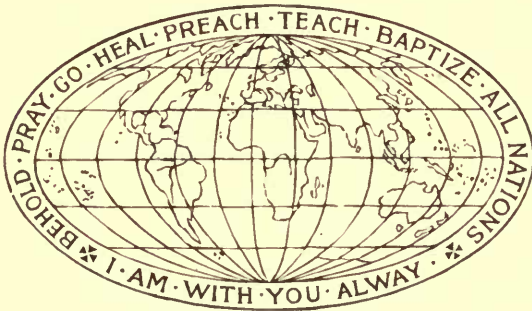


WORLD-WIDE EVANGELIZATION

THE URGENT BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH

ADDRESSES DELIVERED BEFORE THE FOURTH
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THE CLAIMS OF CHINA'S WOMEN UPON CHRISTENDOM

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A FEW years since a Chinese student in America wrote to me in these words: "My country-women should have the first claim on the attention, sympathy and charity of Christian people in more favored lands. That those who need help most should be helped first is a saying as true as it is trite. That they have not had the consideration they deserve in the schemes for the evangelization of China is inexplicable to me. The seed of a man's faith in the providence of God is planted in his heart by his mother, and no one else can do it half as well, and the surest way of elevating and Christianizing China is by giving her daughters the advantages of a Christian education." These are the conclusions of an intelligent educated man, fitted by years spent in China to understand the conditions and needs of his country-women, and by years in America to appreciate the difference between them and the women of Christian lands, and to realize what Christianity would do for them.

One of the claims of China's women upon Christendom is found in their exceeding need of the gospel. Those who need help most should be helped first. It may help us to realize the condition of China's women, if we think for a moment what it would be to us if all the spiritual blessings and advantages which we enjoy to-day, all our hopes for the future were swept away. However far below our privileges we may live, however weak our faith and love and trust may be, would anything induce us to give up our Christian hope, to part with it forever? Oftentimes in our beautiful churches while listening to the melodious tones of the organ and choir or the eloquent words from the pulpit, I seem to see the shadow that rests on the other side of the world, and the question comes back again and again, Why has God given so much to some of His children and so little to others? "Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good," but what poverty can be compared to the poverty of soul, the barrenness of a future reaching out interminably into outer darkness? What matters it if earthly life is destitute of every comfort, even if it stretches out to the full measure of the allotted three score years and ten, if at the end there is a Savior's welcome and a home in the many mansions of our Father's house?

In all heathen lands the darkest shadows, the heaviest burdens fall to the lot of the women. Often unwelcome when they come into the world, the journey through it is a weary pilgrimage. We have often read with pain the story of hopeless years of suffering, so plainly written on the sad patient faces of the old women for whom life has held so little happiness. Who can estimate the weight of sorrow which may be crowded into such a life between the cradle and the grave, without a single ray of hope to brighten the future. The daughters of Christian lands are lovingly welcomed and tenderly cared for, but in some parts of China the little girl oftentimes at the threshold of life is met by the question whether she shall be allowed to live or not. Sometimes it is an unloving father, sometimes the mother-in-law, sometimes the mother herself who decides that there is no place for her in the world, no room in the family circle, no loving affection in their hearts, and the little spark of life is extinguished by the very hands which should protect and cherish it. One of the women employed in our Seminary, now a sincere Christian, is the mother of six daughters of whom only two were allowed to live. These two are now educated, intelligent Christian women, one is doing missionary work as teacher in a boarding school, the other is the wife of a promising Chinese preacher in San Francisco. How many times the mother has said: "If I had only known about Christianity, it might all have been so different; but I did not know."

For Chinese girls who are the daughters of poor parents the years of childhood are often clouded by the fear of being sold into slavery. Some years since one bright Sabbath morning, just as we were going over to the morning service, a woman came to ask that her little daughter, one of our pupils, might be allowed to go home to see her father who was so ill that he was not expected to live. The woman's very evident distress seemed quite natural under such circumstances, and we could not understand the unwillingness of the little girl to go with her mother. Never dreaming that it was more than a feeling of reluctance to go away from the school for a few days, we told her that it seemed best for her to go and see her father and then come back again and left her thinking that the mother would soon persuade her to go with her willingly. What was our distress when we returned from church to learn that the story of the father's illness was false, and that she had really been taken away to be sold. The woman left in charge told us how frantically the little girl had cried and clung to the door in the vain effort to escape from the fate which she knew awaited her. To the mother the experience was as painful as for the little girl, but her husband had treated her most cruelly and compelled her by threats to come for her daughter. Every effort was made to redeem the child from slavery, but without success.

No class of the world's unfortunates could have a stronger claim

upon the pity and help of Christians than the blind girls of some parts of China. Sold or given away by their parents to those who value them only as a means of profits, doomed to lives of misery, hopeless and helpless, their situation is pitiable beyond the power of language to express. A few years since two women came from the country village to Canton, each bringing a little blind girl in the hope that some one might be found who would take the children and give them a home. The mothers were both widows and had been left entirely destitute. One of them had three other children with no way of securing a support for them excepting her own ill-paid labor; and, as she said, the care of the child who was so helpless was a hindrance to her in providing for the others. There was no lack of maternal affection in these cases, only the crushing weight of poverty made the blind girls burdens which the mothers could not bear. With tears streaming down their faces they told their sad story, and said that if no one would take the children, they would be obliged to drown them or see them starve. The poor little girls, who were old enough to understand all that was said, wept silently, and nothing could have been more pitiful than to see the tears falling from their sightless eyes. Their sorrow was turned into joy when they learned that Christianity had provided a refuge for them, and in the School for the Blind, opened by a missionary, they found a happy home.

For nearly all Chinese girls except those belonging to the servant class there is the lifelong suffering entailed by the cruel practice of foot binding. Their marriages are arranged without their knowledge or consent, and they often suffer with constant dread lest at any moment they may be taken away from their home and friends to a strange family circle where they may, or may not, be kindly treated, their comfort and happiness depending to a very great extent upon the character and temper of the mother-in-law whose authority is absolute, and whom they are expected and obliged to serve. Not long ago in a town a few miles from Canton nine young girls committed suicide, their only means of escaping the fate of being thus married,—and I have known of several similar instances. With so much to darken and sadden their lives is it any wonder that the burden sometimes becomes too heavy for them to bear?

But let us turn to a brighter page of China's history and read some of the living epistles which Christianity has written. We are sometimes asked, "What kind of Christians do the Chinese make?" The same kind of Christians that the people of other lands make; the work of the Holy Spirit is the same whether in the heart of a native of China or of America. I certainly never expect to find anywhere more earnest consecrated Christians than I have known in China. I have felt very humble in the presence of examples of their strong faith, implicit trust in God, and their reliance in and

prompt resort to prayer in times of need, the evident feeling that God is near and the assurance that He will hear. The bonds of Christian fellowship are not limited by any ties of church or nationality. We have often rejoiced to feel that while superior advantages of birth and education seem to place us in many respects upon a different plane from those whose environment has been so different, whose lives have run in such narrow channels, yet when we meet as Christians soul to soul, we meet on the same plane, sharing the same blessed hope, looking forward to the same glorious future.

To the women of the poorer classes whose bare, cheerless dwellings are destitute of almost everything which we consider necessary, our homes furnished according to our ideas of comfort seem palaces, and often when they come in they will look around the rooms and say, "This must be just like heaven." While our hearts are filled with pity for lives so barren and destitute as to make such comforts seem heavenly, we joy to think of the inheritance prepared, the revelation that it will be to them when they enter in through the gates and see and know what heaven really is. Although it is impossible now to find in lives which have been lived under such different conditions congeniality of thought and feeling in many lines, we look forward with glad anticipations to the time when all the differences which have existed in earthly conditions, the distinctions of rank and wealth and learning and advantages and inheritance have passed away, and Christians of all lands shall meet in our Father's house and rejoice together, and then realize as perhaps we cannot now that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

What will Christianity do for China's women? Just what it has already done for the women of Christian lands, — what it has done for us. I have a message to you to-day from a Christian sister in China. I wish that she could be here to give it to you herself, and I wish that you might hear her sing; for she has what is unusual in China, a very beautiful voice. One well qualified to judge said that with the necessary culture her voice would give her a high standing among musicians in any land. We have sometimes almost felt regret that she could not have this; and yet we know that the position she is filling so successfully as the principal of the School for Training Teachers and Bible Women is far better. She is intelligent, well educated and an earnest, consecrated Christian. It would be difficult to find in any land a teacher better fitted for her position or more solicitous for the spiritual welfare of her pupils. Not long since, when the question of calling a pastor for the Second Presbyterian Church of Canton was being discussed, one of the elders said that he would rather listen to her sermons than to those of any one else. She has been connected with our Seminary for many years, first as pupil, then as teacher.

One of my first remembrances of the writer of this message is of a little girl only nine years old standing beside her dying father and whispering to him words of comfort. I seem still to hear the very words in which she told him that he had served the Lord so faithfully, and now he was going to be with Him, and that he must not feel anxious nor troubled about those he was leaving; for the Heavenly Father would take care of them and they would surely follow on and come to him in heaven. Her mother had always seemed a very timid woman, but after her husband's death she took up the burden of life very bravely and became an active Christian worker. In less than two years she was laid to rest beside her husband, and the little daughter was left doubly orphaned and with the care of a younger brother. At first his waywardness caused her much anxiety, but after a time her constant prayers for him were answered. He became a Christian and afterward studied medicine with Dr. Kerr and became his first assistant in the Refuge for the Insane.

After she had spent several years in the Seminary she was very happily married to a young man who was preparing himself for missionary work among his people. But yet again she was bereaved and left a widow with one little daughter, a child of unusual intelligence and promise. The little girl was recently received into the church, and for a Chinese girl has the unusual inheritance of a Christian ancestry through several generations,—so far as I have been able to ascertain, the first Protestant Christian in China of the fifth generation.

The letter from which I will read some extracts was written to the missionary society of the home-land.

“Dear Christian Friends:

“I write to send you our greetings. Because of our love for the Savior, we feel that we know and love you; for we alike belong to the Kingdom of Heaven and to the family of God, and we shall soon be together in the mansions that our Savior has gone to prepare for us. The anticipation of such a glad meeting fills me with happiness. We constantly remember God's great mercy in choosing us to be His disciples. Jesus said, “Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you, and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit”; therefore it is our desire, according to the measure of our ability and opportunity, to bring forth fruit. We think of the work that you have done in China, and remember with deepest gratitude the love which for Christ's sake you have shown to us in helping us to learn the true doctrine and come to the Savior. When any inquire the purpose for which this school was established, we carefully explain to them that because of your love to Jesus you have opened this school to teach others to know and love Him, and to come to God and obtain eternal life.

"This is the time of China's distress and humiliation. It is truly pitiable, but we remember that it is written in the Bible, 'Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.' So we hope that God will bless China and change the hearts of the people that soon they may turn from the false to the true and seek the Savior. I believe that God certainly will do this because He is compassionate and merciful. Dear friends, 'pray for us that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified even as it is with you.' The members of the Missionary Society and the pupils in the Seminary all unite in sending greetings."

We find that the Chinese women are almost invariably ready as soon as they become Christians, to begin working for the salvation of others. A great number of young Chinese women have taken a medical course and are now practising physicians. They are able to do much in relieving the sufferings of their sisters and in helping them in every way, as all are Christians. One who has some property of her own has recently opened a free hospital for women and children. The day that it was opened a large meeting was held. The man who had been invited to make the address through some mistake was not present, and as no one else was prepared, the doctor herself came forward and explained the purpose of her work, her plans and hopes, and it was done with such ability and grace that all present felt that it could not have been done better by any one.

A few years since then prizes were offered for the best exegesis to be written on selected portions of Scripture. The competition was open to all the assistants except the ordained ministers. The first prize was won by a woman graduate from the Seminary. The union meetings for Christian women, which are held regularly in Canton, mark the progress and development of their spiritual life. The addresses given by the teachers and Bible women show their consecration, spirituality, ability and earnest desire for the salvation of others and their growth in grace.

There are those who say: "For what purpose is this waste?" so many dollars and cents spent for the conversion of a single heathen. It is not the right way to estimate such work; and yet for those who look at the question from such a view-point, is there not an answer in the fact that in a certain mission in China the amount spent during the year was equal to \$125 for each convert, while in the City of New York, with Christian ancestry for generations, Christian environment and influences it was \$629 for each addition to the churches. What is Christ's estimate of the value of a soul? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And will any one dare to claim that in His sight the soul of the intelligent, cultured man who has enjoyed every advantage of birth and education in a Christian land is of more value than that of the man whose sad fate has been to miss all

this from his earthly life. Let us not forget that of him to whom much is given, much shall be required.

There is work enough to do at home. Yes, there is work enough to do at home and there are many workers and many more who might and ought to be workers. Is there any one anywhere in our Christian lands who, if he wished for assistance in the line of the development of spiritual life, could not find some Christian who would be rejoiced to aid him? Is it any reason why the crumbs which fall from the table should be refused to the needy ones outside the gates, because many of those who are invited and urged to sit down to the feast so bountifully spread within the palace will not accept the invitation?

When the lives of a few hundred from Christian lands were in jeopardy in Peking, the whole world was stirred to sympathy in their behalf and action for their relief; and it was right that it should be so. Yet, for those who won the martyr's crown it was but a sharp, swift agony, the prelude to the Master's welcome and an eternity of bliss. But what of the thousands of heathen who are daily swept into a hopeless eternity. Why should Christendom be so slow to recognize their claim upon our sympathy with their desperate need of help.

Hath not God made of one blood all nations of men? Can we not hear Him say, "These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone"? Is it not a most painful comparison, that if anything is to be gained politically or financially, if it is decided that the Chinese have merited punishment, there are thousands of men and millions of money available to carry out any measures deemed desirable to mete out punishment to them, while there are so few to go and such a lack of funds to be employed for their spiritual help and benefit? Let every effort be made to keep the open door for commerce that other nations may have the opportunity of reaping a harvest in China; but do not send any more missionaries, lest they should complicate matters and interfere with the interests of commerce. Let us secure all that is possible for ourselves, but do not let us share any of our blessings with them. Is not this the spirit too often shown? The expense of firing a single volley from the two large guns of the United States war vessel stationed at Canton during the recent troubles would be sufficient to support fifty Bible women for a whole year. I remember a few years since hearing some men, who were familiar with existing conditions in China and who looked at the situation from a humanitarian rather than a Christian standpoint say, that it seemed pitiable that the one idea of Chinese officials with regard to the advantages to be derived from western civilization seemed to be that the study and adoption of Western methods of warfare would enable them better to defend their country from the encroachments of other lands, and protect it from threatened dismemberment. The one

pressing need of China is Christianity; her need of railroads, telegraphs, electric lights, the development of mines, the advantages to be derived from commerce with western nations, however desirable these may seem, is not vital. As past centuries have proven, she contains within herself all that is necessary for a good degree of comfort for the earthly life. But for the life beyond she has nothing.

Her wisest sage has written, "Not yet fully understanding the present, how can we speak of the future?" The future is to them a sealed book, but to us is given the power to open the seals, the key which can unlock for them the door of hope. We cannot wonder that those who will not accept the best blessings of Christianity fail to recognize the need and claims of heathen lands. But what of the many Christians who know and realize what Christianity means for themselves, and yet close their hearts against these claims? We do not need to go back many centuries to find our ancestors living on a far lower plane of civilization than the Chinese were then and are to-day. Surely the command, "Freely ye have received, freely give," is binding on us all. Nearly nineteen hundred years ago the Apostle Peter said to the multitude assembled in Jerusalem, "The promise is to you and to your children and to all that are afar off." Century after century has passed away and to-day how many of those that are afar off have never even heard of the promise. For the generations of the past we have no responsibility, for those of the future only indirectly, but for the present generation our responsibilities are limited only by our opportunities, and they are very great. In this age no part of the world seems far away and the prayer of faith can reach to the remotest corner.

Is there no message for Christendom from the unknown graves of the Christian Chinese women who have sealed their testimony with their lives? They have joined the great cloud of witnesses by whom we are compassed about. Surely they have not ceased to care for their countrywomen. Are they not rather looking down with clearer vision, a keener interest and deeper solicitude for their welfare? Let us be faithful to our trust; let us heed the claims of China's women, and as far as is in our power, give to them the gospel both for their own sakes, and to enable them to be to others the power for good, which is their right and may be their privilege. And the future years will surely show that in China as in other lands the elevation and Christianization of woman is at once the measure and the means of the advancement of mankind.

Many years ago I attended a large missionary meeting in Chicago. As we were passing up the broad stone steps leading to the hall in which the meeting was held, a woman who was standing on the upper one turned and looking down said to one near her: "Oh, if this movement had only come twenty years ago. See the silver hairs; for so many of us it means such a short time to work."

The time to work is short, even for these who do not yet find the silver threads among the gold. In this age when life is so intense the years pass very rapidly, bearing away the opportunities which never return. Some of us know that the time of service must be short; no one can know that the time will be long. Let the years, whether many or few, be so filled with loving service, that when they are in the past the joy of having faithfully served our generation will be ours forever.

QUESTIONS

Q. If you learn one dialect, can you be understood all over the Empire? A. No. I know one preacher who preaches in six different dialects.

Q. Is the Bible printed in the classical language for that whole people? A. Yes.

Q. Can all the people read it? A. In the South five men in one hundred can read it, and five women in a thousand.

Q. What proportion in the North? A. Five women in ten thousand and five men in two hundred.

DR. GAMEWELL. — I find that there is a very widespread misapprehension regarding Chinese. John Wesley remarked that the Devil invented the Chinese language to keep the gospel out of China. If he did, he is failing in that as he has in everything else, as the Mandarin spoken language is usable in fifteen of the eighteen provinces. I was transferred from one province to another two thousand miles away, and I could speak the language. The small dialects are mainly confined to the three south-eastern provinces.

Q. What is the feeling of the higher classes toward Christianity? Has the Boxer uprising made any difference in their attitude? A. In the northern part of Canton Province I visited a few months ago a German Mission where there were sixteen graduates of what we call the bachelor's degree, and the missionaries told me that a large number of the better classes of Christians and educated men were interested since the trouble.

ANOTHER MISSIONARY. — I received a letter from a missionary, the other day and he said that officials there were very friendly and were anxious to learn, and that just as soon as he could get the buildings erected he would have a number of the high officials' boys attending the school.

Q. Is the attitude of officials and of the scholarly class in general more favorable now than before the outbreak? A. A large majority of the missionaries voted that it was more favorable.