Opening Service of the Kuling Church,

AND

THE PRESENT ASPECT

OF THE

Missionary Work in China,

BY

Rev. Griffith John, D.D.

Printed at the "Shanghai Mercury" Office.
A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

Opening Service of the Kuling Church,

August, 14th 1898,

BY

REV. GRIFFITH JOHN, D.D.

Printed at the "Shanghai Mercury" Office.
INTRODUCTION.

THE KULING CONVENTION.

To many readers of the addresses which this pamphlet contain the name "Kuling" does not possess any special meaning. Kuling is a beautiful valley on the upper heights of the Lü Mountains. These lofty ranges are visible from steamers passing Kiukiang, on the great Yang-tsi River. Precious lives have been lost, valued workers removed, great expense incurred, because hitherto Central China has lacked a sanatorium like Kuling.

Roughly speaking, the valley is about a mile and a half long, by half a mile wide. Grouped around its pretty stone Gothic Church—built on spurs of the hills, or nestling in secluded glens, are about a hundred houses. The little town reposes amid swift cool, clear streams, rocks, flowers and shrubs. Wide spreading views of rivers, lakes, and mountains, are on every hand. Happy children roam about without fear. The
cool bracing air, and bright sunshine of an ideal summer, work wonders for the invalids who come seeking rest and health.

In such a "Valley of blessing" it is a most natural thing for grateful hearts to praise God; and for kindred spirits to meet together, to speak of His dealings with them. Thus was our convention born, almost without design, by the longing of those who "Dwelt with the King for His service," to compare experiences, and exchange spiritual gifts.

The two Addresses which follow are printed by special request, with the reluctant consent of the honoured speaker. They present and illustrate the two sides of our convention, viz: the Devotional and Practical—Worship and Service, Love and Duty.

Our gatherings for the "Deepening of the Spiritual Life" manifested the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. The hundreds of brothers and sisters called by different denominations, of various Societies, from all protestant countries, met under the motto "All one in Christ Jesus"—to love each other better, to learn more of our God and Father, and to sign a Declaration of Unity in the common truths of our faith.

In the gatherings for the discussion of Missionary problems of the time—so pregnant with glorious opportunity, it was realized that the Spirit of God is leading on to yet greater things.
Many felt the solemn hush of soul in the presence of the Master, and received fresh gifts from Him, for the ministry of the Word, through the Spirit.

The author of these Addresses is too well known to need any introduction. For more than fifty years Griffith John has stood forth as a champion of Evangelical Truth. For more than forty years, he has preached that truth in China. He is not ashamed to say, as his experience, that the Gospel is the power of God to every Chinese who honestly believes, and obeys it. He is not inclined to lower this standard in favor of any modern notions concerning China's need, and the remedy required. China need the Gospel, and the Gospel is the only remedy which will meet the need.

May Dr. John long be spared to reap abundantly, where he has sown so faithfully! These inspiring words of his, are sent forth by special request of the Convention, in the prayerful hope that many others may be helped and encouraged in the work of God.

Joseph S. Adams,
Chairman of Convention Committee.
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AUGUST 14TH, 1898,
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2 Corinthians v. 14.
"FOR THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US."

"The love of Christ," that is, His love to us, not our love to Him. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" In this passage the love of Christ is referred to as a ground of confidence. "It is, however, no ground of confidence to assert, or even to feel, that we will never forsake Christ; but it is the strongest ground of assurance to be convinced that Christ will never forsake us, that His love will never change." In my text the love of Christ is referred to as the great constraining power in the life of the Christian. "The love of Christ constraineth us," that is, it shuts us up, so that we cannot but choose to act as we do. "Because we have thus judged," that is, ever since our conversion this has been with us a fixed judgment, a settled truth, "That one died for all, therefore all died," that is the all died in the one, so that His dying is the same as if the all died. When He died, the all died objectively in Him, and he who realizes this truth, through faith, dies to
sin and self, and becomes alive to God and to righteousness. "And He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him Who died for them and rose again." "For the love of Christ constraineth us." At one time we all lived to ourselves—some of us for one thing, and some for another thing, but all for self. Self reigned in us and over us. Now a new principle of action has taken possession of us, which has dissolved every old principle of action, and become the all-absorbing passion of our life. The new principle of action is the love of Christ. We are crucified with Christ: nevertheless we live; yet not we, but Christ liveth in us: and the life that we now live in the flesh we live by faith in the Son of God, who loved us, and gave Himself for us.

Thus the love of Christ is the great constraining power in the life of the Christian. In regard to all the duties which devolve upon him, it acts as the great inspiring motive. "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause." In all things we are actuated by one impulse. "The love of Christ constraineth us."

I wish to speak, on this occasion, of the love of Christ as a love-producing power in the heart of the Christian. Without love we can do nothing in the service of Christ. The highest outward service is valueless in the sight of God, unless it has love as its source and strength. But where is this love to come from? "The love of Christ constraineth us."

I. Let us consider, in the first place, what Christian love is. I will not attempt a metaphysical definition of love, or a theological definition. Let us try and find out what the New Testament teaches about Christian love. It is of Christian love that I am now speaking.

(1). Our Lord teaches us that the entire law and the prophets hang on this one word—love. A lawyer asked Him, which is the great commandment of the law? Jesus said unto
him: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Here we are taught that love is more than a performance of the single precepts of the law; it is the very essence of the law itself. Love, and all these things will be possible to you. Love, and though from ignorance and weakness you may miss the mark outwardly, you will fulfil the law inwardly. Love to God and man embraces all. On this hangs all the law, as a door on its hinges. It is the grand principle which runs through the whole law and the prophets—through the Mosaic economy and all the subsequent revelations of God.

(2). In perfect conformity with the teachings of our Lord, Paul tells us that the entire law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The Apostle is speaking here of the duties which we owe to our neighbour, and he tells us that the one word love covers them. But he tells us more than this. He tells us that the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" covers the entire law. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Christian love to our neighbour springs necessarily from love to God, and supreme love to God must manifest itself in love to men; so the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," covers the entire law. Moreover, love not only covers the cardinal precepts of the law, "it reaches to those lesser courtesies and sympathies which cannot be digested into a code or reduced to a rule." It reaches to every deed, however insignificant, and to every word, however unimportant. It is impossible to furnish rules and
regulations for all the duties of life; neither is it necessary. Love, and you cannot go far wrong even when thrown entirely on your own judgment, and have no authoritative rule of action to guide you.

(3). Christian love comprehends justice. It is justice and more. “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour.” This is not a full definition of love. What greater things love works, the Apostle does not say now. But this it certainly cannot do. Just it must be, to say the least. Let us not look on justice and love as mutually opposed. There is no such thing as unjust love; and there is no such thing as loveless justice. The love that is unjust is not love, and the justice that is loveless is not justice.

(4). I have just said that love is justice and more; and that is strictly accurate according to the ordinary definition of justice. But in the school of Christ justice and love become commensurate. What is justice? The rendering to every man his due. But according to what law? Your answer to that question will depend on whether you are a Christian or no, and on whether you understand the Christian law of love. According to this law, it is your duty to do all the possible good you can to every man you meet. You are a debtor to every man who needs your help, and whom you can help. When the priest and the Levite passed the man that had fallen among thieves, without offering him the needful help, they acted unjustly and well as lovelessly. In the kingdom of heaven, justice is to render every man his due according to the law of love. Does love demand this? Does love demand that? Does love forbid this? Does love forbid that? These are the questions which I have to put to myself constantly as a Christian man. Do you, my Christian brother, wish to be just? Then you must comply with the Christian law of love. You must satisfy the demands of this law, otherwise this law will condemn you as an unjust man and a law-breaker. Thus in the school of Christ justice and love become commensurate.
Let us compare the Christian law of love with the Confucian. We are sometimes told that they are one and the same; and some go so far as to say that Christianity is indebted to Confucianism for its golden rule. Speaking of the Confucian law of love, Dr. George Matheson, in his lecture on the religion of China, says: "That Confucius is the author of this precept is undisputed; and therefore it is indisputable that Christianity has incorporated an article of Chinese morality." A more gratuitous assumption than that there never was. There is not a particle of evidence to show that Christianity has borrowed anything from Confucianism. But let us look at these two laws for a moment, and see how far they are one and the same. The Confucian law of love is this: "Do not unto others what you would not have others do unto you." Now, that is justice, and justice only, taking the word in its ordinary acceptation. It is good as far as it goes; and China's great sage is worthy of all praise for the clearness and the earnestness with which he taught and enforced his great rule of action. Would that all the Chinese had attained to this standard of perfection! Would that all Christian men and women could say that they had attained even to this degree of moral excellence! Even this law, if we came under it fully, would put an end to all meanness, all rudeness, all underhandedness, all jealousy, all craftiness, and all hypocrisy in our dealings one with another. The world would be a much better world than it is, if all men could reach even the Confucian standard of perfection. But it is a standard with which we as Christians should not rest satisfied. We should seek to be this and more. And I would observe in passing, that if we do not seek to be more, and a great deal more, we shall fail to attain to even this. There is nothing noble about this standard; and there would be nothing noble about the man who could not reach a mark far beyond it and above it. Think of a man moving among men, and saying to himself: Well, I don't like to be deceived, and therefore I will not deceive any one to-day; I
don't like to be killed, and therefore I will commit no murder to­
day; I don't like to be insulted, and therefore I will insult no one
to-day; and so on, and so on. There is nothing noble about a
character like that. Scarcely will any man die for a man like that.

Now look at the Christian law of love. “All things therefore
whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye
also unto them.” That is the Christian law of love. The difference
between them is vital. “Do not to your neighbour what is odious
to yourself.” That is the Confucian golden rule. “Do all the
good you can to your neighbour.” That is the Christian golden
rule. The one is negative; the other is positive. In the one
you have common-place morality. There is nothing noble or
enobling about; on the other you have a morality which is Divine
in its nature and origin, and which clothes its possessor with a
beauty which is truly God-like. “Love is of God; and every
one that loveth is begotten of God, and knoweth God.”

(6). Love is the greatest of all virtues. Paul mentions three
cardinal virtues, and he tells us that the greatest of the three is
love. “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, and the
greatest of these is love.” These three are cardinal graces, and
are greater than the supernatural gifts of which the apostle had
just been speaking. Those supernatural gifts, such as the gifts
of healing and of tongues, were designed for the first starting
of the Christian Church, and were gradually to cease; but the
cardinal graces of faith, hope, and love are absolutely essential
to the very existence of the Christian Church. They are the
very foundation of the Christian Church, and therefore must
abide as long as there is a Church on earth, or a Christian in
the world.

And more, these three exist in heaven. No finite mind can
take in at once the whole of the unseen future. There must,
therefore, be room for faith and hope in heaven—faith in a
coming future, and hope in respect to the bliss that will then be
disclosed and realized. Thus faith, in the sense of trust in God,
abideth for ever; and hope, in the sense of expectation with regard to the realization of ever new and ever increasing blessedness, also abideth for ever.

Why, then, is love called the greatest? One reason is this: Though there will always be faith, and though there will always be hope, still both faith and hope are in their very nature temporary means towards something else and higher into which they are destined to pass; whilst love, from its very nature, though capable of indefinite expansion, can never pass into anything else and higher that itself, and so is necessarily eternal. Faith and hope pass into sight and possession. The sight is higher than the faith, the possession is higher than the hope. But what is higher than love? Into what else and higher than itself can it pass. "God is love."

Such is Christian love; and such is Christian perfection, for Christian perfection is simply perfection in love. Christian perfection consists, not in perfection in knowledge, not in freedom from all mistakes, but in perfection in love. Oh! that God would make us perfect in this respect. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." That is, be perfect in love.

II. Let us now consider at the demands of the Christian law of love.

(i). The Christian law of love demands supreme love to God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." It demands, not only love to God, but supreme love to God. Some look upon this demand as absurd. They will tell you that they believe in fearing God and revering God; but that they do not understand what is meant by loving God. I do not see how an unconverted man can understand what it means; for it is a thing to be experienced in order to be understood.

Neither can the heathen mind understand what it means. There are three religions in China, but not one of them
inculcates love to God, or to the gods. The command to love God does not exist in Confucianism, or Buddhism, or Taoism. Dr. Legge says: I have been reading Chinese books for more than 40 years, and any general requirement to love God, or the mention of anyone loving Him, has yet to come for the first time under my eye," I can say the same thing. And yet this is the first, the highest, and the most vital of all the duties that can devolve on man. There can be no religion in the highest sense of the term without it.

And what is true of Confucianism with regard to this point, is true of Mohammedanism also. True, the God of Mohammedanism is intensely personal. But He is a God of power and will merely. "The name father, which expresses so much to the Christian heart, has no place among the ninety-nine holy names of the Koran. The highest relation to God attainable by man is expressed in the well-known name the religion bears: Islam, that is resignation, a state of unconditional passiveness." The God of Mohammedanism is not a God of love; neither does he seek the love of his children. The God of Christianity, on the other hand, is emphatically a God of love, and His supreme demand is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." He is your Father; He loves you with more than a mother's love; love Him with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. That is the supreme demand of the Christian law of love.

(2). The Christian law of love demands Christ-like love to our brethren in Christ. "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love." In this Christ himself is to be our example. "A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye love one another." This Commandment is both old and new. It is an old commandment in a new form; and the newness consists in the model and standard. Christ's love to His people, in giving His life a ransom for them, was altogether new. "Even as I have loved you, that ye love one another." That is the demand of the
Christian law of love. When shall we attain to this standard of Christian perfection? Would Christ have done this to me? How then can I do this to my brother in Christ? Would Christ have spoken that unkind word of me? Why then do I speak so of my brother in Christ? Would Christ not have shown pity on me? Why then do I show no pity when I see my Christian brother in need? "Even as I have loved you." That is your law, if you are a Christian. You dare not take anything lower than that as your standard, without falling away from your high position in Christ. "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." "If God so loved us, we ought to love one another," and so love one another.

(3).—The Christian law of love demands love to all men. Who is my neighbour? In the Hebrew law the term neighbour was restricted to the Hebrew people. In Leviticus we read: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This precept in its original form referred to Israelites, and obedience to it helped to keep them distinct from other nations. But the Pharisees, to increase the distance between the Jew and the Gentile, added the converse precept "and hate thine enemy," as if the one precept was a legitimate inference from the other, instead of being, as Bengal calls it, "a detestable gloss." Our Lord opposes this interpretation. True, separation was necessary to preserve the Jews from the heathen influence to which they were exposed; but this addition, "hate thine enemy," was contrary to God's mind and redemptive purpose. And even separation was a mere temporary expedient. It has no place whatever in the kingdom of God as established by Jesus Christ. In this kingdom, the word neighbour is made to extend to the universal brotherhood of man. All are our neighbours, whether we recognize the fact or no; and all are felt by us to be our neighbours, when we have learned in the school of Christ what we owe to man as man.

Why should I love the Chinese? Why should I sacrifice myself on their behalf? I should do so because their Father and mine is one; and because we are members of one great family.
"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." He is the Father of all; He maketh His sun rise on all; He sendeth His rain on all. Be like Him.

(4). The Christian law of love demands love to our enemies. "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the gentiles the same? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

That is the highest teaching this world has ever known. There is nothing to be compared to it in the whole range of non-Christian literature. And here I would make two remarks: First, Christ alone could give us such instruction, since He alone, by His life and death, has exhibited the perfection of God in man. Secondly, a lower standard Christ could not have set before us, since likeness to God in inward purity and love must be the constant aim and end of the Christian in all departments of his moral life. A lower standard would have been unworthy of the kingdom of God, unworthy of Christ as its head, and unworthy of ourselves as its subjects.

It is, however, a hard saying. Confucius, China's greatest moral teacher, could not rise to this. Some one asked Confucius what he had to say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness. The prompt reply was: "With what then will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and recompense kindness with kindness." In the Li-Ki, one of the Confucian classics, the Sage is reported to have said: "He who returns good for evil is a man who is careful of his person." That is, he is a man who tries to avert
danger from himself by a show of magnanimity. In other words, he is a coward. And there are men who call themselves Christians who look upon the matter pretty much in the same light. "Do you think I am a coward? I am not afraid of him. I must have my revenge. He will find that he cannot offend me with impunity. Nobody shall say that I am a coward."

The unconverted man cannot rise to the law of Christ in this matter. On my return voyage to China, about 17 years ago, I had a well known Sinologue for one of my fellow passengers. We had many a long conversation on Christianity and Confucianism, and generally he showed himself to be more of a Confucianist than a Christian in his sentiments. One day I called his attention to the Christian golden rule, and asked him if he would not allow that it is very much higher than the Confucian. "I will allow nothing of the kind," was the emphatic reply, "I will admit, that it is a different rule, but not a higher, for the simple reason that it is not practicable. I do not believe in the Christian law of love. I love my friends. I do not love my enemies, and I cannot love them." That was an honest confession, to say the least. This love is beyond the reach of human strength, relying simply on itself. For an unconverted man to talk about loving his enemies would be sheer hypocrisy. "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

Such are the demands of the Christian law of love. How holy, how lofty, how far reaching!

III. How can we rise to this attitude of moral excellence? "The love of Christ constraineth us." A vision of the love of Christ, the love of Christ shed abroad in our hearts—this, and this alone, can help us. The love of Christ is the love-producing power in the heart of the Christian.

(1). Christ's love, as a revelation of God's love to me, constraineth me to love God with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength. God's goodness is revealed in nature
and providence; but there is much in both nature and providence that puzzles my intellect and my heart. I cannot study nature without asking again and again, why did God create this, and why did God create that? Would not this world have been a much fairer and happier world if this and that had been left out? I cannot study history without ever asking, why did God permit this, and why did God permit that? To inspire supreme love to God in this breast of mine, a revelation of the very heart of God is absolutely necessary. But where is this revelation to be found? It is to be found, not in nature, not in providence, but in Jesus Christ. The very heart of God is revealed in Christ. In the love of Christ I behold the love of God; through Christ I realize the loveableness of God; gazing on Christ I am made to feel that God is not an object to be feared and revered merely, but emphatically to be loved. "God is love." Where did the Apostle John learn that? Not by studying nature, not by reading history, but by sitting at the feet of Jesus, gazing on the face of Jesus, and drinking in the spirit of Jesus. "And we beheld His glory, glory as the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

(2). Christ’s love, as a revelation of His own heart, constraineth me to love Him with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my strength. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." He deserves my highest and best love. He is altogether lovely.

(3). Christ’s love for me personally constraineth me to love myself, to seek my highest well-being, to battle with sin, and live the life of righteousness. It is my duty to love myself. True self love is not selfishness. Selfishness is the undue preference of our own happiness and interest to the happiness and interest of others, and that is infinitely removed from true self love. True self love is of the utmost value to man. But there are times when it is not easy to exercise it. There are times when a man gets such an insight into his own sinfulness and vileness, that he finds
it to be extremely difficult to believe that he is worth being saved. There are times when he loses all heart about himself; when he feels he can hate himself, and abandon himself to sin and hell. How is he to be brought back to a right state of mind with regard to himself? "The love of Christ constraineth us." If Christ loves me, there must be something in me worthy of His love. If Christ died to save me, there must be something in me worth being saved, "The love of Christ constraineth me" to love myself with a love that is true and holy. If Christ wants to save me, He shall. "I am thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice, And it told Thy love to me; But I long to rise in the arms of faith, And be closer drawn to Thee."

(4). The love of Christ for His own people constraineth me to love the brethren wherever found and in whatsoever circumstances they may be. Christ loves them, and I must love them for His sake. The family bond, based on the love of kindred, binds brothers and sisters in the same household. The Christian bond, based on the love of Christ, binds all Christians. Some of the brothers and sisters in the family may not be all they ought to be; but there is the family bond. So all the brothers and sisters in the Kingdom of God, may not be all that we could wish them to be; but there is the Christian bond. "Ye are all one in Christ."

(5). The love of Christ for all men, even for His enemies, constraineth me to love all men, even my enemies. Christ's love in His own heart enabled Him to do this; and the same mighty love in my heart will enable me to do as He did. The family bond, based on the parental love, secures the forgiveness of the child however wayward. The human bond, based on the love of Christ, secures the forgiveness of our fellow men, however bad and sinful they may be. The world is Christ's; all men are His; all souls are His. He died for all; how dare I hate any one for whom Christ died?
(6.) Once more, the love of Christ constraineth me to work for the good of men however hard the task may be. "But is it not hard to work for the salvation of some men?" Yes it is; yet the love of Christ in your heart will enable you to do it, however hard the work, and however objectionable the men. "I find it difficult to like the Chinese." But this is not a question of liking. It is a question of loving, a much higher thing. It is easy to love where you like; the difficulty is to love where you don't like. God loves the loveless, and you must do the same, if you would be like Him. You find it hard to work for the Chinese. Will you tell me why? Is it not because you look at the Chinese too much, and at the Christ who died for them too little? Try and look at the Chinese with the eyes of Christ, and feel for them with the heart of Christ, and you will soon find that the stream of love which burst from His bleeding side will bear you aloft and carry you along. Your love is weak; but His love is mighty. Your love is a poor narrow thing at its best; but His love is divine and all embracing. Gaze more on Christ, and let His mighty love possess you and press you on, and you will be able to say with the great Apostle. "I can do all things in Christ, who strengtheneth me.

"The love of Christ constraineth us." Paul's life was a wonderful life. How earnest, how active, how forceful, how resolute, how restless! It reminds me of that mighty river yonder, ever flowing, never stopping. Tell it to stop, and it will tell you that it cannot. Ask it why, and its reply will be: "A mighty law has taken possession of me, and is carrying me onward, ever onward. I cannot help myself. The law of gravity constraineth me." So it was with Paul. See him travelling from city to city, town to town, and village to village, preaching the everlasting Gospel, establishing churches, and teaching the Christians. Ever moving, never resting. Tell him to rest, and he will tell you that he cannot. Ask him why, and his reply would be: "A mighty law has taken possession of me, and is
bearing me onward, ever onward. I cannot help myself. The
love of Christ constraineth me."

Love constraining. What a strange contradiction of words.
But the constraint of love is sweet; and the contradiction was
beautifully harmonized in the experience of the great Apostle.

Two words in conclusion. My missionary brethren, God has
brought us to China to make known to this people the love of
God for them. Our great work is to preach Christ, and Him
 crucified, as the divine witness of the love of God for man.
What a privilege! What an honour! Can you imagine any
calling in this world higher or nobler than yours and mine? But
how are we to preach the Gospel of divine love to this people?
What must we have in order to preach it with power and effect?
There is one thing we must have, if we would not be utter failures.
We must have our hearts filled with the love of Christ. The
greatest thing in the world is love; and the greatest spiritual
force in the world is love. We must be endued with this mighty
power; the love of Christ must dominate us, and our lives must
be to all around us a manifestation of His love. Men must see
the love of Christ in ours. Without this love, our preaching will
be in vain; though we speak with the tongues of men and of
angels, we shall be to this people mere sounding brass, or a
clanging tympanum.

One word more. God has given us this magnificent sanitarium, and we bless Him for it. But what shall it be to us?
What shall it be to us morally and spiritually? A blessing or a
curse? That will depend on ourselves. We can make it the
one or the other. Let us all determine, in God’s strength, that
this valley shall be a valley of blessing, and of blessing only.
Let us all determine, in God’s strength, that this valley shall be the
abode of holy, heavenly love; that jealousy, envy, strife, evil
speaking, backbiting, and all other works of the flesh and the
devil, shall find no home here.
Whenever we meet in this sanctuary, which we this day dedicate to the God of heaven, to God our Saviour, to the God whose name is love, may we meet in the spirit of love.

And these days, as we meet together for the deepening of spiritual life, let us not forget the greatest of all the Spirit's gifts:

"Gracious spirit, Holy Ghost,
Taught by Thee, we covet most,
Of Thy gifts on Pentecost
Holy, heavenly love."

More love! More love! More love! More love to Thee, O Christ! More love to the Father, O Christ! More love to Thy people, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious blood! More love to all men, for Thou hast died for all! This is what we all want; and this is something definite to ask for. Let us hunger for this, thirst for this, pray for this. Let us do so these days, and the Holy Spirit, as the spirit of love, will descend upon us and fill us, and we shall return to our respective spheres of labour clothed with the very power of God. Amen.
AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

CHURCH IN KULING,

On Monday, August 22nd, 1898,

By

REV. GRIFFITH JOHN, D.D.
ADDRESS IN ADDRESS

ON RACISM IN KULLING

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Rev. Griffith John p.c.
The Present Aspect of the Missionary Work in China.

This is a very wide subject, and it is impossible for me to do more than just touch on two or three points of present interest and importance.

The present aspect of missionary work in China is very different from what it was when I arrived at Shanghai in the year 1855. At that time there were just five spots in the whole Empire where the Protestant missionary might pitch his tent. The vast interior was hermetically closed against him, the length of his tether being only twenty four hours' distance from the Treaty port. He might go where he pleased; but he must be back within twenty four hours of the time he started. At the time of my arrival, the missionaries at Shanghai were beginning to feel their way into the surrounding cities and towns; but not a city or town was occupied by any missionary of any society. In those early days it was nearly as dangerous to travel in Kiangsu, as it is now to travel in Hunan. Hooting, pelting, and beating was the order of the day. Gradually, however, the cities began to open, and travelling became perfectly safe and enjoyable. In 1857, we managed to get into the city of Suchow, and carry on Missionary work openly within its walls. In the same year Dr. Williamson established himself at Sungkiang with his family; and soon after I established myself at Ping'hu with my family. These were the first inland cities occupied by
Protestant missionaries; and had Dr. Williamson and myself been inclined to set up for ourselves, we might have anticipated my dear friend Mr. Taylor, and called our mission "The China Inland Mission."

It was the treaty of Tientsin, which came into full operation in 1860, that opened China, and it is during these 38 years that the missionary work in China has made any real progress. That Treaty did not only add several new ports to the preceding five, it threw the whole country open so far as the right of travel is concerned.

At that time the number of missionaries was small, and the converts were few. When I arrived in China, I doubt if there were in the whole empire more than 300 converts in connection with the Protestant church; and even in 1860, I don't think there were 1,000. When I went to Hankow, in 1861, there was not a missionary in the valley of the Yangtsze, and, so far as I know, not a single convert. Even in 1868, Hankow was the furthest station in the valley. In that year Mr. Wylie and myself made a pioneering journey through Hupeh, Szechuen, and Shensi. We went up the Yangtsze in native boats as far as Suifu, a city situated at the mouth of the Min, and up the Min as far as Chengtu, the capital of Szechuen; then we travelled overland, and struck the Han some distance above Han Chung Fu. At Han Chung Fu we took a boat again, and returned to Hankow by the Han. It was a journey of more than 3,000 English miles, and it took us more than five months to complete it. We preached and sold books at every city and almost every important town on the way. But what I wanted to say is this: we never met a Protestant Missionary or a Protestant convert from the day we started to the day we returned. But look at the present state of things throughout the whole of that region. On the line of our route there are now dozens of mission stations, scores of missionaries, and hundreds of Christians. That, however, is only a piece of China.
A similar contrast is to be witnessed in all the provinces, with the exception of Hunan and Kwangsi; and the day is not far distant when these two provinces will cease to be exceptions. I am not prepared to say that Hunan is to-day open to the Gospel as Hupeh is; but it is opening rapidly, and before long it will be wide open. There are now mission stations in the East, West, North and South of that anti-foreign province, and foreign missionaries are actually living at Changteh, one of its largest and most important marts.

Thus the missionaries, during these 38 years, have taken possession of the whole land. They are to be found in all the provinces, and their converts are to be found everywhere. I hardly know how many Protestant Christians there are in China to-day. My own impression is that there are 100,000 at least, representing a Christian community of not less than 300,000. What a glorious fact! It is impossible to think of it without asking with wonder and gratitude, "What hath God wrought?"

During these 38 years, the work has been moving on steadily, and the workers everywhere have had abundant reason to thank God for the measure of success which has attended their labours. Nevertheless, till quite recently, there has been nothing very startling to report in connection with the progress of the work in China. It seemed slow; we felt it to be slow. Of late, however, there has been a great change in this respect in some provinces and some districts. A strong movement towards Christianity has set in, and people have been, and are, pressing into the church by the hundreds and the thousands. This has been the case emphatically in Manchuria and Fuhkien; and it is the case in certain parts of Hupeh and Kiangsi. My own impression is that the movement will spread, and become general over the land.

It is on this aspect of the missionary work that I wish to speak for a few minutes this morning. I shall confine my remarks to a statement of facts as they have come under my
own observation, and to certain conclusions which I have drawn from them. Others, I hope, will do the same, and give us the benefit of their experience.

It was in 1894 that I was, for the first time, brought face to face with this remarkable movement. In the beginning of that year our evangelist Wei Teh-sheng, who was then a colporteur, visited Kingshan. As he was passing through the district, he came into contact with a number of people who seemed wonderfully prepared for his message. They had lost all faith in idolatry, and professed to have no faith in Roman Catholicism. They gave up their idols to Mr. Wei, and begged him to stay with them and teach them. Having spent some weeks at the place, he returned to Hankow, and gave us a report of the work such as took us all by surprise. I had visited Kingshan before, and we had had a few converts there for some years. But this was a new work, and quite different from the old in both spirit and character. Mr. Wei wanted us to visit the place at once, and see with our own eyes what God was doing in Kingshan. We thought it best to wait, and give the movement time to develop, and disclose its true nature. The fact is, we stood in doubt of it, and were slow to commit ourselves to it. It was not before October of the same year that Mr. Bonsey and myself visited the place. We took with us one of the most experienced and trustworthy of our native assistants at Hankow, in order to sift the movement to the bottom, and find out the real character of the candidates. On our arrival we were met by a large number of converts. They gave us a right royal reception, and would have killed us with kindness. Out of the multitude of candidates who came before us, we baptized only 45 adults. We might have baptized hundreds had we been less exacting. Both Mr. Bonsey and myself were surprised at the amount of knowledge the candidates possessed, and the evident sincerity which most of them evinced. The work in Kingshan has been
growing steadily during these four years; and we have now in that one district several hundreds of baptized converts. Most of the Christians are respectable farmers and farm labourers. A similar work is going on in the districts of Tien-men, Yun-mung, and Hiau-kan. We have had a work in Yun-mung for many years; but till quite recently it was slow, heavy, and discouraging. About three years ago it began to show signs of a new life, and now our chapel, which holds nearly 200 people, is too small for the congregation. In Hiau-kan we have had a good work for more than twenty years. The progress there has been steady and substantial from the beginning. But of late there has been a wonderful revival. On a recent visit I baptized in the Hiau-kan district 166 persons, of whom 131 were adult believers. Thus the fire has been spreading during these four years in a wonderful manner, and, so far as I can see at the present time, is destined to spread. The movement took me by surprise. Though I had been in China 40 years, I found myself unprepared for it. I could hardly believe in its reality. It seemed too good to be true. And yet this is what I had been praying for ever since I came to China.

Has the work stood the test of time? Yes in a remarkable way so far. The men admitted into the church four years ago in Kingshan, with two or three exceptions, have remained steadfast. The converts in that district have contributed well of their means towards various church purposes. The movement there and elsewhere has already given us some excellent workers in the shape of evangelists, school teachers, and teachers of the language. Taking them all in all, the new converts, brought into the church in connection with this movement, are quite as satisfactory as the old converts who have joined us in the slower way at Hankow and other places. We have, probably, pretty much the same kind of work going on in these districts in Hupeh as is going on in Fuhkien and Manchuria, but on a smaller scale. In character and origin it is, I have no doubt, a similar
movement, and is destined, in all probability, to grow into like proportions.

To what is this movement to be ascribed?

This is an important question, and I will endeavour to answer it fully and fairly.

(1). It is to be ascribed in a measure to the vast amount of Christian work that has been going on in the Hupeh province for so long a period. The daily preaching carried on at Hankow, Wuchang, and Hanyang, at so many chapels and for so many years, has a great deal to do with it. Hankow is a magnificent centre for public preaching to the heathen. The Gospel has sounded forth from this grand centre into all the surrounding regions, and even to distant provinces. Most of the Hankow missionaries are firm believers in this branch of the work, and enthusiastically devoted to it.

The Christian literature, which has been so widely scattered over the face of the land, has had a share in it. For many years, scriptures and tracts have been circulating by the hundreds of thousands per annum, and of late by the millions. We found copies of these books in the possession of some of the candidates in Kingshan, a few of which I brought back with me as trophies, and are now in my study at Hankow.

There can be no doubt that there is a vital connection between the seed sowing of the past and the present harvest. Had there been no work of this kind going on in Central China during the past 37 years, such a movement as I have now described would have been impossible.

(2). The movement is to be ascribed in a measure to the more friendly attitude of the officials. Since the degradation of the Szechuen Viceroy, together with some twenty or thirty of his subordinates, there has been a marked change in the bearing of the officials towards the missionary and his work. I do not suppose that they are more friendly at heart, but they are, for the most part, far more friendly in their attitude. This makes it
easier for men to make a profession of Christianity; it also makes
the Christian Church appear more respectable in the eyes of the
people. The open and practical recognition of the Christian
religion by the Government has, to a very great extent, taken
away the reproach of the cross; so that the disgrace attached
to church membership is not at all the formidable thing it
was in former days.

(3). The movement is to be ascribed in a measure to the
hope of securing protection by joining the Protestant Church.
The Chinaman as a unit is weak, and he feels himself to be so;
and hence the attraction of the native hui and the native kiao to
him. The Jesus kiao and the Gospel hui are getting to be looked
upon as powerful organizations, and this is one reason why many
desire to join us. The protection sought is varied. Some seek
protection from the Roman Catholics, who in most places are
disliked and feared. Some seek protection from the gentry and
scholars, whose power to oppress is great, and who do sometimes
oppress grievously. And some seek protection from the yamen
itself, which is so utterly corrupt and corrupting.

(4). Litigation is a great converting power! If a man is
wrongly accused, he will seek admission into the church in order
to obtain justice at the yamen. If guilty, he will try and join the
church in order to escape justice. The accuser also will seek
admission in order to obtain an easy and sure victory over the
accused. Unfortunately the discovery has been made that the
magistrates are afraid to touch a Christian. This is emphatically
the case so far as the Roman Catholic converts are concerned.

I would divide the candidates with whom I have had to deal
in connection with this movement into three classes: those who
are actuated by good and pure motives wholly; those who are
actuated by bad and false motives wholly; and those who are
actuated by mixed motives—motives not bad themselves, still not
exclusively religious and spiritual. All the candidates with whom
I have had anything to do belong to one or the other of these
three classes. Those who are actuated by good and pure motives solely are easily dealt with; but they are not, I fear, very numerous. Neither is it difficult to deal with those who are actuated by bad motives solely, for if the missionary is straight in his dealings with them, they will soon fall off of their own accord. The great mass of candidates are to be found among the third class, or those who are influenced by mixed motives, and they are not so easily disposed of.

In what light shall we regard these men? How shall we deal with them? Shall we look upon them as so many hypocrites, and dismiss them on account of the imperfection of the motive by which they are actuated? Some would say yes. I say no, a thousand times no. I would say: "Take them by the hand, pour more light into their souls, and lead them on to higher and nobler things." Do this, and in many cases the lower motive will die down, and the higher motive will grow in strength and become dominant. Out of that mass of candidates, not very satisfactory perhaps at the outset, you will get some of your brightest converts, and most valuable helpers in the work. Such has been my experience. Some of the best men we have in Central China are men who were in the first instance actuated by mixed motives. And there is nothing strange in this. The Apostles were actuated by very mixed motives right up to the time of the crucifixion. Who shall be the greatest in the kingdom? That was one of their grand ambitions. And yet our Lord did not reject them on this account. He bore with them, and patiently led them onward and upward. When the Holy Ghost came down upon them at Pentecost, the low motive was burned up, and the higher motive became regnant in their hearts and lives. So will it be with these imperfect converts, at least with many of them, if we adopt the method of Christ in dealing with them.

What should be our attitude towards this movement as a movement? I am willing to admit at once that the movement is not all that we could wish it to be. We have been praying
for a great outpouring of God's spirit on this people, and in our imagination we have pictured a movement resembling that witnessed on the day of Pentecost—the people smiting their breasts, and crying what shall we do to be saved. That is what we should like to see, and that is what we may see some day. But this movement has not come in that form. Rather it has come in the form of a magnificent opportunity. People are coming to us by the hundreds and thousands, and asking us to allow them to identify themselves with us. "We want to join you, and put ourselves under your instruction and guidance. We have lost all faith in idolatry, and we have no faith in Roman Catholicism. Admit us into your communion, and teach us the truth as it is in Jesus." Such is their attitude, and such is our opportunity. It is a glorious opportunity, and woe be to us if we do not lay hold of it, and turn it to the highest advantage. We dare not turn our backs on this movement on account of its imperfections. We must study it, watch it, guide it, and do all in our power to make it conducive to the interests of Christ's kingdom in this land. If we do not seize the opportunity, the Roman Catholics will. They are wide awake, and know full well the importance of the present crisis. If we are remiss, these men who are now wishing to join us will fall one by one into the Roman Catholic net, and be lost to the Protestant Church for ever. I look at the Church as a hospital. The physician rejects no one on account of his ailments. If a man wants to be healed, and is willing to put himself under treatment, the physician receives him, and does what he can for him. So if a man comes to me, conscious of his spiritual disease, and desiring to be made whole, it is my plain duty to take him in hand, and do all I can for him. Who am I that I should turn my back on a man on account of the imperfection of his motives? What was the church at Corinth but a hospital? It was a big hospital, and a badly ventilated hospital too. And yet the Apostle did not repudiate it on this account.
Now for two or three practical suggestions based on my own experience:

(1). Let us be perfectly straight ourselves in dealing with candidates. Let us not be carried away by the love of success. If the candidate is a scoundrel, tell him so, and keep him out. If he is actuated by mixed motives, keep him waiting, till he receives more light, and his motives are purified. Don’t be in a hurry to baptize men. If a candidate has difficulties with the Roman Catholics, keep him out till his difficulties are over. Be slow in receiving Roman Catholic renegades. As a matter of policy it is best to keep them at a safe distance. They have been brought up in a bad school, and will only give trouble. We have not in connection with our church in Central China a single Roman Catholic apostate, though many have tried to come in. Be careful not to admit candidates involved in litigation. If a man comes to you as a candidate, expecting help from you in this respect, tell him at once that you cannot help him, and that he cannot be admitted into your communion whilst he is living at feud with his neighbours.

(2). Communicate with the officials of the districts in which you carry on your work, and explain to them that the convert, though a Christian, is a Chinese subject, and amenable to Chinese law like other subjects, and that, if he breaks the law of his country, you will not interfere on his behalf. If you do this, it will mark you off from the Roman Catholic priest in the eyes of the magistrate and people. It will also serve as a salutary warning to the converts under your charge. In all my written communications with the officials, I use foreign paper and foreign cards, in order to guard against forgery; and they are made to understand that any letter professing to be mine, unless written on such paper and bearing certain marks, is to be regarded as a fabrication, and that the bearer is to be treated as a criminal. These days men are constantly sending letters into the yamens in the name of missionaries with sinister purposes, and the officials
are often taken in. It is our duty to do all we can to prevent the mischief. I have adopted the plan just mentioned as the best I have been able to devise.

(3). Let us be sure that our native assistants are trustworthy men. The native assistant knows all about the candidates, and if he is thoroughly trustworthy, the missionary cannot go far wrong in his endeavours to form a right judgment with regard to the worthiness or unworthiness of the applicants for baptism brought before him. The native assistants these days are exposed to great temptations. People are ever trying to bribe them with money in order to get their names entered on the church roll, or secure their influence in other ways. They need be men of genuine piety, downright integrity, and much practical insight in order to keep out of the snares by which they are surrounded.

I should like to say something on the important question of native agency, and the need of a thoroughly-trained native pastorate. The native assistants of the future must be more than trustworthy; they must be systematically trained and thoroughly educated. God forbid that I should say one word in disparagement of the native assistants of the past. They have done a noble work, and the Church in China owes them a debt of eternal gratitude. But the times have changed, and we must adapt our methods to the new order of things. But I cannot dwell on this subject now.

(4). Once more. Let us as missionaries be perfectly open and strictly honourable in our relations one with another. Come to an understanding with each other, define your boundaries, and keep within your respective spheres. Live and let live. No society can convert the whole of China. There is plenty of room for all. Let us not interfere with each other's converts. Let us not covet the sheep of other folds. "Do not steal." That is one of the commandment you know! Let us not employ a convert of another mission in any department of Christian work, without first consulting the pastor of that convert and obtaining his consent. Let us not receive the rejected of another mission.
Beware of the black sheep of another mission; as for the white ones, they will stick to their own fold. Let us make all the natives, whether converts or heathen, understand that we are all one in the common service of our one divine master, Christ, and that we have no private or selfish ends to serve. All this is important at all times, but it is specially so at this time. If this movement is to be guided aright, and made a blessing to China and the church in China, the missionaries must lay aside all jealousy and all envy, and have their eyes ever fixed on the glory of God and the salvation of men.

If time permitted, I should be glad to say a word on the present thirst for English and for western education, which is so general, in its bearing on the missionary work. It is a wonderful phenomenon, and a most significant sign of the times. It is a something I never expected to see in my day. But I cannot dwell on it now.

Before I sit down, however, I should like to state how delighted I am to meet on Kuling, and on this occasion, so many of my fellow workers in this great mission field. It is a great joy to meet so many of the veterans, men and women who have grown old in the service of Christ. What a privilege it is to be permitted to labour so long for Christ in this great Empire, and for the good of this great people! “Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, bless His holy name.”

I am extremely glad to see so many of the younger workers, upon whom the hope of the work, so far as the future is concerned, rests. I should like to say a word or two by way of encouragement to them.

(1).—I wish to tell you, in the first place, that I am not tired of my work. Dr. Morrison was asked by some one if he was not very tired. “Yes,” was the reply, “tired in my work, but not of it. I delight in my work.” I can say the same. His missionary career was only 26 years; mine has been 43 years. But if God were to multiply the 43 by 10, I would willingly devote them
all to Him, in China, and on behalf of China. I have one strong desire, namely, to live in China, to die in China, and to be buried in China.

(2).—The longer I live the grander does the missionary calling appear to me. To my mind there is nothing to be compared to it. I would not exchange it for any other calling under the sun. And it is not a matter of success with me at all. Success or no success, the work as work appears to me to be the grandest and most blessed in this world. There is a passage in the June number of the Review of Reviews which interested me greatly. Speaking of Mr. Gladstone during his dying hours, Mr. Stead says: "That which cheered him most, of all the news he heard during the last trying months, was the report that his grand-daughter, a bright young maiden of 20, had decided to dedicate herself to the work of a Christian missionary to the heathen who sit in darkness. The dying statesman thrilled with joy at the thought that his grand daughter had chosen the better part. To his illuminated eye, nothing in this world was worth talking of or living for, save the great commission to preach Christ and Him crucified as the living witness of the love of God for men. There is nothing better than that, nothing, indeed, to be compared to it. Again and again would he revert to it, but always with complacent, triumphant joy." What a testimony to the grandeur of the missionary calling from the greatest statesman of his day!

When Felix Carey entered the civil service, his father spoke of him as one who had shrivelled from a missionary into an Ambassador. Let us magnify our calling, and cling to it. God forbid that any one present should turn his back on this glorious work, and shrivel up into anything else. There are temptations ahead. May God keep us from falling into them. May you, my younger fellow-workers, have as many years in China as I have had; and may your joy in the work grow deeper and deeper, and your attachment to it grow stronger and stronger as the years roll on.
(3)—I do not feel disappointed as a missionary. A disappointed man is a miserable object to behold. But a disappointed missionary! I have known missionaries, soon after their arrival in this country, speak of themselves as disappointed men; and I have known some return to their native lands from sheer chagrin. My advice to all who feel disappointed is this: Take a broad view of the work, and stick to it long enough for the spirit of the work to enter into you, and your disappointment will vanish. I knew a brother who carried his resignation in his pocket for two years. "But," said he when telling the story, "I never sent it in, and I am now precious glad that I did not," Suppose Dr. Morrison could visit China these days. Would he know it? Do you think his first word would be: "Well, I am disappointed." No! No! His heart would thrill with wonder and joy. The Lord hath done great things for us. Men have often disappointed us, methods have often disappointed us, attempts have often disappointed us; but the work itself has not disappointed us. Its progress has been wonderful in the past. Mighty obstacles have been overcome, and glorious results have been achieved. But the prospects are brighter to day than they ever were before. We the older men have seen great things: but you my younger brethren shall see greater things. Let us all thank God and take courage. Let our watchword ever be Onward! Onward! Onward!

"He is sending forth a trumpet,
That shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men,
Before His judgment seat.
Be swift my soul to answer Him,
Be jubilant my feet;
For God is marching on."

Yes, God is marching on. Let us follow Him, and let us conquer this great Empire for Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.