

A CHINAMAN'S VIEW OF CHRISTIANITY.

The following extracts from a paper in the *North American Review* by Wong Chin Foo, a Chinaman, and evidently a graduate of one of our New England colleges, gives his reasons for preferring the religion of his fathers to Christianity. True Christianity and its teachings he of course does not comprehend and against it his pointed sarcasm has no power; but against much, very much, nay, against the generality of what is called Christian it strikes a sharp blow which should have some good effect in stimulating thought on the part of many who feel that their religion only must be an unreasonable matter. And yet we know that this educated heathen man voices the sentiment of thousands of sensible thinkers, who, merely because they have less moral courage than he, do not express themselves. How much need there is, then, to "Lift up a standard for the people" – *the truth* – and how energetic all should be who have been entrusted with the honor of being standard bearers in this time "when the enemy shall come in like a flood."

Wong Chin Foo says: –

The main element of all religion is the moral code controlling and regulating the relations and acts of individuals toward "God, neighbor, and self;" and this intelligent "heathenism" was taught thousands of years before Christianity existed or Jewry borrowed it. Heathenism has not lost or lessened it since. Born and raised a heathen, I learned and practised its moral and religious code; and acting thereupon I was useful to myself and many others. My conscience was clear, and my hopes as to future life were undimmed by distracting doubt. But, when about seventeen, I was transferred to the midst of your showy Christian civilization, and at this impressible period of life Christianity presented itself to me at first under its most alluring aspects; kind Christian friends became particularly solicitous for my material and religious welfare, and I was only too willing to know the truth. But before qualifying for this high mission, the Christian doctrine I would teach had to be learned,

and here on the threshold I was bewildered by the multiplicity of Christian sects, each one claiming a monopoly of the only and narrow road to heaven.

I looked into Presbyterianism only to retreat shudderingly from a belief in a merciless God who had long foreordained most of the helpless human race to an eternal hell. To preach such a doctrine to intelligent heathen would only raise in their minds doubts of my sanity, if they did not believe I was lying. Then I dipped into Baptist doctrines, but found so many sects therein of different "shells," warring over the merits of cold-water initiation and the method and time of using it, that I became disgusted with such trivialities; and the question of close communion or not, only impressed me that some were very stingy and exclusive with their bit of bread and wine, and others a little less so. Methodism struck me as a thunder-and-lightning religion – all profession and noise. You struck it, or it struck you, like a spasm, – and so you "experienced" religion. The Congregationalists deterred me with their starchiness and self-conscious true-goodness, and their desire only for high-toned affiliates. Unitarianism seemed all doubt, doubting even itself. A number of other Protestant sects based on some novelty or eccentricity – like Quakerism – I found not worth a serious study by the non-Christian. But on one point this mass of Protestant dissension cordially agreed, and that was in a united hatred of Catholicism, the older form of Christianity. And Catholicism returned with interest this animosity. It haughtily declared itself the only true Church, outside of which there was no salvation – for Protestants especially; that its chief prelate was the personal representative of God on earth; and that he was infallible. Here was religious unity, power, and authority with a vengeance. But, in chorus, my solicitous Protestant friends beseeched me not to touch Catholicism, declaring it was worse than heathenism – in which I agreed; but the same line of argument also convinced me that Protestantism stood in the same category. In fact, the more I studied Christianity in its various phases, and listened to the animadversions of one sect upon another, the more it all seemed to me "sounding brass and tinkling cymbals."

[The following portion shows the great evil of calling things what they are not – of calling civilized nations *Christian* nations and calling the worldly, unbelievers and the unconsecrated *Christians*, because they outwardly respect religion and draw nigh to God with their lips while their hearts are far from him.]

"Call us heathen, if you will, the Chinese are still superior in social administration and social order. Among 400,000,000 of Chinese there are fewer murders and robberies in a year than there are in New York state. True, China supports a luxurious monarch whose every whim must be gratified; yet, withal, its people are the most lightly taxed in the world, having nothing to pay but from tilled soil, rice and salt; and yet she has not a single dollar of national debt....

Christians are continually fussing about religion; they build great churches and make long prayers, and yet there is more wickedness in the neighborhood of a single church district of one thousand people in New York than among one million heathen, churchless and unsermonized. Christian talk is long and loud about how to be good and to act charitably. It is all charity, and no fraternity – "there, dog, take your crust and be thankful!" And is it, therefore, any wonder there is more heart-breaking and suicides in the single state of New York in a year than in all China?

The difference between the heathen and the Christian is that the heathen does good for the sake of doing good. With the Christian, what little good he does he does it for immediate honor and for future reward; he lends to the Lord and wants compound interest. In fact, the Christian is the worthy heir of his religious ancestors. The heathen does much and says little about it; the Christian does little good, but when he does he wants it in the papers and on his tombstone. Love men for the good they do you is a practical Christian idea, not for the good you should do them as a matter of human duty. So Christians love the heathen; yes, the heathen's possessions; and in proportion to these the Christian's love grows in intensity. When the English wanted the Chinamen's gold and

trade, they said they wanted "to open China for their missionaries." And opium was the chief, in fact only, missionary they looked after, when they forced the ports open. And this infamous Christian introduction among Chinamen has done more injury, social and moral, in China, than all the humanitarian agencies of Christianity could remedy in 200 years. And on you, Christians, and on your greed of gold, we lay the burden of the crime resulting; of tens of millions of honest, useful men and women sent thereby to premature death after a short, miserable life, besides the physical and moral prostration it entails even where it does not prematurely kill! And this great national curse was thrust on us at the point of Christian bayonets. And you wonder why we are heathen? The only positive point Christians have impressed on heathenism is that they would sacrifice religion, honor, principle, as they do life, for – gold. And they sanctimoniously tell the poor heathen: 'You must save your soul by believing as we do!'...

We heathen are a God-fearing race. Aye, we believe the whole universe-creation – whatever exists and has existed – is of God and in God, that, figuratively, the thunder is His voice and the lightning His mighty hands; that everything we do and contemplate doing is seen and known by him; that he has created this and other [R978 : page 2] worlds to effectuate beneficent, not merciless designs, and that all that He has done is for the steady, progressive benefit of the creatures whom He endowed with life and sensibility, and to whom as a consequence He owes and gives paternal care, and will give paternal compensation and justice; yet His voice will threaten and His mighty hand chastise those who deliberately disobey His sacred laws and their duty to their fellow-men.

'Do unto others as you wish they would do unto you,' or 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' is the great divine law which Christians and heathen alike hold, but which the Christians ignore. This is what keeps me the heathen I am! And I earnestly invite the Christians of America to Confucius.

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What can the *nominal* Christian Church answer to this charge and arraignment of heathenism? Nothing; they themselves have counted in under the name Christian, millions of the unregenerate, wholly opposed to the true principles of the doctrine taught by the Founder of Christianity and his apostles. They have with pride acknowledged all the civilized nations of earth as Christian nations, even going so far as to speak of them as Christendom (Christ's Kingdom); and hence to be consistent they must bear the Chinaman's reproach as against Christianity, for the nefarious acts of these kingdoms which the Scriptures declare to be beastly and subject to the machinations of the devil, the prince of the power of the air who now worketh in the children of disobedience, but is to be dethroned, bound, and finally destroyed by the true kingdom [R979 : page 2] of Christ, when he shall take his great power and reign.

How pointed, too, are the thrusts of this heathen man: He agrees with Paul who says – While one saith I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Peter, etc., are ye not *carnal*? So the Chinaman wants to know whether the various sectarian claims – I am of Wesley, I of Luther, I of the Pope, I of Calvin, Knox, etc., etc., does not imply gross carnality among Christians to-day.

And how well merited are this heathen's strictures upon what has come to be the *fundamental* doctrine of "Christendom?" – that all but a small handful of humanity are on their way through a world of sorrow, pain, disappointment and tears, to a place of untold and everlasting agony, prepared for them by a God of love, whose unerring wisdom saw this to be their fate and portion before they were born.

Oh! what blasphemy upon the wisdom, love, justice and power of our Creator. What a terrible misrepresentation of his gracious plans. It is creditable indeed to the fairness and justice of the heathen world, that they spurn such – *bad tidings* of great misery, to all people. It is a shame, a disgrace to the intelligence of the civilized world to-day, that such an

unreasonable, cruel misrepresentation of God and his plan finds credence among them, and has their millions for its support and spread. Even if the real plan of God were not seen by them, the civilized mind like that of its heathen brother, should be able to recognize such a hideous distortion, and should regard the teachers of such things, as would the heathen – "as insane, if not liars."

But the fact is that the majority of the intelligent people of "Christendom" do not believe in this doctrine, that God's chief work is to create men by the billion for eternal torment. The trouble is that they are not *honest*, not *righteous*, not *upright*. They are willing to sail under false colors, from selfish motives. They are lovers of self more than lovers of God, and hence are willing to join in this blasphemy of his character and plan. They, like Baalam, love the reward of unrighteousness, and hence practise deceit to get that reward. Verily, they have their reward!

Oh! for more noble men and women whom Satan cannot rule by either fear or favor. Honesty is a pre-requisite to growth in grace and knowledge; for "Light [truth] is sown *for* the RIGHTEOUS and gladness [such as comes from confidence, inspired by the true plan of God] *for* the UPRIGHT in heart." Since the truth is only *for* the upright, the honest, is it any wonder that so many morally *dishonest* people of intelligence fail to find the truth? How can they believe who seek honor one from another and seek not (exclusively) that honor which cometh from God only?

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EXTRACTS FROM INTERESTING LETTERS.

Akron, September 25th, 1887.

DEAR BRO. RUSSELL: – I am thankful for many things! I am grateful for the September TOWER! I am so glad for Brother Hickey's excellent (anniversary) letter, so comforting to you and all the dear saints. I like the Sabbath article and yet believe that because it robs religionists of the Sabbath they love so much and regard so little, that it tends greatly to make your prediction of hindrance to our free teaching of truth, brought out in the View – a fact.

I was at Kent part of Friday and Saturday delivering DAWNS previously sold. A large proportion of them are in good hands. Although the necessity and glory of the work I do in selling DAWN is a compensation, yet I can scarcely tell you how much your letters are to me. You mention that some of mine are timely, and my words and deeds helpful to encourage some, especially you and Sister Russell, and that knowledge is a great joy and encouragement to me. How often Brother Tackabury must, now that he is himself helpless, look back joyfully upon the record of his faithfulness.

A little coterie of Henry George's adherents are warm friends of DAWN and June TOWER View; they sold many books for me. The headquarters is in a store owned by a McGlynn Catholic.

I suppose TOWER readers who consider DAWN selling to be preaching the Word, if they hear that for the last two weeks I fell below 200 names per week, will be surprised. The chief reason is that the main industry here has been suspended for several months; and it is natural that when house after house pleaded poverty, the colporteur should make his talks longer, even to debating the matter of the book sale with the people. I am more than ever convinced of the folly of this course. Our strength should be taxed less and not more at each house when sales

are slow. And the able colporteur who is always sure to make his canvass interesting is the party who must guard most against delay from this cause. We should be sure not to stay so long that our greeting at parting will be less cordial than when we introduced ourselves.

But to-day in another section I made my old record of 50 names, so that a few days in this neighborhood will be apt to raise me to 500 names for 2½ weeks work. I made no long talks to-day, having learned by my late experience that lesson, I was forward to teach to others, and had not learned thoroughly myself, viz., Do not preach, nor debate, nor indulge in long talks of any kind while selling DAWN – be brief and to the point.

In close affection, and fellowship, joined by Mrs. A.

Yours in Christ,

J. B. ADAMSON.

Sept. 20th, 1887.

BROTHER RUSSELL: – Mr. Tackabury has regained strength to quite an extent, being able to walk about the house and sit up most of the day. His lungs show great power of resistance to the advance of the disease, much to the surprise of all, but he is scarcely more than a skeleton. He wishes me to remember him to you and Sister Russell with much love.

We feasted on the contents of the last TOWER. Mr. T. said he thought it one of the best he had ever read. We find many things in the Bible that we would like to hear you talk about. Almost every reading reveals something new, something that throws light on the grand plan which God has designed for a lost world's recovery. How it all increases our love and gratitude to our heavenly Father!

Write us whenever you can spare time from your numerous duties.

Your sister in Christ,

MRS. S. T. TACKABURY.

Clear Water, Neb.

MRS. C. T. RUSSELL, MY DEAR SISTER: – I received a number of April TOWERS and have a good many loaned out. I do hope and pray the Lord will hear and answer my prayer, that the eyes of their understanding may be opened that they may behold God's wondrous plan of Salvation. I received a very interesting letter last week from a lady whom I have never seen and know only through the glad tidings preached in MILLENNIAL DAWN. I think it will interest you and Brother Russell, so I enclose it. May the Lord continue to bless you and make you a blessing to others still more, is my daily prayer.

With love and respect to Brother Russell and yourself, I remain your humble Sister in Christ,

J. A. M_____.

[We publish the letter referred to, that it may encourage all to further efforts. – ED.]

Willow Valley, Neb.

DEAR MRS. M.: – You will doubtless be surprised at receiving a letter from a stranger, but I want to let you know that you have been instrumental in bringing to me such joy, peace, and rest, as I had not thought it possible to possess in this life. Our mutual friend, Mrs. L., gave me MILLENNIAL DAWN and several copies of ZION'S WATCH TOWER to read. As soon as I had looked them over, I saw that I had received them in answer to my prayer for a better understanding of God's Word, if so be I should use that knowledge aright. That book proved to be the key for which I had long been searching. And Oh! the rich treasures of God's boundless love and mercy to this sin-stricken world, it opened up to my view. No wonder, Paul could say, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. I shall esteem it a blessed privilege to preach this gospel to every one with whom I come in contact. I have already been able to interest several, though I have only had it a few days myself. In looking over the letters of the "Little Flock" to Brother Russell, I noticed that there seemed to be a great scarcity of "this world's goods" among them, and I thought, what a poor little flock it is, to be sure, – and it made me feel rather sad for a moment, thinking of the multitudes of truth-hungry ones needing food. Then I remembered the multitude of hungry ones that were following Jesus. How he satisfied their hunger with the seven loaves and a few small fishes, which he blessed and brake and gave to his disciples to be distributed among them. And I knew that that was intended for a lesson for us now. We are to give him what loaves and fishes we possess, and it shall be sufficient to feed the hungry multitude who are now following him; and not only that, but we will have more for ourselves than we had in the beginning; for "they took up of the fragments seven baskets full."

Then let us go forward in the full assurance of faith, knowing in whom we have put our trust. All the honor and riches of this world seem now as "filthy rags" compared to that which I see by faith "beyond the veil." Now I know what it means to "be dead to this world." May the Father give me strength to never "look back," for I know full well that the flesh is weak. I am a farmer's wife, and do my own work, so of course my time is pretty well occupied with the necessary duties of this life. But this I know, If we make the best use we can of the opportunities given us, it is all God requires of us. If our heart is really in any work, we can and will find many opportunities for engaging in it; for instance, while my hands are busy with household work, my mind is devising ways and means for spreading the truth, or studying the meaning of some text of Scripture, for it nearly all has a new meaning to me, since I have the key.

I hope the knowledge that you have been the means of helping me to see the truth, will encourage you to persevere. I shall be pleased to hear from you if convenient. Sincerely yours,

O. E. S_____.