of things in Sz’chuen and elsewhere. How can converts so seldom visited be well instructed? What would become of our churches in Christian lands with only such opportunities? Well may we exclaim, “a miracle!” when told that such persons are zealous, sincere, and upright Christians. We are still more astonished, when we read such a sentence as this: “The missionaries tell us, that being forced, in three or four months after their arrival, to preach when they do not know the language sufficiently either to be understood, *or to understand themselves*, they have seen their auditors immediately embrace Christianity.”†—What kind of Christianity is this? The similarity between the Chinese forms of worship and those of the Roman Catholic church has often been remarked, and it may be supposed, without any violation of charity, that many of these uninstructed converts have merely substituted one form of idolatrous worship for another. They take away the idolatrous tablet on which they have written the words *shin*, god or spirit, and before which they

* Nouv. Lett. Edif., vol. i., p. 348.

† Ibid., vol. i., pref. p. vi.

have burned incense, and substitute another of similar shape and size on which they have written *shin, chin chu, tsáu tien jin wuh*, i. e. "God, true Lord, Creator of heaven, earth, man, and all things."* They cease to venerate Chinese heroes, and bow down before Christian saints, of whom they know still less, and whose names they cannot pronounce. They cease to venerate *Tien hau, shing mú Mátsú po*, "the Queen of heaven, holy mother Mátsú po," and pay their adorations to *Tien hau, shing mú Má-li-yá*, "the Queen of Heaven, Holy mother Mary:" but what do they know of the difference between these two forms of religion? Their heathen neighbours see them perform their worship, and while they admire their ceremonies and their songs, they say, "the Christians have a goddess whom they worship, they call her the holy mother."†

There is nothing in the letters of the missionaries in Sz'chuen to enable us to judge of the knowledge of the truths of Christianity possessed by their converts, but perhaps we may form some idea of it by comparing it with that of their converts in India, where perfect liberty is enjoyed, and their missionaries meet no hinderance in instructing them as fully as they desire. The Abbe Dubois, "apostolic missionary" in Mysore, in some letters to his superiors in France, gives the following anecdotes. "I was preaching

* *Nouv. Lett. Edif.*, vol. iii., p. 136.

† *Chinese Repository*, vol. xii., p. 525.

twenty-eight years ago in Tamul, to a congregation composed entirely of native Christians, and repeated several times that the founder of the Christian religion was a poor peasant in Gallilee, the son of a carpenter, and his apostles were twelve fishermen. These words, *son of a carpenter*, and *twelve fishermen*, offended my hearers, and no sooner was the sermon finished than three or four of the principal of them came to me in a very bad humour, to inform me that the congregation was scandalized by my giving to Christ the appellation of a *carpenter*, and to his apostles that of *fishermen*, because the carpenters and fishers belong to the most despised caste in the country. Finally they counselled me, that whenever I should have occasion to speak of Christ and his apostles, I should not fail to say that they were born in the tribe of the Kshatryas or Kings, and never to mention their humble occupations." Verily, these Christians seem to have known but little of Him, *who though he was in the form of God, humbled himself and made himself of no reputation for us; who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor.* Nor does it appear from the account of M. Dubois that he took any pains to correct the notions of his hearers. The same gentleman about the same time writes, "I have at present under my charge seven or eight thousand Christians, and I should be really embarrassed, if out of them all, I had to choose four men capable of comprehending the Bible, or to

whom the naked text of the Scriptures could be of the least utility. I have composed for the instruction of my numerous flock a little catechism, containing ten or twelve pages, in which the principal truths of Christianity are explained. This little work is written in the most simple and perspicuous manner, and to render it more intelligible, I have explained it several times to my congregations, and yet after all this labour, I find that the great majority of my Christians do not understand it.”* Well might the Abbe call them *my Christians*, for had these men been taught of God, and possessed the unction of the Holy Ghost, they would have understood better.† If amidst the quiet and uninterrupted labours of the Roman Catholic missionaries in India, *such* ignorance prevails, what must be the case in China where all instruction is given by stealth, and in constant fear of detection?

It is hard to say what is the least amount of knowledge required in one who possesses true faith in Christ, and still harder to say how much of superstition and error may exist in the heart without destroying all claim to the character of a true Christian. We are willing to believe that good has been done, and is now done by the Roman Catholic missionaries in China. We cannot think that such a man as Dufresse, so pure, so fervent, so spiritual, could labour for a series of years

* Annales, vol. iii., pp. 13-18.

† 1 Cor. ii. 15. 1 John, ii. 21.

in any place without accomplishing, we would fain hope, much that may abide the trial of the last great day. With this belief we look upon their labours, during late years, as having done something to accomplish the prophecy of Isaiah. Of some of their converts, it may doubtless be truly said, "*Behold these from the land of Sinim.*"

Yet in making this declaration, which we do with pleasure, let it not be supposed that we approve of the general policy or doctrines of the Roman Catholic church. We glory in the name of Protestant; and while rejoicing in the good which the Roman Catholics may have accomplished in China, we do not the less emphatically protest against the errors that mark their course, even here. We protest against the profusion of uncommanded ceremonies; the reliance upon sacraments and not on grace; the withholding of the Scriptures, and the mutilation of the commandments; the worship of the saints and of the Virgin Mary; the abominations of the confessional; and the tyranny over the conscience; which here, as everywhere else, are among their distinguishing characteristics.

CHAPTER V.

PROTESTANT MISSIONS IN CHINA.

A SKETCH of the progressive fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah respecting the land of Sinim, would be incomplete without some notice of the efforts of Protestant churches to spread the gospel in China. These efforts, however, are all too recent to allow of much development, and as many of the first actors are still living, it is difficult to give full accounts or accurate estimates of their labours. We shall leave it to them respectively to give fuller details than can now be done. A short statement of facts and a view of some of the principles on which Protestant missions are conducted, will form the conclusion to an article already extended beyond the limits at first designed.

Comparatively little was done by the Protestant churches in sending missionaries to the heathen, until within the last sixty years; and a combination of circumstances prevented any direct efforts being made in China, until after the commencement of the present century. Several of the Baptist missionaries in India, directed their attention to the acquisition of the Chinese language, in the hope of

thus communicating the gospel to this people. Among these the Rev. J. Marshman, D.D., was honourably distinguished. With the assistance of Mr. Lassar, an Armenian Christian born in Macao, and speaking and writing the Chinese language with fluency, he translated the whole of the Sacred Scriptures into Chinese. This translation was completed in 1822, and printed with metallic type in Serampore.* Of the extent of the circulation of this version we are not informed. It is well spoken of for clearness and general accuracy, though like all first efforts, it does not profess to be perfect.

In 1807, the Rev. Robert Morrison, a missionary of the London Missionary Society, arrived in Canton. For some time it was uncertain whether he would be allowed to remain, for the Directors of the East India Company were but little disposed to encourage the labours of Protestant Missionaries within the sphere of their jurisdiction. Exercising great prudence and caution, he was suffered to remain, and his progress in the acquisition of the language was such, that in 1809 he was appointed translator to the Company. This office, which secured him an abundant support, and an undisturbed residence in Canton, he held until the Company's factory in China was dissolved. Much of his time was necessarily given to the business of the Company, but perhaps,

* Reports of the Brit. and For. Bib. Soc. Chinese Rep., vol. iv. p. 252.

even considering the great object for which he came, it could not have been more profitably employed. It is difficult for us to appreciate fully the disadvantages under which he laboured. Every step of his way he prepared for himself. There were then neither grammars nor dictionaries, and he was without facilities for the study of the language, save those afforded by a few imperfect and expensive manuscripts prepared by former Roman Catholic Missionaries.

For several years Dr. Morrison laboured alone, giving his time chiefly to the study of the language, and the preparation of a grammar and dictionary. To this point his attention had been specially turned by the Directors of the Missionary Society. "Perhaps," said they in their instructions, "you may have the honour of forming a Chinese Dictionary, more comprehensive and correct than any preceding one." This expectation has been fully realized, and the Dictionary prepared by Dr. Morrison is still the most valuable of all the books used by the student of the language.

It does not seem to have been the expectation of the Society, or of their missionary, that he should give much time to the oral instruction of the Chinese. The acquisition of the language, the preparation of works to assist others in acquiring it, and especially "the translation of the Scriptures into a language spoken by one third of the human race," were the chief objects proposed by the

Directors of the Society;* and to these his attention was for many years, indeed for the whole of his life, mainly directed. Yet so soon as he became sufficiently acquainted with the language, he commenced holding religious services with his domestics, and with such others of the Chinese as chose to attend. These instructions were confined to but few persons, for the East India Company discouraged all such efforts, and the persecutions against the Roman Catholics, then raging throughout the empire, rendered the Chinese averse to any intercourse with foreigners which might subject them to difficulties or danger. Yet his efforts were not without success, and the first convert, Tsái Ako, who was baptized in 1814, proved faithful until his death.†

In 1813, Dr. Morrison was joined by the Rev. W. Milne, but permission for the latter to remain in Macao was refused by the Portuguese government there; and as Mrs. Milne could not reside in Canton, it became necessary for them to seek another field of labour. Many Chinese had emigrated to Batavia, Borneo, Malacca, Penang, and Bangkok, and it was thought that among these might be found opportunities for extensive and undisturbed operations of all kinds. This impression being confirmed by an exploring voyage made by Mr. Milne, it was arranged

* Milne's Retrospect of the first ten years of the Chinese Mission, pp. 52, 58.

† Morrison's Memoirs, vol. i., p. 408.

that he should establish himself in Malacca, while Dr. Morrison remained in Canton. This was done in 1815,* and Dr. Morrison was thus left alone again, and so continued until the year 1830, when missionaries from America arrived in China.

All the English missionaries to the Chinese, who came between the years 1813 and 1838, were located in the Straits, either at Penang, Malacca, Batavia, or Singapore. The number of Chinese in these places was great; and as many of them returned to their own country, every year, favourable opportunities were thus presented for sending the Scriptures and religious books where no Protestant missionaries could have gone. Schools were also established at the various stations, and the preaching of the gospel regularly sustained. Through the efforts of the missionaries many have been convinced of the folly of idolatry, and a few who gave good evidence of a change of heart were received into the church by baptism.

The principal efforts of Morrison and Milne, up to the time of the death of the latter, in 1822, were directed to the translation and circulation of the Holy Scriptures, and the preparation of works to facilitate the acquisition of the language. The printing of Dr. Morrison's great Dictionary was completed in 1823, and by the joint labours of himself and Dr. Milne, the whole Bible was trans-

* Retrospect, p. 135.

slated in 1819, and printed not long afterwards.*

The labours of the missionaries in the Straits were unremitting, and to some extent successful. The number of converts we are not able to state definitely. But the class of Chinese, with which they were brought into contact, was one by no means likely to be influenced by the truths of the gospel. They were emigrants who had left their native land, some to avoid the justice or the oppressions of their rulers, and most of them for gain. Few of them had their families with them; and in their roving unsettled life, and in many cases, cherishing expectations of returning to their own land, but little encouragement was found for persevering efforts to instruct them. In consequence of these disadvantages, and attracted also by the wider field opened in China since the signing of the treaty of Nanking, most of the missionaries have removed from the Straits to China Proper, where their previous study of the language, and acquaintance with the manners of the people, give them great advantages in prosecuting their labours.

The first missionaries of the American churches, were the Rev. Messrs. E. C. Bridgman, and D. Abeel,† who arrived in 1830. Both are still labouring in China, and have been followed by additional labourers from their own country. More missionaries have

* Morrison's Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 2.

[† The latter has since returned to the United States, in impaired health.]

been sent to the Chinese since the dissolution of the East India Company's factory in 1834, than in all the years that preceded. It would seem that the Providence of God, foreseeing the events about to occur, selected the men, and sent them to be on the ground when the long closed doors should be opened. Consequently, when the treaty of Nanking was signed, by which five ports in China were opened to foreigners, there were Protestant missionaries ready to enter into each; and with the exception of Fuhcháu, which it is hoped will not long remain unsupplied, there are now representatives of the Protestant churches of Christendom in all the ports of China to which foreigners have access.

The number of Protestant missionaries in China is thirty-one. This number does not include some who are on visits to their native land, and others, who, though labouring directly for the Chinese, are not on Chinese soil. They are sent by the London and Church missionary societies in England, and by the societies in connexion with the Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Episcopal churches in America. Some of those now in China have spent a large proportion of their missionary life in the Straits, while the greater part have arrived so recently, that they have not yet had time to acquire the language. But with the facilities now enjoyed in books, and opportunities for access to the people, the Chinese language is by no means so difficult to acquire as when

Morrison set down alone to its study, and we cherish the hope that ere long they will all be able to make known to this people, in their own tongue, the wonderful works of God, and the unsearchable grace of Christ.

With this brief sketch of events, we propose to combine a short statement of the principles and present results of Protestant missions in China.

The Protestant missionary considers mankind as a race of beings who have fallen from their original relation and allegiance to their Creator. By their fall they have incurred the anger of a just and Holy God, and rendered themselves obnoxious to his eternal displeasure. But God in mercy has provided a way of salvation, and has given commandment that it be preached to every creature, and disciples be made in all nations (*μυθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη*, Mat. xxviii. 19.) The missionary hears this command, and feels himself bound to obey it. He is further induced to this course, because he takes, in their plain and obvious meaning, the words of the apostle Peter: "There is salvation in no other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12. He also acknowledges the relationship between himself and the men of every nation, seeing that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." Acts xvii. 26. Considering therefore that the heathen are connected with himself as members of the same great family; that they are in danger

of eternal destruction from the presence of God, and cannot be saved without the knowledge of Jesus Christ,* he cheerfully obeys the command to make known, among them, the way of life through Him.

The main object therefore of the Protestant missionary is to impart to the heathen the knowledge of the true God, and of Jesus Christ, for it is not ignorance, but knowledge which is the mother of devotion: and by this knowledge of God, he seeks to convert him from his idolatry to the true and spiritual worship of his Creator. He has other objects in view of acknowledged importance, but all

* This is a point on which there is much misapprehension, and some will consider the sentiments above expressed as bigoted and uncharitable. Without entering into any defence of them, the writer would state the views he has formed. The heathen, who die after they come to years of discretion without having heard of Christ, cannot be saved. But they are not condemned because they do not believe in Christ. It is no crime not to believe in him of whom they have not heard. They are condemned because they do not act according to the light of nature which they possess; because, "knowing the judgment of God, that they which do such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but have pleasure in those that do them. Rom. i. 32. Their own consciences accuse them. Rom. ii. 14, 15. The writer has never conversed with a Chinese who did not acknowledge that he did many things which he knew to be wrong. They are justly condemned. But their punishment is by no means so severe as that of those who have heard of Christ, and yet have refused to believe, who know their duty better, and do it not. Luke xii. 47, 48. The children of heathen parents, who die before they have committed actual sin, it is believed, are saved by the merits of Jesus Christ.

inferior to this, and most of them intended only as means to assist in gaining this.

Here it may be said, that we do not reckon converts on the same principles with the Roman Catholics. We are not satisfied when a Chinese, or any other heathen, professes himself convinced of the truth of our religion, or ready to perform the ceremonies which it enjoins. A mere theoretical belief, and outward observance of forms, is not all that we require. Such converts are easily made. We should not call those *converts*, whom the Abbé Dubois styles "my Christians," nor should we give them that name, even had they understood the whole of the short system of truth which he taught them so laboriously, and which so few of them understood.

When we speak of converts, we mean men whose hearts are regenerated by divine grace and of whom we have sufficient reason to hope that they are the children of God. In every convert there is not merely an acquaintance with the simpler doctrines of religion, and a theoretical persuasion of their truth; there is also a love of the truth; repentance for sin, a trust in the merits of Christ alone for justification before God, and a consecration of the whole man to his service. There is a radical change, *a new creation*. 2 Cor. v. 17. This is a hard thing. The great mass of men do not love the truth, and it is no matter of surprise that such converts are as yet but few. If we reck-

oned converts as is done by the Roman Catholic missionaries generally, we should number our thousands. There is much truth in the remark which was made not long since by a Roman Catholic convert to a Protestant missionary in Singapore: he said, "You will never make many converts. Your religion has too little to attract us, and requires too much. It is very easy to become a Roman Catholic, but too hard to be a Protestant." Such being our belief, and such the objects kept in view, the means to gain them are the following.

1. *The Preaching of the Gospel.*—As already remarked, it was not Morrison's first object to preach publicly to the Chinese; whether his course in this respect was wise or not, might perhaps admit of a doubt, though probably few who consider his situation, will not justify the course he took. But it has been the chief object of nearly all who have laboured among the Chinese since his time, to preach the gospel, and to tell them "in their own tongues, in which they were born," the wonderful works of God! As soon as sufficient acquaintance with the language has been obtained, it has been the aim of each missionary to preach the Lord Jesus, "both publicly and from house to house." Religious services on the Sabbath, and on week days, have been held in Borneo, Batavia, Singapore, Malacca, Penang and Bangkok, and are still continued at all those places

where there are missionaries. Similar services are now held in Hongkong, Amoy, and Shánghái, and in the villages in their vicinity. The number of persons thus instructed in the truths of our religion is very great, and several hundreds of persons are regular attendants on public worship in the places above mentioned. This is justly considered the most important branch of missionary labour. There are "diversities of gifts," and therefore "diversities of operations;" but the majority of missionaries to the Chinese have it in purpose, to devote their chief strength to this object. Nor have these efforts been unsuccessful. In most of the stations some who are regarded as converts, (in the Protestant sense of that term,) have been baptized: and there are already three churches of native Christians in Hongkong, two of which are under the care of the Baptist missionaries, and one in connexion with the London Missionary Society.

2. Another object, second in importance only to the preaching of the gospel, is to furnish the Chinese with a perfect *translation of the word of God*, in their own language. On this point we are directly at issue with the Roman Catholics. "The Bible is the religion of Protestants," and we deem that time and labour well spent which make the heathen better acquainted with its contents, so that they can examine it for themselves. We hold in its fullest sense the truth of the apostolic doctrine, "all Scripture

is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." Hence Morrison and Marshman devoted their best energies to this object. That the translations they made should be imperfect, was a matter of course. First translations from or into any language, are always imperfect, and this must be especially the case in a language where there are so many difficulties as in the Chinese. But though imperfect they are by no means useless, and those who seek to make better translations are greatly assisted by these labours of their predecessors.

The successors of Dr. Morrison have not failed to endeavour to render his version more perfect. More than one revised edition of the New Testament has already been published, and the one now in use, though far from being perfect, is much superior to those previously made. The Protestant missionaries in China have formed themselves into a general committee to revise the existing translations of the Scriptures. This is a work which must necessarily be slow in its progress. It was nearly one hundred years from the publication of Tyndale's New Testament, until the completion of our present version of the Sacred Scriptures, and it should not be a matter surprise if an equal period should be needed, where the difficulties are so much greater. We deem it needless to enter on any defence of the propriety of spending so

much time and labour for this object, and equally so, to show the advantages resulting from it.

3. Together with the translation of the Scriptures, the efforts of the Protestant missionaries have also been given to the preparation of *religious tracts*. There are many readers in China, and tracts can go where the living teacher has no access, and where large books even could not be safely or easily taken. The tracts prepared, are on various subjects, but chiefly on those of a directly religious nature. The value of such productions is admitted by all—by none more explicitly than the Roman Catholics, who in forty years after their first entrance had published no fewer than three hundred and forty, a number far larger than that yet issued by Protestants. That these tracts are imperfect is admitted, and also that some of them have been circulated with too unsparing a hand. But some have been revised, and those found to be unsuitable to the taste of the Chinese have been withdrawn, and it may be truly said, that our tracts were never more intelligible and acceptable to the people than at present. A judicious caution in giving them only to such as could make a proper use of them would increase their efficacy.

4. Among objects to which much time has been given, that of *the education of Chinese youth* of both sexes, has held a prominent place. In all the stations, and in connexion

with all the missions, there are schools in which several hundreds of youth have been educated. These have not only been instructed in the various branches of elementary education, but constant efforts have been made to instil religious truths into their minds, and in several cases with the happiest effects.

Besides the common mission schools, we may also notice the Anglo-Chinese College, and the school of the Morrison Education Society. The former was founded in 1818, by Morrison and Milne at Malacca,—and though at present suspended, will probably be re-opened before long at Hongkong. The latter was established at Macao, in 1838, and was removed to Hongkong in 1842, where it is now so well known, and so generally approved that it is needless to add more respecting it here.

5. A subject which has of late received much attention among Protestant missionaries in China, is the *practice of the healing art*, gratuitously. The object of this, is to open the hearts of the people by doing good to their bodies,—to show them that foreigners can come with disinterested motives, as well as for the sake of gain,—to win their gratitude, gain their confidence, induce them to receive us as friends, and thus prepare them to receive the more readily the truths that tend to the healing of their soul. The importance of the object, and the suitability of the means to attain it are easily seen,

and generally acknowledged. In this way the prejudices of the Chinese against foreigners are gradually subdued, access is more easily gained, and multitudes are brought under the instructions of the living teacher, who would otherwise have had no intercourse with him. When this agency shall be carried into full operation it is intended that each medical missionary be joined by a clerical associate, that thus we may fully imitate the example of him who "went about teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." To a good extent this is already the case.

There are now eight medical missionaries in China, most of whom are actively employed. In the words of the report of the Medical Missionary Society, "Since the publication of the last report there have been attended to upwards of twelve thousand patients, who have not only had relief administered to their bodies, but many of whom have had opportunities of hearing the Bible, and of the way of salvation offered to man."*

Such are some of the results of the labours of Protestant missionaries in China, and we regard them, not with pride, but with much thankfulness,—especially when we consider the difficulties amidst which they have been obtained. Of these the greatest has doubt-

* For fuller particulars see the excellent report of the Medical Miss. Soc. on p. 369, of the Chinese Repository, vol. xiii.

less been that till of late, China has been closed against all efforts from without, and these labours have been prosecuted at a distance from the proper field, and amidst many disadvantages in the want of facilities for acquiring the language, and mingling with the people. A triple barrier opposed our intercourse with the Chinese. 1. The disposition of the people, or rather, the settled policy of the government hindered all foreigners, and especially all religious teachers from entering the country. 2. The influence of the Roman Catholics was a great obstacle. It was their course which in former times closed the doors of China against foreigners, and the persecutions against them in modern times have still farther prevented the access of Protestants. 3. Even the influence of the English East India Company was unfavourable to missionary exertions. It was with difficulty they allowed Dr. Morrison to remain, and while deriving the greatest benefit from his talents and acquirements, they looked with a jealous eye on all his proceedings. When a word from them would have secured for Dr. Milne a residence in Macao, they refused to speak that word;* and in consequence partly of their objection to all such efforts, all the men sent by the English churches previous to the dissolution of their factory in China, found it more advantageous to settle at a great distance from the field in which they sought to labour. Consequently

* Morrison's Memoirs, vol. i., pp. 366, 368, 414.

the great mass of efforts, have until of late, been expended in fields of a most unpromising character, and more success has attended the efforts made in China within the last few years, than all those previously made beyond its borders.

The question is often asked, why Protestant missionaries do not enter the country and prosecute their labours as the Roman Catholics do? but the answer is easily given. When the Jesuits were expelled by Yung ching in 1724, they had hundreds and thousands of converts, and these were in all parts of the empire. The greater part of them remained unmolested, and were suffered to retain their new belief notwithstanding the persecutions against their teachers and some few of the converts from the higher ranks. It was therefore easy for the Roman Catholic missionaries to enter the country in disguise, and to remain concealed in the houses of their converts. Thus they have always done. Although in the country, they never make open attempts to proselyte the people.

The Protestant missionary has no such advantages, and no object, in attempting to penetrate into the country. Were he in the interior he has no place of concealment, and if detected, as he certainly would be, he has no prospect of obtaining the martyr's crown. All that would be done, would be to take him quietly to Canton, or the nearest of the five ports, and command him to leave the

country. If he made a second attempt a similar course would be pursued by the Chinese, joined probably with a complaint to the authorities of his nation for not restraining him from "wandering away into the country," and inasmuch as Protestant governments (unlike those of Roman Catholic countries,) are more disposed to discourage than to favour missionary efforts, the only result of his efforts to enter the country would be the waste of his time and his becoming involved in needless embarrassments. Nor are we disposed to favour such secret and stealthy means as are used by the Roman Catholic missionaries. When God in his Providence opens the door, it will be found that Protestant missionaries are not backward to enter, and if called to endure the martyr's death, we have every confidence that the spirit of their fathers, and the spirit of their God, which has enabled many in times past to yield up their lives at the stake, will be found to dwell in their hearts still.

In addition to the direct influences and results of Protestant missions in China, there are others of importance which, though they have less relation to religion, should not be overlooked.

1. There is an influence on the social and literary habits of the Chinese people. Hitherto, few have associated on terms of familiar intercourse with them, except the missionaries. Few have spoken with them in their

own language, and there have been few others to whom they could go for information respecting other countries. Hence, much of what they have learned of the customs, modes of life, history, and the sciences of foreigners, has been communicated by missionaries. The children in the mission schools are often better acquainted with the principles of geography, natural history, and the sciences in general, than the literati of the nation, or the emperor's prime ministers. The person from whom Kíying now derives much of his information respecting other countries, was educated entirely by an American Protestant missionary. The influence of the scholars in the mission schools bids fair to become great. In its nature it must progress slowly at first, but as one after another becomes enlightened and returns to the bosom of his family and friends, it will become more and more extensive. Is it anticipating too much to hope that thus the literature and arts of western nations shall be transfused into the Chinese mind?

Numerous efforts have been made to introduce among the Chinese the art of printing with metallic type; most of these have been made by Protestant missionaries, and they have been attended with so much success, that we anticipate seeing, at no distant day, the cumbrous and imperfect mode of block-printing giving way to the neater, cheaper, and more expeditious methods of more civilized lands.

2. The influence exerted by Protestant missionaries in bringing the Chinese into more friendly relations with foreign lands, is also worthy of notice. This influence is exerted, partly as stated above, by bringing the habits, feelings, and literature of foreigners into closer contact with the Chinese mind: partly by diffusing information respecting China, among foreigners: and partly by more direct efforts. Much of what is known of China comes to us through former Roman Catholic missionaries, but a large part of what has been learned more recently, is from the Protestants. It is scarcely needful to refer to the communications of Dr. Morrison, and the pages of the Chinese Repository.

It is well known that the greater part of the facilities for acquiring the Chinese language have been prepared by Protestant missionaries. With the exception of the excellent work of Premaré, (a work however of little use to a beginner, and one too which but for the care of Protestant missionaries, would scarcely have been published,) the greater part of the dictionaries, grammars, and other elementary books and translations are the work of Protestants. We do not forget the numerous and valuable contributions of P. Gonçalves, but unfortunately they are in a language little used by those who study Chinese, and they are much less known than they deserve.

The friendly intercourse between the Chinese government and people and foreign na-

tions, during the last thirty-five years, has been greatly facilitated by the presence and exertions of those of whom we speak. The station held by Dr. Morrison was considered so important, that when he was dismissed from it by order of the English East India Company for pursuing his missionary labours, their agents in China assumed the responsibility of retaining him in their service.* His exertions during the embassy to Peking in 1815, commanded the unqualified approbation of the persons composing that embassy. When he died, his place was taken by his son, J. R. Morrison, Esq., a man, who with all his father's abilities and acquirements, was not less devoted to the missionary cause. The writer will not soon forget the deep feeling with which Mr. Morrison once said to him, "I wish you would call on me, whenever you think I can be of service to you. I cannot be a missionary myself, but it is one of my first objects to assist those who are, and to further the cause of Christ in China." The importance of his services in promoting friendly feelings between China and Great Britain were not overrated by the late governor of Hongkong, when he called his death "a national loss."

The late treaty between China and the United States of America was negotiated by the assistance of Protestant missionaries. In all the ports yet opened to foreigners fre-

* Morrison's Memoirs, vol. i., p. 415.

quent recourse has been had to them, by both natives and foreigners, and that too, in cases where the lives of many persons depended on their exertions. It is not for us to repeat the praises often bestowed upon them, but we may be permitted to hope that the blessing pronounced upon the "peace makers," may long continue to be deserved by them.

With this review of all that has been done to spread the knowledge of the true God in China, it is not difficult to answer the question, whether the prophecy in Isaiah respecting the land of Sinim has been fulfilled. Much has been done to give this people the knowledge of the truth. God has not left himself without witness even here; and as far as China is concerned, there is no force in the common remark, that Christianity was not intended for the world, because so many nations have been left in ignorance.

Something was done by the Jews, and more by the early Christians. In the time of the Nestorians the knowledge of God in China received its greatest extension. Something has since been done by the Roman Catholics and by the Protestants, and the signs of the times encourage us to hope for more. The future is full of hope.

If the prophecy contemplates the conversion of the whole land to God,—as we firmly believe it does,—then it has yet received but a partial fulfilment. And herein we find one of the greatest encouragements to per-

severing efforts to evangelize this empire. No word of God can possibly fail. What he has predicted must come to pass; and the but partially fulfilled prophecy, respecting the Land of Sinim, offers to every lover of the best good of this land, one of the most cheering inducements to labour. The time of its accomplishment is daily drawing nearer, and no devices or opposition of man can hinder it.

APPENDIX.

TOLERATION OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION IN CHINA.

WE insert, as an Appendix, the Edict of the Emperor of China tolerating the Christian religion in a portion of his dominions. It is to the exertions of the French Ambassador that Christianity is indebted for this toleration, which it has never before enjoyed; yet it is understood that this toleration not only extends in form to Roman Catholics, but that its provisions are equally favourable to Protestants. It does not confer all the liberty that could be desired, but its provisions will be of great value in the prosecution of missions in China.

EDICT OF THE EMPEROR OF CHINA.

Keying, Imperial Commissioner, and Viceroy of Canton and Kwang-se provinces, respectfully memorializes [the Emperor] as follows:

It appears that the religion of the Lord of Heaven is honoured and observed by the various nations of Europe, mainly with the view of exhorting to the practice of virtue, and repressing vice. Ever since the Ming dynasty it has made its way

into China, and has not yet been prohibited; but because some of the adherents of that religion in China have repeatedly made a handle of their religion to act viciously, therefore the officers of government, on discovering the same, have punished them, as is on record. During the reign of the Emperor Keaking it was first determined to distinguish these and punish them for their offences, the sole object of which regulation was to prevent the professors of the said religion in China from practising wickedness, and not with the view of issuing prohibitions against the religion of foreign and European nations. Now, according to the request of the envoy of the French nation, Lagrené, that the virtuous professors of the said religion in China should be exonerated from blame, it appears suitable to accede thereto; and it is proper to request that henceforth, with regard to all persons, whether Chinese or foreigners, professing the religion of the Lord of Heaven, who do not create disturbances, nor act improperly, it be humbly entreated of the Imperial benevolence to grant that they be exonerated from blame. But if such persons resume their former ways, and, independently of their professions, commit other crimes and misdemeanors, then they will be dealt with according to existing laws. With regard to the French, and the subjects of other foreign nations, who profess the aforesaid religion, it is only permitted to them to build churches at the five ports opened for foreign commerce, and they must not improperly enter the inner land to diffuse their faith. Should any offend against the regulations, and overstep the boundaries, the local officers, as soon as they can apprehend them, shall immediately deliver them over to the consuls of the different nations to be punished;

but they must not rashly inflict upon them the punishment of death. This is in order to manifest a tender regard for the common people, so that the wheat and the chaff is not confusedly mixed together, and that reason and law may be equitably administered. That which is requested is, that the good and honest professors of the afore-said religion may be exempted from punishment: it is reasonable therefore that a respectful memorial be presented, intreating that by the imperial favour the above suggestions may be carried into effect.

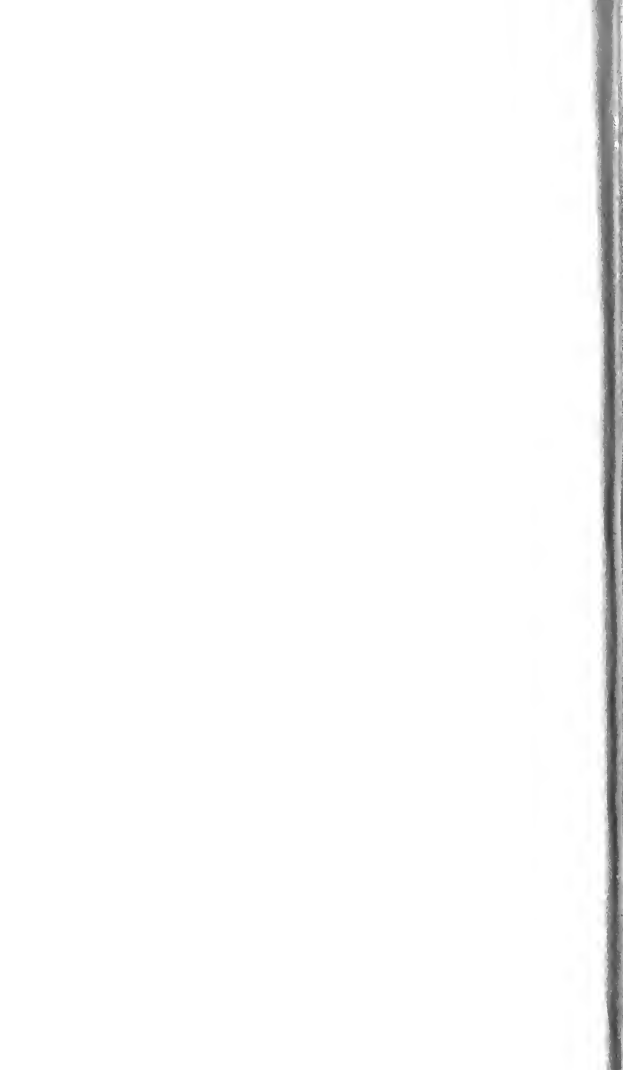
On the 24th year of Toan Kwang, 11th month, 19th day, (Dec. 28, 1844,) was received the Imperial reply, saying,

“LET IT BE AS IS REQUESTED. RESPECT THIS.”

On the 12th month and the 25th day, (Feb. 1, 1845,) the order arrived at Saochow, (capital of Keangnan.)

THE END.

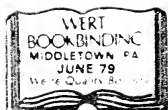




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