



Eng^d by A. H. Ritchie

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MEMOIRS
OF THE
HON. WALTER LOWRIE

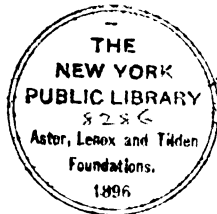
EDITED BY HIS SON
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FAREWELL COUNSELS—MISSIONS TO EASTERN ASIA.

IN the earlier years of the Presbyterian Missions it was a common usage for the Executive Committee, through its secretary, to give farewell instructions or counsels to new missionaries, when they were leaving for their fields of labour, if their journey was to be made by a sea voyage. Dr. Swift, secretary, made addresses of this kind; Mr. Lowrie, also; both repeatedly. These were of general interest, and were listened to by large congregations.

But with the change of travelling to steam navigation, most missionaries preferred to remain with their friends at home until the latest hour of departure; and farewell services were usually conducted by their pastor or neighbouring ministers. The elaborate addresses formerly made seemed to be seldom suited to the occasion. In some cases, however, either method answered a good purpose. It may be of interest to insert here the address of Mr. Lowrie at a public meeting in the Brick Church, New York City, when the Rev. John A. Mitchell, of Charleston, S. C., and the Rev. Professor Robert W. Orr and his wife, of Cannonsburgh, Penn., embarked for Singapore as missionaries to the Chinese, December 6, 1838.

BELOVED BRETHREN—It is a subject of peculiar interest to the Executive Committee of the Board of Foreign Missions of the General Assembly, that one

of their first acts is to deliver instructions to the first missionaries to China sent out by the Presbyterian Church. If we take into view the immense number of the Chinese people; their general intelligence; the progress they have made in civilization; the remarkable fact, that not only the whole empire, but four other adjoining nations, read one language; and also, that this entire population are "without Christ, aliens from His Church, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,"—the solemn duty of the Church to send them the gospel will appear in a strong light. In discharge of this duty, little, comparatively, has been done by any branch of the Church; and by our beloved Zion, until now, nothing has been even attempted. We rejoice that, in the good providence of God, a mission from the Presbyterian Church to this great but perishing people is prepared to embark, to carry to them a knowledge of Redeeming Love. May we not indulge the hope that in future her zeal and resources will, in a measure, make up for our past indifference, and that you, dear brethren, will be followed by large numbers, continued and increasing from year to year, till the whole empire of China, and the nations reading her language, shall be made to rejoice in the knowledge of the Saviour! This result is in the promise and in the purpose of God, and His power will bring it to pass. Our present efforts, and those of sister churches who have preceded us, and are now engaged in the same blessed work, may be considered feeble and unimportant; but all these efforts are in accordance with the appointed means for this very end, and are in obedience to the command of our blessed Lord. This is His plan:—let

His churches and His missionaries see to it that they become neither weary nor discouraged in His work.

We may not live to see the triumph of His cause among the heathen, for we have all neglected our duty in this great work; but the day is coming when the churches will come up to the requirements of the word of God, and then they will see and rejoice in the final triumph of the cause of Christ; when the hearts of His people will be filled with joy and gladness, to see the glory which will be to God in the highest, in the general knowledge of the Redeemer's name.

The first Protestant missionary to China was the Rev. Dr. Morrison, a name most deservedly dear to all the churches. He was sent out in 1807 by the London Missionary Society, and laboured faithfully, and, for a great part of the time, alone in preparing the way for future labourers, till his death. The labours of this great man, in translating the Bible into the Chinese language, have been duly appreciated by all, and especially by every missionary to China. In part of these labours he was ably assisted by Dr. Milne, who joined him in 1813; but his early death, in 1822, left Dr. Morrison once more alone; and his life was graciously spared till these great works were finished.

The London Missionary Societies have in this field at present six missionaries; the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, including Singapore, Java, Sumatra and Siam, seventeen; the Episcopal Church in the United States, three; the American Baptist Board, three; and the Church of England Missionary Society, one. The whole number from all these is thirty. How few the labourers in this great

field! Surely the time has fully come, when the churches should pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest: and not pray only, but also *do* the will of their Lord, in sending to this perishing people the blessings they themselves so richly enjoy.

The empire of China extends through twenty-one degrees of latitude, and twenty-six degrees of longitude. There is considerable difference in the estimates of the number of square miles by those writers who are supposed to be best acquainted with the subject. Taking the medium of their estimates, China proper may be set down as containing a million and a half, and the whole empire five millions of square miles. Supposing this to be the most correct estimate, it will be seen that this great empire is more than one-fourth larger than all Europe, and is more than five times the size of the twenty-six United States.

The number of the population is also a matter of much uncertainty, though all writers agree in stating it to be very large. The best evidence on this subject seems to be the enumeration of the Chinese themselves. Their census of 1793 gave a population of 307,000,000, and of 1812 of 360,000,000.

The government would be a pure despotism were it not for some limitations and restrictions imposed by custom on the emperor. He is considered the source of all power and honour; is styled the Son of Heaven; and is an object of worship throughout the whole empire. Constant efforts are made by the government to impress the people with the belief that all its principles are strictly patriarchal—taken from the model of a family, and conforming to it in all

respects. The emperor is said to be the father of his whole people ; the same penalty is prescribed for offences against each, and the same mourning at the death of the emperor that there is at that of the father of a family.

The emperor is assisted by various Boards at Peking, not unlike our heads of departments ; and, under their direction, each province has a governor, a judge and a collector ; and under these again are various orders of Mandarins, amounting in the whole empire to 14,000.

The standing army consists of 80,000 men, and there are 700,000 militia, who receive a pittance of pay. The navy, although numbering many vessels and boats, is quite inefficient, and often unable to subdue the pirates on the coast.

The penal code of China contains many excellent provisions, expressed with great clearness and appropriate brevity. It is far in advance of that of any other Eastern nation. Its defect is a too great minuteness in the attempt to regulate every circumstance in common life. The great evil is in the administration, affording another sad evidence, on a large scale, that without the knowledge of the Bible, the rights of the people, and truth and righteousness, are unknown.

The character of the Chinese is perhaps as favourable as that of any other civilized people who are without God, and without a knowledge of His Word. Though but a part of the population can read, the readers are in every part of the empire, and in this respect, education is general. They are noted for their industry, and for their business habits ; they are remarkable for their respect for the aged, and they possess a mild and peaceable disposition. But

alas! here we must stop; and describe other traits of character truly painful. They care nothing for truth, and are full of deceit; their self-love and ignorance make them proud, haughty and conceited, and all but themselves are barbarians; infanticide of female children has long been extensively perpetrated among them; and that universal mark of heathenism, the degradation of woman, prevails throughout the whole empire. The female infant is despised as soon as she is born; she is called even then a hated thing; and through life the law, and all the maxims and writings of their atheistical sages, are against her.

The religion of China is a strange mixture of atheism and idolatry. Three sects exist there—the followers of Confucius, the Buddhists, and the Doctors of Reason.

Confucius was born 550 years before the Christian era. His writings are preserved with great care and veneration; in them are many excellent maxims, but the good is intermixed with many things of the most evil and pernicious tendency. He acknowledged that he knew nothing about the existence of the gods, and respecting them preserved silence. Con-foo-tze, his most distinguished disciple, affirms that sufficient knowledge was not possessed to say that the gods had any existence; but he saw no difficulty in omitting the subject altogether. This doctrine of Confucius is the established religion of the empire, and, although its foundation thus reposes on atheism, there is an expensive state worship, with many imposing forms. Sacrifices are offered at the public expense to heaven—to the emperor—the earth—sun—moon—sages and other objects. The images and objects of worship of the common people are without

number or description ; and the annual expense of their idol worship is estimated by Dr. Morrison at 200,000,000 of dollars.

Buddhism is another form of their worship, but this sect is merely tolerated. Which are the most numerous in China, the followers of Buddha or of Confucius is not known. But, if the adjacent countries be taken into account, no form of heathenism is so prevalent as Buddhism. At this day, more than half the human family are led captive by this delusion of Satan. In this system, atheism is a leading feature. The god they acknowledge and worship is a mere abstraction ; he is said to exist in a state of eternal repose, caring for nothing, and without any mental exercises whatever. They believe not in the creation of the world, but in a succession of worlds ; yet they profess to believe in a state of future rewards and punishments ; but these truths are so mixed up with their fables of the metempsychosis of the soul from one body to another that all salutary influence on the conduct is lost. Not one ray of the true light shines upon them. The whole system makes the mass of the people more submissive to their wretched and abandoned priesthood. There it begins, and there it ends.

The Doctors of Reason constitute the third sect. They are silent as to the being of a God, the immortality of the soul, or a state of future rewards and punishments. They are given to magic and alchemy, and spend much of their time and thoughts in pursuit of the elixir of life. They are also called Taouists.

Among the great mass of the people, these three sects are not very distinctly marked ; and many of the superstitions of each are attended to by all. It

would indeed be difficult to describe the darkness, confusion, and obscurity of their practice and belief.

From this brief but melancholy survey of this great empire may be seen how greatly it needs the knowledge of the true God, and the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. The millions of China are perishing, and their dark and hopeless state calls most earnestly on the churches for relief. In responding to this call, and in devoting your lives to their benefit, it is proper for you, dear brethren, as well as for the Board under whose direction you go, and the churches whose missionaries you are, to know the difficulties which will meet your efforts to carry the gospel to them. It is, indeed, but an abstract of these difficulties that can be presented here; and you will meet with others, unknown at present to us all.

1. The stern prejudices, and determined hostility, manifested of late by the Chinese government against the introduction of the gospel into China, present an obstacle to all benevolent efforts in behalf of this great people. These efforts must at present be made at a distance, and of course under disadvantages. But this obstacle, in the present state of Protestant missions, has been greatly overrated. The superabundant population of China, overflowing the limits of their native land, and finding resting-places in the neighbouring countries and islands, afford many opening fields for the churches to occupy, and where they may prepare and qualify their missionaries to be in readiness when God, in His providence, removes the principal barriers. In the meantime all the brethren sent out will be on missionary ground, labouring among the hundreds of thousands of Chinese who are

now perfectly accessible to their appropriate labours. Were every barrier now removed, few more facilities would exist for learning the language ; for providing and conducting suitable schools and higher seminaries ; for raising up and instructing a native ministry ; for translating the Scriptures and preparing other suitable books ; and, in general, for using the mighty agency of the press, than are now to be found.

2. Another discouraging circumstance is, that the labourers are so few. Few, indeed, they are for so great a work ! But let not this discourage our efforts ; rather let it increase them. The number is increasing from year to year ; the evangelical churches are becoming awake to the importance of this great work ; and, above all, the Lord of the harvest, in answer to the prayers of His people, will send forth "labourers into His harvest."

3. Another obstacle is the advanced position occupied by the Church of Rome on the borders of the empire, and, to some extent, even within its limits. The whole of the Phillipine Islands, as well as Macao, is under her control ; and to the importance of this subject she is quite awake, and in a great measure prepared with able men and abundant means to send into the interior her adulterated form of the Christian faith. Instead of discouraging this state of things ought to engage the true churches to redoubled efforts. Although the influence of this false religion exists strongly in this field, it exists also in most other fields, and it must be met by the Church of Christ, let it exist where it may. This influence is indeed pernicious, but its days are numbered, and it will come to an end at the brightness of the coming of the Lord.

4. When you come to teach the Chinese themselves, you will find their minds preoccupied by the most contradictory and the most confused and absurd notions of their own superstitions. You will find atheism and idolatry existing in the same mind. If you speak to them of God, they will point to the visible heavens ; for thus their books teach them. The providence of God is unknown to them ; and they will tell you that the heavens, earth and the sages, are united in the government of the world. If you speak to them of virtue and vice, of sin and holiness, you will find their views most indefinite and obscure. These and many other things equally painful, and which for a long series of generations have become, as it were, part of their existence, will require of you unremitting perseverance, faith and prayer, lest you faint and grow weary in your work.

5. Their great veneration for their sages will meet you as an obstacle at every step. They praise Confucius in language similar to what we use in the praise of God, our Maker. When you speak to them of a *crucified* Saviour, to whom their emperors and their sages are required to be in subjection, they turn from the instruction with contempt and loathing. "It is foolishness unto them," and so they literally call it.

They are taught from infancy, and from age to age, to think themselves superior to all other people. Confucius and his disciples have in their writings strongly inculcated this feeling ; it has become with them a second nature, interwoven with all their thoughts, and incorporated with their very language ; and the government has at all times, for political purposes, nourished and cherished it in all their

transactions with foreigners, and in every state paper relating to them.

7. Much labour will be required in fully learning the singular and difficult language of this people. It is true, this has heretofore been greatly overrated; but it will still be found to require long and patient application, to obtain a perfect knowledge of it. To master this language fully, however, is an object of so much importance, that the Executive Committee earnestly call your attention to this subject. What is even at this time most wanted is a translation of the Bible into Chinese, which, while it faithfully preserves the spirit of the original, will use such expressions and national idioms as are familiar, and, as far as mere language is concerned, will be acceptable to the people of China. The translation made by Morrison and Milne has been found by succeeding missionaries to be deficient in the use of such modes of expression as are in use in the Chinese writings. By some of the missionaries now in the field a new translation was some time ago commenced, of which the New Testament has been finished and printed. Other missionaries, however, while they admit that defects exist in the former translation, have made objections to this, as going to the other extreme, and in some places giving not a translation, but a paraphrase of the original, by the use of the Chinese idioms. The subject is one of acknowledged difficulty, owing to the peculiar structure of the Chinese language, and the great number of idioms in it peculiar to itself; but it lies at the foundation of all our efforts in behalf of China; and hence the necessity of a perfect knowledge of the language. Let these considerations stimulate and encourage you

in your efforts to attain this object. By these means you may have the honour, in connection with missionaries from sister churches, of producing a translation that will be to China what our present translation is to us.

We have thus brought to your view some of the difficulties that you will have to meet in your field of labour. But, in view of these and of all others, of whatever kind, we say to you, dear brethren, be not discouraged. To this great work you go not forth alone. You know who it is that hath said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Keep constantly in mind what God requires you to do, and what it is that He has reserved to do Himself. Your duty is clear, and, in humble dependence on His grace, be faithful in the discharge of it. What more can you want than the promise of the Saviour's presence? What more can you possibly receive than His company with you always? If we could add anything to this for your encouragement, we would remind you that the glory of the Redeemer is here concerned. The millions of China are promised to Him; the day is coming when in all her valleys and on all her mountains, His name will be known and with sweetest sound dwell on every tongue; and the means which God has appointed to bring about this glorious result, is the performance of those duties in which you, and those who send you forth, are called upon to engage. Nothing can be more certain than that these efforts are in obedience to the Saviour's commands; that this is His plan for the extension of His kingdom; that He is with His servants always, even unto the end; that His glory will be promoted by the heathen being brought into His fold; and, finally, that

this is His work, and He will bring it to pass. Let these truths cheer you in your darkest hours. Your trials may be severe, as you go in advance of others, and your lives may be spent more in preparatory, than in direct efforts for the heathen; but even this will not change the nature of the work itself, for this part of the work must first be done; and what is accomplished by you will prepare the way for others.

Until you shall have reached your field of labour, and have made the examinations suggested in the letter of instructions you have already received, the ultimate location of the mission cannot be decided on. At Singapore you will find a temporary resting-place, affording you many facilities for learning the language, and prosecuting the inquiries with which you have been charged. In the permanent location of the mission, care must be taken not to interfere with any existing Protestant Mission; and that there be such numbers of Chinese in the vicinity as will require not only your labours, but also those of some of the other brethren who may follow you.

And now, in conclusion, dear brethren, let us affectionately exhort you to take care of your own souls. This admonition we would also take to ourselves. If the Apostle to the Gentiles found it necessary to be watchful and to take all care, lest, when he preached the gospel to others, he himself should be a castaway, how much more is it necessary for each of us, who are so far behind him in conformity to the holy image of our Lord, to examine carefully what spirit we are of. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father

which is in heaven." Without His love in our hearts, though we speak with the tongues of men and of angels, we are but as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. We may have the gift of prophecy, and understand mysteries and all knowledge, and still be nothing. We may bestow our goods on charitable objects ; we may endure the hardships and privations of a missionary life, at home or abroad, we may even give our bodies to be burned, but unless our motives and our hearts are sanctified by the grace of God it will profit us nothing. "Let us take heed then, brethren, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." But whilst it is our sacred duty to take heed to these solemn warnings in the Word of God, the example of the same apostle affords us the most assured encouragement, and in his experience we see the fruits of a holy life when he came to die. Before he left the earth he speaks to us as from the vestibule of heaven, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

You are sent by the churches to make known the riches of a Saviour's love to the perishing heathen. But, whilst you point them to the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world," remember, beloved brethren, that He is your Saviour ; also that to Him you must look for assistance, whilst engaged in His service here ; and that on Him rests your own hopes beyond the grave. Let your reliance on Him be simple and entire ; and fear not to trust yourselves

wholly to Him in life and in death. Take Him with you in the ship; the great expanse of waters over which you are called to pass are His; and all the storms and dangers of the mighty deep are under His control. In your labours among the heathen stand near the cross, and look to God in constant, earnest prayer, for the blessing of the Holy Ghost, whose work it is to apply to the soul the redemption purchased by Christ. When all your labours are done, and you are called to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, fear not to trust the Saviour then. He will meet you in that hour, and after death you will still be where He reigns and controls all things; "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Finally, brethren, *farewell*. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind; live in peace! and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Amen.