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AN APPEAL IN BEHALF OF CHINA.

NOTE.—*This appeal, written and addressed to christians in England, was while in manuscript submitted for perusal to the Editor of the Chinese Repository. And it is at his suggestion and earnest request that it is published in China.*

Canton, China.

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AN APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS

IN BEHALF OF CHINA.

by
Charles Gutzlaff

IN ALL cases where pecuniary aid is required, it is necessary to point out the excellency of the object, in which we ask the co-operation of our fellow christians. Benevolent institutions at the present day are so numerous, that appeals to christian sympathy are generally met either with indifference, or that languid zeal, which has so many channels into which to divide itself, that its forces can never be concentrated in a single point. There are, however, exceptions; and many are enthusiastic in the promulgation of the gospel.

We look, in the present instance, for something more than mere money. Nor have we much to say in behalf of the great work, this can speak for itself; and so far as regards the means to accomplish it, we are confident and know by experience, that God will supply them. We only wish to discharge our obligations of making known to all our fellow christians, the feeble beginnings of a great and glorious work, which if properly followed up will lead to the most glorious results. We

would not however, be too sanguine in our expectations, nor visionary in our predictions, but simply look to God, who has begun the good work, and who will, doubtless, also accomplish it. Let us not on the other hand be too diffident; a firm reliance upon his almighty power will carry those, who enter upon the work, through all dangers; and things unheard of, or considered impossible, can soon be accomplished. The writer of this, considers himself an unworthy instrument,—not in the language of affectation, but in truth; he desires ardently that his name may be forgotten, since it is written in heaven, provided the holy cause of God fill the mind of every reader.

China has hitherto been considered inaccessible to the gospel. With its 350 millions of immortal souls, with its extensive sway over numerous hords of semi-barbarians, and with its many other vassals, it presents an unbroken strong-hold of Satan, which is fortified by anti-national laws, and made impregnable by ancient customs. What a painful sight to behold these myriads in Satan's thralldom, in the darkness of degrading idolatry, without a God and Savior; and withal, to behold the mountains of impossibilities which seem to render their borders impenetrable by the light of truth. We have pity on barbarous nations, which in a state of savage life dishonor human nature by the abominations of heathenism; but here we meet a people endowed with a good share of natural understanding, polished by the hand of civilization, and superior to the Mohammedan Asiatics, degraded by brutal Budhism, led astray by Taouism, and estranged by Atheism. Whoever has beheld these millions of China in such a state, and who cherishes in his bosom the feelings of common humanity, will pity them; but a soul touched by the divine Savior's love will weep for them, and pray earnestly that the salvation of our God may be granted

unto them. Alas, China has found few advocates in christendom. We have been content to say a few words upon the subject, and after having lamented their lot, we have left them to themselves. There has been a general excuse;—We can find no access to them; the government counteracts all efforts to enlighten them; we must be satisfied with instructing the settlers in the Indian Archipelago, and wait till the barrier of national exclusion is removed. At the same time we may prepare the scriptures in their language, issue tracts, and render the study of their difficult language easy by philological works. We may open schools, to instruct the youth in our settlements, and thus imbue their minds with the doctrines of christianity.

These attempts are highly laudable, and the individuals engaged in the work are praiseworthy, and their labors and their zeal will find a rich reward in eternity. It is unnecessary to speak of the success which has followed their efforts; nor need we name those conspicuous individuals, whose labors of patience have contributed so greatly towards opening the way of evangelizing China. Instead however of being satisfied with what has been done, we ought to press forward till we have found access to the empire itself. Are there any obstacles too great for the Lord, who has commanded us to preach the gospel to all nations, and at the same time promised to be with us till the end of the world? Considerations of this kind ought to make us bold in attacking the bulwarks of Satan, even though the whole world were in array against us.

If the visionary project of subjecting all mankind to the spiritual jurisdiction of the pope, could embolden men to enter this empire at the peril of their lives, how much more ought we to be undaunted in the work of God, to subject this nation to the sway of Christ, the Lord of all? We aim at nothing

but the glory of God. The Roman catholic missionaries overcame all difficulties by their perseverance, and gradually gained ground; and we, being clad with the armor of God, are we not able to conquer? When they entered China, the intercourse between distant nations was exceedingly imperfect, the intercourse with China very little, the prejudices of the Chinese against foreigners were much stronger than at present; but notwithstanding all these impediments, they found their way into every part of the empire. In our days the ships fly through the ocean, our mercantile intercourse is on the increase, and national antipathy is partly worn away,—possessing now all these advantages, is there not a greater prospect of success? But still the same system of national exclusion is in force, and in point of liberal intercourse we have scarcely gained anything. In other countries we have had to meet more formidable obstacles; and they have been overcome. Yet in China we despair. Witness the Romish missionaries; see with what a perseverance they withstood the sweeping regulations of national exclusion. We disapprove entirely of their measures; we detest the cause as far as mere popery is concerned; but to stand firm till death, boldly to brave all dangers to accomplish the end, is heroism, and highly recommendable to protestant missionaries.

The writer of this was deeply impressed with these and similar considerations, when against the wishes of his friends he ventured upon a voyage to China. Having left Siam, his former station, he embarked on board a Chinese junk for Teen-tsin, a large trading town in the neighborhood of Peking. He was weak with sickness, borne down with grief, and in the most feeble situation imaginable. Though he despaired of life, he thought it better to die in defence of the great cause, than to linger on a sick bed. After arriving in the Chaou-chow district on

the eastern frontiers of Canton, he saw himself surrounded by millions, who had never heard the sound of salvation. He distributed books, which were gladly received; this roused his sinking spirits. The voyage to Fuhkeen and Shantung was fraught with disasters; and he had his full share of sufferings. Instead of finding the mandarins vigilant to watch his motions, he met with none, and was quite at liberty to converse with the natives who visited him from curiosity. Teen-tsin in Pih-chih-le province furnishes a large field for giving medical assistance. This opened the way for religious instructions, his company was sought, and he was scarcely noticed by the government. After visiting Mantchou Tartary, he returned to Canton, where he was kindly received by Dr. Morrison. It appeared that we might carry on the work of an evangelist without involving us in any danger, and that the Chinese government was by no means so hostile as to preclude every attempt to promote the glorious gospel. This was in the year 1831.

Meanwhile the attention of the British Factory in China had been directed towards the northern ports of the Chinese empire,—which in days of yore had been visited by the English ships. They therefore fitted out an expedition, to which the writer was appointed surgeon and interpreter. The *Lord Amherst*, (this was the name of the ship sent on this enterprise,) went up the coast in March 1832.

Unfavorable winds detained us a long time in different ports of Canton province. Mr. L., the supercargo, gave me full liberty to distribute the word of eternal life, which was everywhere joyfully received. Arriving in Amoy harbor, the greatest emporium of Fuhkeen, we were treated as enemies, and found but few opportunities of making known the riches of the gospel to a people, who claimed me as *a native* of their district. We then

visited the Pescadore islands; and from thence stretched over to Formosa. No interference of the mandarins hindered the people from intercourse with us; we had many visitors, and the demand for christian books was great. Christianity once flourished on this island, but we now found no vestiges of it remaining.

At Fuh-chow also, the capital of Fuhkeen, we were unshackled in our proceedings; the crowd of natives who thronged us for medical assistance and books, was immense. We here met with Roman catholics; they informed us that *they were printing the New Testament*. Nothing astonished them more than that we had been able to publish it in their own language; the only thing they regretted was, that we should distribute these precious books to the "ignorant and blind heathens!"

Hastening towards Chekeang, we entered the port of Ning-po. The natives here are a very amiable race, and of all whom we have hitherto met, the most promising as regards the introduction of the gospel among them. This opinion was still more corroborated by our visit to the Kin-tang island. After having staid a considerable time at Shang-hae in Keangsoo province, (which with Ganhwuy province formerly bore the name of Keangnan,) we departed for Shantung; and thence passed over to Corea. In all our excursions on shore we scattered the word of eternal life. Neither in Chekeang nor Keangnan did we find the *people* prejudiced against it; they read it eagerly, and I can now say, not in vain.

As far as my knowledge extends, the mandarins interfered only twice with the distribution of books; and then they made but a feeble effort to discountenance what they could not disapprove. Wei, the lieut. Governor of Fuhkeen, asked me for a set of christian books, and sent them up for examination to the Emperor. *Taou-kuang*, the reigning monarch,

who has never shown hostility to the catholics, passed no censure upon the glorious gospel; and the magnates at Peking, who examined into its doctrines, did not denounce it,—but they withheld likewise their approbation.

On our first arrival at Corea we met with no opposition in making known the truth of the eternal God; but afterwards, when we came in contact with the royal commissioners, we found that the door was shut. However the king received a whole copy of the Scriptures, in twenty-one volumes, and a double set of all the tracts, among the presents which we sent to him. Notwithstanding the severest prohibitions, and the anti-national character both of the government and the nation, the good seed is sown in this remote country, and will ere long gloriously spring up and yield fruit.

From some unaccountable cause we found the Loochooans, whom we next visited, prejudiced against the word of life. This remark however applies only to the government: *the people were anxious* to obtain copies of the New Testament, and of our numerous tracts. As often as they were freed from the presence of their rulers, they eagerly pressed forward to obtain from us these books.

After having returned to Macao, in September 1832, I received several offers to go upon a new expedition, of which the utmost limits were to be Mantchou Tartary. Though this new attempt was on some accounts highly objectionable, nevertheless I embarked, and entered the service of a great commercial house, as surgeon and interpreter.

We departed in October, met tremendous gales, and arrived in November in Mantchou Tartary. Whilst I scattered the seed of eternal life in those distant regions, and anticipated the joy of doing so from the southern shores up to the Chinese Great Wall, our ship struck the ground, and we

suffered the most intense cold. But when God had saved us from this imminent peril, we directed our course to Shang-hae. Most joyfully were we received by the natives. Six months before they had read our books; now they understood their contents, and wanted a fuller instruction in the way of life.

During our further progress in the northern parts of Chekeang province, and among the Chusan islands, I had ample reason to praise our glorious Saviour for opening so wide a door to the introduction of the holy gospel. All that I had formerly seen was nothing compared with the ardent desire now evinced by the natives to obtain books. Many, many thousands of the plainest essays upon the most essential doctrines, have found their way to all the adjacent districts; and had I had a million of tracts, and fifty thousand copies of the Scriptures, they would all have been scattered amongst eager readers. My most sanguine expectations have been far surpassed. I marvel and adore in the dust. Curiosity, I confess, had a great share in rousing the people to be impetuous in their demands; but at the same time, I see in it a higher hand. Are the bowels of mercy of a compassionate Saviour shut against these millions? Does his all comprehending love exclude these millions? *Before him China is not shut*; he, the almighty conqueror of death and hell, will open the gates of heaven for these myriads,—he has opened them.

When we arrived at Fuhkeen, in our return, my large store of books was exhausted, and I had to send away numerous applicants empty handed. After a dangerous voyage, we reached Lintin, near Macao, April 29th 1833.

Whilst writing this, I anticipate the pleasure of being again very soon in the northern ports of China, and of remaining there for an indefinite

time. We have experienced many severe trials, and have had to struggle with almost insurmountable difficulties; but God has never forsaken us. Our communication with the greatest part of this extensive coast, where we may have intercourse with more than fifty millions of Chinese, may now be considered as established. Let us not however, expect too great results from these very feeble attempts; but let us believe, that the Almighty God who has granted his blessing on the beginning of the work, will not suffer China to carry on any longer her system of exclusion. Appalling difficulties may frequently arise; but what are they before an omnipotent God? The decree of evangelizing China is passed in heaven; what therefore can all the contrary decrees of the pretended "son of heaven" avail? I am happy to say the supreme government at Peking has hitherto not denounced evangelical doctrines as dangerous, but merely censured them as unclassical. Yet should they dare to dencunce them, it would only rouse the spirit of the nation to inquire further into the truth of the gospel.

But let me not draw too favorable a picture of the Chinese nation; though they harbor no peculiar prejudices against foreign creeds, they are entirely engrossed with the things of this world; their hearts are steeled against religious impressions, whilst they satisfy their minds with the punctilious observance of mere rites. We are however by no means dejected on this account; it is the work of God, in which we are engaged; the Saviour has promised to send the Holy Spirit, and we trust that by his powerful agency a glorious change will be wrought.—The wild migratory barbarians, whose hords once started from the frontiers of China and went on inundating and conquering all Europe, were brought to the obedience of the gospel when amalgamated with the German

tribes; why should not the Chinese be benefitted by its celestial rays?

The writer addresses himself to simple-hearted christians. He beseeches them to pray earnestly that God may send the Holy Spirit from on high, to enlighten the darkness. He wishes to speak to kindred souls, who are ready to sacrifice their all, that China may be evangelized, and Christ glorified. Is there no body, who having the goods of this world, will dedicate both his substance and himself to the great cause, by becoming a traveling preacher in China without burthening any society? Among the thousands of English vessels, is there none which will eventually perform the voyage along all the coast, visiting every place in its way, *to benefit the heathen?*

We have no intention of draining public funds which are already so much exhausted, but we wish to see individual efforts, which if well directed, will produce most glorious results. May the Father of all them who adore our Lord Jesus Christ in spirit and truth, call some of his children to these regions where there is abundance of work, and but few laborers.

Millions of Bibles and tracts will be wanted; and I trust that these will be furnished, persuaded that *He* who opens the door for the introduction of the gospel, will also furnish the means for its propagation.

CHARLES GUTZLAFF.

Canton, China, May 25th, 1833.