

## **VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER.**

### **IS THE CHINA TROUBLE PROPHETICALLY SIGNIFICANT?**

Apparently a serious crisis in the world's affairs is being reached in China. For the past sixty years Europeans have been intruding themselves upon the Chinese, ostensibly for the benevolent purpose of blessing the Chinese with European civilization, but really for commercial purposes; – supplying their needs for a money consideration. Subsequently, about forty years ago, under compulsory regulations forced upon the Chinese, Christian missionaries were permitted to enter the Flowery Empire to contradict its religious and moral ideas cherished for centuries. The new religion brought family strife – especially because it taught the people that their ancestors (whom the Chinese worship as demi-gods), not being believers in the only name wherein is salvation, were lost eternally – doomed to everlasting torments.

These missionaries, and all foreign merchants who lodged with them, were specially protected by treaty laws and regulations, and thus were exempted from Chinese laws and became a favored people, possessed of greater privileges and liberties than the natives. Moreover, the missionaries (especially the Romanists, from all accounts) attempted to extend these special treaty rights to such Chinese as professed conversion – the priests became the attorneys of their people, and by arguments and threats, etc., generally got their faithful free from charges brought against them.

Thus inch by inch the white man forcibly intruded upon the yellow man, until the war between China and Japan, which displayed to the civilized world the helplessness of China, the second greatest nation of the world numerically (400,000,000). Since then the white man's arrogance has increased, and the newspapers of the world have told the Chinese that it is only a question of time until their nation will no longer

exist, being divided among the nations of Europe, who have grasped ports and whole districts, compelling a nominal acquiescence on the part of the Chinese.

The Chinese are a thrifty people and peaceably disposed and not specially patriotic, – else they would not have submitted to these intrusions so long as they have. Indeed, they are quite tolerant toward foreigners who will adopt their civilization, submit to their laws and mind their own business. Understanding the circumstances, we cannot so much wonder at the recent uprising against foreigners under the auspices of an athletic society called the "Boxers." It is worthy of note that the present outbreak, while it has extended to all missionaries and all foreigners, nevertheless began with Roman Catholics exclusively. Much as we must deprecate the killing of many missionaries and many native converts, we must admit that such an uprising would have occurred long ago among white men of any nationality. Lack of patriotic sentiment amongst the Chinese, and inferior armament, etc., accounts for the delay of this outbreak: the people have been kept so busy providing for life's necessities that love of money has crowded out love of country.

Europe is astounded at the late uprising, for two reasons. (1) It offers a suggestion that a patriotic feeling may yet take hold of the Chinese, which with their overwhelming numbers would make them a menace [R2662 : page 212] to Europe; for they could muster an army twice as numerous as could all Europe combined – an army accustomed to obedience, and very economical. (2) Even should the whites succeed in coercing the Chinese, and hold the kingdom as a vassal empire, or divide it amongst the "more civilized," the danger is that international jealousies over shares in the spoils, "spheres of influence," etc., would ultimately lead to great wars, far-reaching in their influence, and quite possibly involving all Europe.

It is from this standpoint that affairs in China are of special interest to those who know that we are living in the harvest time of the Gospel

age, and who are instructed from the Word of God to expect this age to close with a great time of trouble – beginning with international complications, and ending with anarchy. [R2663 : page 212] From this standpoint we examine the Scriptures and note the following as seemingly pertinent, indicating that every nation of earth will be involved in the trouble, but that "Christendom," "Babylon," "Sheshach," will be the *last* to drink the cup of wrath. We quote from Jeremiah 25:15-33, as follows: –

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel unto me: Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them....All the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them.

"Therefore thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink ye and be drunken, and spue and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you.

"And it shall be if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Ye shall certainly drink: ...for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts....The Lord hath a controversy with the nations: he will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord....

"Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts [boundaries] of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried."

It is not for us to prophesy, but to seek to interpret and apply prophecy: and even then we are to learn from the past that it is not the

divine purpose that matters prophetically revealed shall be understood in *detail* until during or after fulfilment; – and then by those taught of God. We therefore merely suggest that, in harmony with the foregoing Scriptures, it will not surprise us if the Chinese are entering now their share of the great day of wrath upon all nations; – about to drink their share of the cup of divine wrath, which is to bring all nations low, as an experience preparatory to the great blessing of all the world under the Millennial Kingdom. And if it was appropriate that Israel, the natural seed of Abraham, upon rejection of Messiah should be punished and destroyed nationally, eighteen centuries ago, will it be strange if other nations also be compelled to drink of the same cup of wrath? – See verse 29.

India has already been severely scourged with famine and pestilence, yet these may be only the beginnings of her share in the cup of wrath, which we understand will be to every nation, as it drinks thereof, a time of trouble without precedent. Probably the trouble will extend from nation to nation during the next few years, until finally, despite every effort to avert it (verse 28), great Babylon's turn will come – probably within ten years from now, when she must drink the very dregs of the cup, suffering more severely than the heathen nations, even as she has enjoyed greater privileges and sinned against greater light. "Babylon – Sheshach – shall drink *after* them." – Verse 26.

As the "Gospel of the Kingdom" was circulated throughout Palestine before its trouble and overthrow, so we believe the same Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached *for a witness* to each nation before its trouble comes. China probably contains but few fully consecrated Christians, and these chiefly among the missionaries, and hence the "harvest" message might quickly reach them all. In this connection it will be interesting to note, (1) that under divine providence our dear Brother H. A. Randle sent a special personal appeal to each Christian missionary in China, and later many tracts and DAWNS, about a year before this trouble broke out; (2) the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society sent tracts and booklets extensively to

the same missionaries last year. True, we cannot say that many have received the truth; but we had no reason to expect that many would receive it. Yet the witness was given to all before their great time of trouble came. And who knows but what this interruption of mission work, backed by the truth, may set others to thinking in another direction – to looking and praying for God's Kingdom to come, as the only hope of the world.

### **THE SHEPHERDS DISAPPOINTED AND CHAGRINED.**

Reverses in the mission fields of the world, one after another, will be very discouraging to ministers who have been preaching to themselves and others that a peaceful conversion of the world to Christ is near at hand: that thus the Millennial Kingdom will be introduced. They will find that they have been [R2663 : page 213] uttering a false cry, saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no peace, and can be no peace satisfactory or lasting until the Prince of Peace, Immanuel, shall establish it through his Kingdom, by breaking in pieces the nations as a potter's vessel, and establishing his Kingdom on a different basis in their stead – on their ruins. Note now how the same prophecy refers to this despair of the pastors, etc., of nominal Christendom, at the spoilation of their pasture fields, as follows: –

"Howl, ye shepherds [pastors], and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersion are come; and ye shall fall [and be ruined] like a delicate vessel. And the shepherds shall have no way to flee, nor the principal of the flock to escape. A voice of crying from the shepherds [pastors] and an howling from the principal of the flock shall be heard; for the Lord hath spoiled their pasture." – See Jer. 25:34-37.

\*

\*

\*

Lord Salisbury, the British Prime Minister, addressing *The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, recently said: –

"Just look at this Chinese matter. You observe all the people who are slaughtered. Do you imagine that they are slaughtered simply because the Chinese dislike their religion? There is no nation in the world so indifferent on the subject of religion as the Chinese! It is because they and other nations have got the idea that missionary work is a mere instrument of the *secular government* to achieve the objects it has in view. In the East they have the proverb, 'First the Missionary, then the Consul, then the General.'"

\*

\*

\*

*The London Spectator*, commenting on the general dislike of Europeans by Asiatics, now being exemplified in China, says: –

"There is in China no race hatred, or color hatred, or, as we believe, hatred of creed for Chinese Christians. They could be tolerated quite well as mere idiots, but that those who dislike their ideas fear them also, and believe that unless those who propagate them are extirpated the ideas will win. The Europeans, they say, are already convincing many; they have almost persuaded our Emperor; year by year their views are advancing among the people, – if they and their disciples are suffered to live, our religion, our civilization, our social system, all are lost together. As for our literati, they will be ruined first, for they are our officials. People wonder that the harmless missionaries should be the objects of such a passion, that they should be disemboweled instead of merely beheaded; but think of the treatment of the Christians by the Roman Judges and we shall begin to understand the Chinese movement. Add but a little fear to the feelings already generated, and who would answer for the lives of Jews in France, or Germany, or Russia, or for those of Anarchists in any part of Europe? Asiatics in all ages have believed the amalgam of beliefs and social ways which constitutes their civilization, to be divine and unimprovable, and regard those who despise it, and preach against it, and shake it, as the intrusive Europeans certainly do, with a horror which of itself extinguishes the feeling of a common humanity. They

have no more sense that slaughtering such is wicked, than the Parisians had when they massacred the Huguenots, or than English sportsmen have when they organize a battue of birds."

\* \* \*

General Lord Wolsley, of the British War Department, takes a very pessimistic view of the outlook in China, which is corroborated by the accumulating evidences that since the China-Japan war China has been quietly drilling her troops and arming them with modern weapons, machine guns, etc. He said recently, –

"China possesses every requisite for overrunning the world. She has a population of 400,000,000, all speaking the same language, or dialect, readily understood from one end of the empire to the other. She has enormously developed wealth, and still enormous natural wealth awaiting development. Her men, if properly drilled and led, are admirable soldiers. They are plucky, and able to live on next to nothing. Moreover, they are absolutely fearless of death. Begin with the foundation of millions upon millions of such soldiers as those men are capable of being made, and tell me, if you can, where the end will be."

A Chinese gentleman of education explains that the present trouble is occasioned by the Chinese lack of conscience: that well-meaning missionaries are duped [R2664 : page 213] by many of those professing conversion. He says for instance, –

A Chinaman, an executor of a relative's will, may decide to cheat the orphans under his care. He arranges the matter readily with the Mandarin ruler by promising him one-half the booty. Later he concludes to give him but one-eighth, and to pave the way attends mission meetings, etc. Then he represents himself as terribly persecuted because of his new religion, and through the missionary secures consular protection which hinders him from being tried in a Chinese court. This step is taken months in advance of his refusal to give the Mandarin the promised one-half of his booty.

The missionary, unused to such duplicity, labors, as he supposes, for justice for the oppressed, but the result of his efforts may be summed up thus, –

"Net result: A misled missionary confirmed in his wrong-headedness; a would-be dishonest mandarin baffled and infuriated; two orphans robbed of their inheritance; food for nine days' gossip, and stirring up of hatred of 'foreign devils'; the whole a piece of rank injustice.

"Let me deliberately state that I am quite certain there is not one town in the whole length and breadth of China that has been visited by missionaries, in which you could not at this moment find indisputable evidence **[R2664 : page 214]** of a case similar in all essentials to the example I have given you."

We wonder how long it will require our dear friends interested in missions to learn that God is seeking as his "elect" not the lowest, but the highest types of man; – that now is not the Lord's time for judging the heathen – that as the Apostle declares, "God hath appointed a day [the Millennial day – 2 Pet. 3:8] in the which he will judge the world in righteousness." (Acts 17:31.) When they learn this they will see the un-wisdom of attempting to forestall Jehovah's plan, and will cooperate rather in his great and gracious arrangement of first calling and preparing an "elect" Church, which by and by shall, as God's "royal priesthood," with their glorious Lord, Jesus, as fully competent missionaries, bless the heathen with the gracious opportunity of salvation promised. Perhaps a signal failure of present missions, and spoiling of pastures, may be God's method for awakening his true servants now deluded and blinded by false doctrines contrary to the Word.

-----