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Hymnology Notes

N.C.C. Conference

Itinerating East Szechuan

1932

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|| *The West China* || || *Missionary News* ||

JANUARY 1931

EDITORIAL.

It is time for resolutions—at least it is that time as we write. We have been resolving for, let us say, an average of thirty years and most of these resolutions are forgotten; but perhaps we could look over the pattern of life and pick out color or substance that is there because we have resolved.

A resolution has a negative implication, the sloughing off of the poverties of life as well as a positive searching for its riches. A good resolution might put some of the irritations of life into the very minor places built for them, and leave us with freer souls which would buoyantly bear us into the serious tasks ahead.

Resolutions aren't public matters, but no man liveth unto himself, and we have common cause for making them.

The variety of needs and longings in China fill us with a sense of inadequacy that demands common action—the fellowship of being Christians together.

We read the words of the student who, in this issue speaks of the secretaries of the National Christian Council, and we are glad that there are Christians who meet the test of critical young idealists, and we would be proud to be of their number.

The recent meetings in the province have brought a new world to view. We would like to keep it in sight.

These and other goals are before us, and we find ourselves praying that we may know and share the understanding love of God. We began with resolutions; we end with a prayer. They go well together.

A symposium may be as interesting as drama—it is drama when these collected opinions concern the meetings held in Szechuan by the secretaries of the National Christian Council for they “depict a series of actions . . . of more than ordinary interest” which we hope are “tending toward some striking result.” We have tried to secure a variety of Chinese opinion, but delegates are busy people both at conference and when they return home to recover the time lost from school and church. If our efforts do not draw forth the promised response in this issue, we may look forward to some later impressions that will enrich our memories.

Those who have attended many of the meetings realize that the church should be something more than it was a month ago for its members have heard about God and a wider life from people who know whereof they speak and can tell us of the experience that knowledge has wrought.

For those who could not attend we have tried to bring ideas from several angles to the end that they may find the message spoken for them.



NOTES ON HYMNOLOGY.

"I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." I Cor. 14 ; 15.

Since coming to China in 1928 I have given several talks on Hymnology, in different stations of our Mission. In doing this my thought has not been to present a thorough-going study of the Hymnology of Christendom, but to call the attention of the friends to some phases of the subject which may prove interesting and instructive.

Needless to say, I can only touch upon what may be termed the "mountain peaks" of the subject, and I hope that those who read this series of articles will continue this fascinating study along any line which interests them. Please do not consider this series in any way a text book, it is not intended as such, it is written merely in the hope it may assist the friends to a better understanding of "churchly church music."

First let me give you what I consider an excellent definition of a hymn, taken from the *Everyman Encyclopaedia*: "A Hymn is singing with the praise of God. If you praise God and do not sing you utter no hymn. If you sing and praise not God you utter no hymn. If you praise anything which belongs not to the praise of God, though in singing you praise, you utter no hymn." Although this definition is long and rather complicated it is good, mainly because it makes one think more than does this definition: "A Hymn is a song of praise, or adoration, to the Deity."

The Hymnal of the church, in its religious and moral value to Christian believers, is second only to one other book—the Bible. No one nation, no one people, no one sect or denomination has produced the great wealth of hymnal literature which we possess. It has come from countless sources, from many lands and from many tongues. It is estimated there are more than six hundred thousand hymns on record today. It is also a well recognized fact that a good hymn—like any other work of true art—is not made to order, but must come from the heart if it is to reach the hearts of others.

It is possible to trace the beginning of the English Hymnody from the time of Caedmon—7th century—but that is much too great a task for this series. A clean sweep of the

early Latin hymns was made at the time of the Reformation, and the psalms or the paraphrases of the psalms were the sole medium of praise in our Protestant places of worship.

Martin Luther laid the foundation of the Modern Protestant Hymnody; Isaac Watts laid the foundation of the English Hymnody; John Wesley laid the foundation of the Methodist Hymnody; and Charles Wesley was considered the greatest of English hymn writers.

As Martin Luther was called the "Father" of the Modern Protestant Hymnody let us commence this series with him and his work. While he is given the credit of laying the foundation of Modern Protestant Hymnody, yet we must not forget his way was prepared by such men as: Savonarola in Italy, Huss and Jerome in Bohemia, Erasmus in Holland, and Wycliffe in England.

Martin Luther was born in Germany (1483-1546) and all historians unite in giving him his due in the matter of bringing music into the lives of the people and establishing congregational singing. "No longer was singing vested in the clergy or choir boys, but once and for all it belonged to the people, the whole congregation now joining in the lyrics of David and voicing the exulting praises of a Saviour who redeems from darkness into light."

As is well known, he entered the Augustinian Monastery after his university experiences, and though he lived as other monks did he found no peace. A change in his religious convictions resulted in his leaving the Order and later establishing his own home. His family life was most fortunate, and he would gather his children and friends about him to make music. He composed most of his hymn melodies on the flute or the lute, and these were afterwards harmonised and fitted into the order of religious services. In 1524 his first hymn book was published, and it was said by one of his adversaries that "Luther destroyed more souls by his hymns than by his writings and speeches."

Of his 36 original hymns 2 are quite well known to us. One of these is that most delightful Christmas hymn for the children, and originally written for little Johnny Luther. The words of this are:

"A way in a manger,
No crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus
Laid down His sweet head."

Luther composed a tune for this as well as the words, but for some reason it is rarely used. On looking up this hymn in "The Hymnary" of the United Church I find that Luther is not credited with the words, while another authentic copy I have credits him with both words and music!

The other hymn is the time-honored Chorale "Ein Feste Burg". Of this there are no less than 63 translations into English, the one by Thomas Carlyle being considered the finest, although it is not so well known as the translation by Dr. Hedge. Personally I have been accustomed to singing the version "A Mighty Fortress is our God" and find it easier, although I well realize the version "A Safe Stronghold our God is Still" is the better of the two. Whichever version is used, one can realize that this is a very rugged hymn set to equally rugged music (melody by Luther and harmonised by Bach). This hymn spread very quickly over the land and soon became the "Battle Hymn of Protestantism". It is more than 400 years since this hymn was written, but it is still universally sung and loved.

A French historian has said: "Of a truth, Luther, in causing simple, easy and appealing melodies to be adopted, learned in the schools and sung with the organ, powerfully developed in Germany a feeling for music."

THE PLAN OF CONFERENCE IN CHENG TU

Dr. C. Y. Cheng and party have come and gone, but their influence will long remain. Beginning at Chungking in early November, the party moved on to Suining for the second series of meetings, then to Chengtu for ten days, thence to Kiating and Suifu. They expect to arrive in Shanghai early in the New Year.

The Chengtu Conference held from Nov. 29 to Dec. 8, typical in program. It was a delegated conference made up as follows;—

U. C. Canada Mission	50	
Methodist E. Mission	50	
Church M. Society	40	
Am. Baptist F.M.S.	20	
Friends F.M.A.	20	
China Inland M.	10	
Y.M.-Y.W. and B.S.	10	Total 200, but 247 were registered

The opening was a Day of Retreat when the Conference topics were introduced by the visiting speakers. Without discussion, after each report, considerable time was spent in prayer. Across the front of the altar rail was the motto of the Five Year Movement, "God give us a Revival and may it begin in me". In red and gold characters in the alcove behind the altar was the motto, "We are all one in Christ". Bishop Sung was chairman and he continued with the leadership of the morning half-hour devotions throughout the Conference. He also led us in five minutes of responsive prayers, daily, at the noon hour.

Four days were spent in Group Discussions, with topics and leaders divided as follows;—

- 1-Christian Homes and Stewardship, Prof. Liu Du Chi, Chairman; Li Kung Pu of the Y.M.C.A., Secretary; Miss Kwan.
- 2-Religious Education and Youth Movement, Mr. Wu Chu Chin, B. A. of C.M.S. Chairman, and Cheo Yuin Wen of S.C.M. Secretary. Miss Nina Stallings.
- 3-Rural Work and Mass Education for Illiterates. Bishop Ku, Chairman, Ren Tse Yuan, C.M.S. Secretary, Mr. T. H. Sun
- 4-Evangelism-Rev. W. R. Hsiao, M. A. Editor of Christian Hope, Chairman, Pastor Tzen Tse Liang (U.C.C.M.) Secretary, and Dr. C. Y. Cheng.

The last two days of the Conference were devoted to plenary sessions when general discussion took place and findings sent to the editing committee to be used in follow-up work.

An inspirational address followed the half hour devotions each morning. The subjects and speakers were as follows:

General topic :—The Chinese Christian Church.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| 1. The Five Year Movement | Miss Kwan |
| 2. The Apostolic Church. | Mr. T. H. Sun |
| 3. The Anti Christian Movement and its Relation to the Church | Mr. Dsang Lin Gao |
| 4. The Living Church | Miss Stallings |
| 5. Personal Christian Experience | Bishop Song |
| 6. A Christ Centric Church | Dr. Dryden Phelps |
| 7. The Church Tomorrow | Dr. C. Y. Cheng |

Two Sunday afternoon union service were well attended. The first was a service of welcome and worship when Miss Kwan gracefully responded for the visitors. The second Sunday Dr. Cheng preached and a united communion service followed. All the sessions of the conference were held in the Sutherland Memorial church of the U.C.C.M.

Serving three meals a day in the conference church basement helped to develop and preserve unity, while the fortunately sunny weather made the out of doors tea room a centre of friendly interest outside of conference hours. The mechanics of the conference had been carefully arranged by a business committee composed of one representative from each church aided by the Y.M.C.A. secretarial staff. The educational exhibit was held in the street book room, and it was gratifying to have sales to the amount of \$145. A chairman group under the leadership of Dr. P. S. Lo chose as session chairmen Lincoln Dsang, Donald Fay, K. P. Yang, S. C. Yang, Bishop Sung and Bishop Ku. Mr. C. B. Fu was chairman of the business committee with Mr. Wang Shih Tsai as Business Manager. Pastor Kan was chairman of the Reception Committee and official host to the conference.

Weaknesses were evident. We lacked a good attendance of teachers and missionaries. In both cases the time of the conference was the main cause, but this could not be helped. It was felt that a permanent chairman would have made for more continuity than the daily change of chairmen.

There was a fine spirit of prayer leading up to and throughout the conference. Daily prayer meetings were held at the noon hour in the church, and there were many prayer groups elsewhere. At the Communion Service there were 350 communicants drawn from all the churches, and three Chinese bishops participating.

Saturday afternoon on Dr. Phelps lawn, Dr. Cheng gave an illuminating address followed by questions on The Church of Christ in China. This was followed by a significant act. A missionary collection was taken for an interdenominational school in Africa which trains young men for Christian work. Fifty dollars was subscribed.

The final meeting was lead by Bishop Wang. After his spiritual message on "The Lord was in this place and I knew it not", delegates followed in quick succession testifying to the presence of God with them at this conference. A Miao student of the University touched all hearts by his testimony, and Dr. Cheng followed it with a prayer for all the tribes folk. A C.M.S. delegate from the country told the conference that he was a "mien" merchant, and sold Jesus Christ mien by making it better and giving more than his competitors for the same money. Finally the Bishop gathered all to the altar for a consecration hymn and prayer binding all to each other and to God.

Dr. Cheng and the visiting speakers in a remarkable manner answered all the various and taxing calls on their time and talents. Dr. Cheng and Mr. Sun gave splendid service to the Union University in four joint meetings—University and Middle School. Miss Kwan and Miss Stallings addressed the girls in the Women's College in the early mornings. After Conference sessions they visited the girls' schools of the city and spoke to two crowded meetings arranged by the Y.W.C.A. Dr. Cheng addressed two gatherings of missionaries, and the Home Missionary meeting of the Canadian work in the Tribes country. All were eager and willing to give all they had for the Kingdom of God in Szechuan.

We are deeply grateful to the National Christian Council for making it possible for Dr. Cheng and his colleagues to visit us in Szechuan. Not only did they come and give of their best, but the N.C.C. has also financed these conferences to the extent of half of the entertainment and printing expenses. Our part now is to carry out this Movement for the Deepening of the Spiritual Life in all our churches. Pray God we may trust Him fully, and in prayer and faith, set about our task, "Praying as if all depended upon God, and working as if all depended upon man".

A. J. BRACE

SOME IMPRESSIONS OF THE CHUNGKING CONFERENCE

The much maligned Chungking weather was on its best behaviour during the visit of the National Christian Council representatives to that city. Dr. Cheng, Mr. Sen, Miss Gwan and Miss Stallings had all been duly warned as to the kind of weather they might expect, but warm, sunny days prevailed throughout their stay. Equally warm and sincere was the welcome given to these workers and representatives of the older churches in East China whose coming to Szechuan had been long anticipated. The Conference opened on the evening of November 6th with a meeting of welcome, and closed on the night of the 13th when over 150 persons participated in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper led by Bishop Wang of the M.E.M. Church.

The program was similar to that of the Conference later held in Chengtu—group discussions at first, followed by consideration of the groups' recommendations by the whole Conference. It is probably too early to judge wisely as to the results of this Conference, but certain general impressions may be given.

A very great deal had been hoped for by Dr. Cheng and his associates from the devotional services with which each day's work began. Careful preparation had been made as to the content of these messages. Dr. Cheng gave special emphasis to this very important question in his introductory remarks urging upon all delegates an attitude of quiet, reverent worship during that period. Perhaps the method, viz., a mimeographed order of service, was too strange for most of the members as well as for those asked to lead these services. At any rate, it seemed to a number of people that these services failed somewhat in creating an atmosphere for the day's work.

Each evening an address of an inspirational character was given by some member of the delegation. These were of a uniformly high quality and did much to enlarge the horizon of our people and to give them a larger conception of what the Christian Church really stands for in China as well as the kind of program for personal and community life embodied in the Five Year Movement.

Three groups spent a very profitable time in discussing the problems presented by these N.C.C. officers. Dr. Cheng's group took up the questions of Evangelism and Stewardship. Genuine interest was shown in regard to the problem of what might be done to promote evangelism—the fundamental work of the Church. A very comprehensive statement containing a number of recommendations to the Szechuan Churches was presented to the whole Conference for discussion. The keynote of this report is that of the necessity of deepening and enriching the spiritual life of the individual Christian. And, growing out of that, the primary obligation that rests upon all of us to manifest our faith and loyalty to God's Kingdom by greater efforts to win others for Him through personal evangelism. This recognizes, therefore, the necessity for large numbers of devoted voluntary workers within every church, in other words, every church shall be a working church. It was felt that one of the most effective ways of pushing forward this work of evangelism might be found in the organizing of bands of workers who would travel and work together over a given district.

The presentation by Dr. Cheng of the topic of Stewardship was very timely. The extension of this idea into other areas of life besides the economic was a surprise, I believe, to many delegates. The comprehensiveness of the concept stimulated the thinking of many people. In the matter of Self-Support, moreover, Dr. Cheng made one very striking statement in answer to a question as to his opinion regarding the value of church endowments obtained by the organizing of "Hueis". Dr. Cheng said that from his experience and observation harm (hai chu) alone came to the church that depended upon such mean of support rather than on the voluntary gifts of the members who recognized the claims of stewardship in their lives. Furthermore, in the discussion on the best use of funds obtained from abroad, Dr. Cheng stated that it was his conviction that such funds should not be used for the support of the ministry, but, rather for other specific projects of the Church such as education, medical and social work, etc. While such ideas of self-support and the use of mission funds must, of necessity, be goals towards which the Churches of Szechuan should strive, the fact that these problems and their difficulties have been so clearly defined by a Christian leader of Dr. Cheng's position should do much to clarify our thinking and point the way for future efforts.

The group that dealt with the problems of the Rural

Church and Mass Education was a very enthusiastic one. Mr. Sen was assisted by Mr. Li Min Liang, a specialist in Agriculture of the Mei Dao Huei. It was one of the most encouraging and stimulating events of the Conference to see these two ardent young advocates of an aggressive Forward Movement in rural work on the same platform. There seems to be a wide-open door for the alert Christian worker in the rural communities at this time. The discussion on the Rural Church problem made it quite clear that many Chinese workers believe this to be true, but are held back by lack of a clear-cut program and the insufficiency of their own knowledge as to how to meet the situation. But the Church dare not delay too long. This opportunity to give leadership in a new form of community service may soon pass. Already, in a number of districts, special Normal Schools for the training of rural teachers are being conducted by local authorities with well-trained agriculturists in charge. It was the judgment of this group that the Christian churches should endeavor immediately to begin such forms of work as the Mass Education Movement, advice and guidance in farm problems, etc., so as to make the church the centre of the community's life.

Again, in the group that studied the questions of Religious Education and the Christian Home a great deal of enthusiasm was shown. Now that the schools are so restricted in the matter of religious teaching, it is evident that some other means must be found to give the children of Christian parents, as well as all other children who come to our schools, the kind of religious instruction that will develop the highest type of Christian character and so fit them for greatest usefulness in society. It was especially urged that increased emphasis be given to the work of the Sunday School—and that not for little children alone but also for young people and adults. In addition, it was urged that clubs and other groups of various kinds should be organized to touch all phases of the life of our young people and so guide their activities in ways tending to the development of Christian character and consequent right social attitudes.

The report on the question of the Christian Home provoked a more animated discussion than that of any other topic. It re-affirmed the frequently stated truth that good homes are the real foundation of a strong nation, and that the Church, therefore, should emphasize the need of Christian homes where the children are brought into the church early—rather than having to go out after them after they have wandered into sin.

Prevention is better and less costly in human life and suffering than a later cure. It was the opinion of the group and Conference that the church should be actively and intelligently interested in all the phases of its people's welfare. That is, that the economic difficulties of its people should be a matter of deep concern to the church. The Conference urged that the local churches undertake such activities as would give help and guidance in such matters as literacy, wholesome recreation, hygiene and baby welfare, marriage, and economic difficulties with all their attendant obstacles to a higher standard of living, as well as a program that would tend to the development of a deeper spiritual life and more robust Christian faith.

If one may judge the results of the Conference from impressions of the closing session, then one cannot but feel hopeful as to its benefits. The testimony meeting followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper were hours of spiritual quickening. The spontaneity and sincerity of those who testified were evident to all. One was conscious of people having been deeply stirred by the challenge of the Five Year Movement. Workers who felt themselves without serious objectives were aroused to a new sense of responsibility and of the greatness and possibilities of their tasks as Christian leaders in a day of almost unparalleled difficulties. Without question many workers have gone back to their work greatly encouraged by the knowledge that they and their little groups of fellow-Christians, though geographically isolated, are parts of Christ's Church in China—a great organization with a great forward-looking program that can, if thoroughly worked, touch and influence every part of Chinese life and help lift the country and its people to higher levels of true greatness.

GERALD BELL

Health Sunday, March 6th, 1932

Watch for programme

LEADERSHIP—LOCAL AND NATIONAL

We are often unconscious of our narrow vision and provincialism until we are brought to a sudden awareness by direct contact with the larger vision. This was our experience in meeting with the National Christian Council representatives in the week's conference in Chungking and the three days in Suining. They made a two-fold contribution, first in helping us to see a vision of the whole Christian movement in China, and our part in it, and second in meeting us on the ground of our local problems and helping us to translate this larger vision into a concrete program with methods and materials. We were rather dubious on hearing that they were going to count so largely on local leadership in Chungking. We feared that they would be sadly disappointed in the crude leadership of their carefully planned devotional services and that the chairmen of the discussion groups would either monopolize or stumble in judgment. In retrospect, however, altho there were many failures or part failures, we feel sure that far more teaching value was gained by this policy of local leadership than could have been had in a listening conference. There was real progress in participation in group worship. I have never before in China been in such quiet, reverential services. There were no long speeches in these devotional hours and they were planned so that all the audience took part. The real excitement centered in the discussion periods to which the majority of the time was given. The effort was to begin with a survey of the situation calculated to bring out the problems and generate a conviction of need. Then the discussion was always led to culminate in a concrete program of methods and materials to meet the needs. And finally there was a personal commitment to carry out this program. The discussions were thus filled with the spirit of worship and resolutions were far more than mere words. The conference centered around six phases of the five year movement, evangelism, stewardship, mass education, the rural church, Christianizing the home and religious education. The evening meetings were attended by many students as well as by the regular delegates and made a deep impression.

The shorter Conference in Suining was along similar lines except that it was impossible to have time for the degree of local leadership that we had in Chungking.

I can not but make special mention in this brief report of the happy, untiring, friendly spirit of the National Christian Council leaders who have come to us. Days of hurried travel, irregular meals, numberless feasts, late hours, "Hwan Yin Hweis"—none of these could dampen their spirits. They were always ready. Another point of appreciation is their keen grasp of a local situation and quick adaptation to it. Our first experience of this direct contact with the National Christian Council has been a revelation and our hope is that it is only a beginning of similar conferences in the future.

GRACE MANLY

EXPRESSIONS AND IMPRESSIONS FROM KIATING

The meetings of the Conference proper began on Monday, December fourteenth, at the C.I.M. church on Hsien Kai, and occupied three days. The delegation numbered about one hundred and eighty, each mission having forty five delegates with an addition of twenty each from Tzeliutsin and Jung Hsien.

On the Sunday previous to the Conference the visiting secretaries spoke at the several churches in the city. That afternoon, Dr. Cheng talked to the foreign community. He widened our vision, strengthened our hearts, and counselled us that when retreat or advance presented themselves as alternate courses, we must decide to advance.

A note that pervaded every address was the personal responsibility of every believer to God and to man. No one listening to those addresses could label Christianity an anaesthetic. Dr. Cheng's final address was a call to believers to put the difficulties, real and various as they may be, into the background, and press on out of them and over them to victory and progress for the Christian Church.

Owing to the shortness of time it was possible to allow only one hour for the discussion of each of the six Conference topics, yet ideas were adjusted and much clarity of thought was effected by the discussions.

Evangelism. Evangelism was presented as the heart of the Five Year Movement and its goal as the doubling of the membership of the Church within that period. Of the many methods used, personal evangelism was held up as the best. In the discussion that followed, there was a veering off to the difficulties that have mitigated against the increase of membership, such as,—the high cost of living, environment, taxation, antagonism in the family, robbers, opium, gambling, conduct of members, alliance with foreigners and wealth. These several subjects were blamed as causes for non-progress amongst outsiders, and for retrograde steps on the part of members. Dr. Cheng then very aptly counselled careful self-examination and a renewal of consecration vows, and in the prayers that followed this discussion, quite a few re-dedicated themselves to the Lord and to His Service.

Christianity in the Home. In the discussion that followed this topic, it was evident that this was the popular subject. The needs that this subject represent were ably outlined, and the obligations to improve the conditions that obtain throughout the land were put as an imperative duty and of paramount importance. In many quarters there are already plans being made to carry on campaigns along the lines suggested, and the sales in the bookroom showed very plainly the keen interest in this subject.

Literacy. Literacy for the Church members had also a strong appeal. The widespread prevalence of illiteracy was presented as a barrier to spiritual progress. Several methods of attacking the monster were mentioned, but special emphasis was laid on the One Thousand Character method. The notice of an Institute to be held in Chengtu in the coming year by a specialist along this line, was received with great approval. The bookroom again proved a barometer that indicated the popularity of this topic, and discussion on ways and means to effect the reducing of illiteracy were heartily entered upon.

Religious Education. This subject called forth some interesting opinions. It was evident for some time that we were walking in a sort of maze and were uncertain what it was for which these two words were the *nomen et omen*. It was a relief to be led out of the maze and to learn that all activities and endeavours that had the understanding of the Word of

God, the organisation for a religious endeavour and work for the deepening of the spiritual life as their objective, had each a place within the scope of this title. It was encouraging to realise that in our retreats, our Bible Schools, our Sunday school preparation classes, our children's work and women's schools, we have been contributing to the end and aim prescribed for, under the awe-inspiring title "Religious Education." It was a consensus of opinion that on this subject as on more than one other we had been shown more direct paths to the "journey's end".

The Rural Church. Under this title we were amazed and staggered to learn what a vast and variously interpreted subject we had embarked upon. With consummate skill Dr. Cheng brought this subject within the scope of its title and showed from his experience that, while schools and church buildings were valuable assets, they were not essential to a Church body for either worship or work. The Christian home is, in many scores of cases, the only sanctuary to which members have recourse for worship of God. In spite of this, these Churches are properly organised bodies with a real programme of work. Discussion seemed to show that country visitation and real application to the rural problem will feature in the future programme of the Szechuan Church.

Stewardship. This matter was forcibly presented, but the request for discussion met with a more tardy response than was usual. By the apt use of the Chinese saying 受人之託忠人之事 and by other logical arguments, we could not but see the catholicity of the responsibility that has been laid upon the Church by its Founder and Lord. There was a slight tendency to put the weight of the responsibility on the paid ministry, but here and there were those who were being led by these meetings to look upon their time, abilities, prayers and property as a trust from God. What we own is not ours in the final sense, it is only ours to use. Ways and means of shouldering the responsibility by the Chinese Church were discussed in detail. It was admitted that while foreign money was still necessary, and while the Chinese Church is grateful for it and other help, it must not be allowed to hinder the Church in its march towards spiritual progress and autonomy.

The final address was given by Dr. Cheng and rapt attention followed him as he sought to outline the true attitude to God and our fellow-men that should characterise all Christian living. The only way of getting people to know Christ is to express Him in word and deed.

So much for the meetings and their teaching, what have we to say about the delegates?

They were, after all, the outstanding study of the four days' meetings, and provided in themselves the real incentive and encouragement. The fact that Christianity with all its defective representatives and organisations has produced such people is at once a cause for humility of heart, thanksgiving to God and further consecration to God and His service.

It seems to us that in these delegates we had a sample of a high order of Christian statemanship, of keen Christianised intellect and of Spirit-controlled fervour and zeal. On what platform but a Christian one, and from what people but those who had had real experience of new birth from the Cross, and the moderating enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, could we hear sentiments such as those to which we have been introduced these past days? In seeking to give a human illustration of what expressing Christ really means, the man chosen from a world of representatives was a Japanese—Kagawa.

May the Lord go with the delegation back to their various duties and bless them and may the Lord go with each delegate back to his home church, and may the Holy Spirit keep fresh the impressions that been made by the various truths expressed.

THOMAS COOK

A STUDENT SPEAKS

1. When they preached they proclaimed Christ and not themselves and so every sentence moved people.
2. The person who really preaches Christ has Him in his heart. To speak only what is read or heard on the streets has no force but it is like a "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."
3. Jesus seeks for people, but on the other hand these men and women unceasingly seek Jesus with their heads, their hearts and their deeds. Moreover they do not do this blindly, for they are brilliant people.

4. Clearly, sincerely, they gave us their experiences. Those who heard them directly or through other people felt their doubts disappearing before the genuineness of their words.

My school mates and I have talked together about these things and it is our opinion that among our religious leaders we have heard very few people speak with their spiritual quality. Unfortunately our Christian leaders do not always preach the real Christ nor do they always manifest Him in their personal conduct.

Huang Kong Fong

Womens College, Chengtu University.

ITINERATING IN EASTERN SZECHUAN

HOWARD J. VEALS.

Early in October Mr. Bell, Mr. Longley, Mr. Li Min Liang, our agricultural expert, and Mr. Yang our school inspector arrived in Chungking from Chengtu and we all left for special conferences on the Chungchow and Fowchow presbyteries.

The main object of the meetings was to try to inspire and quicken the workers and members and give them new methods of approach in their work. Mr. Li was to present ways in which the farmers could be helped and so interested. He did that and even better, for besides he gave two or three very stirring talks to the conferences on what the real duty of a Christian was in China today. Mr. Li is a splendid man and a real Christian and is full of enthusiasm for his own special line of work as well as being deeply interested and concerned about the development of the church and the spreading abroad of the Jesus spirit. His testimony is worth a great deal to us. It cannot be reckoned in dollars and cents. Mr. Yang spoke at each place on the great need for universal education and he also gave encouraging and inspirational talks particularly to the teachers, stressing the point that there is no need for them to

fear to give their testimony in the schools. If they are in earnest about it and are true to their colours the local authorities will respect them all the more for it. He gave cases of where this was true in places he had visited on our field. It is certainly encouraging to have our Chinese leaders come out so strongly on these things. Mr. Longley was gathering material for his educational reports and gave some addresses on our school problem giving information of what was being done in other places. Mr. Bell of course had his eyes upon anything that needed his attention as Mission Secretary but his chief concern was to inspire. Every morning at the various places he gave our workers a fine inspirational address of exactly the kind that they so badly need.

On the Chungchow district we held conferences in three centres. We had two days in Chungchow all together with all the preachers and most of the teachers of the district as well as some church members. Then we divided forces and Mr. Bell, Mr. Li and I went out a long day's journey to Pashan while the remainder of the delegation with Mr. and Mrs. Morgan carried on in Chungchow for two days more. Those of us who went to Pashan had two days of meetings there, partly with the members who are nearly all farmers and partly with the crowd, also farmers, on a busy market day. We finished our meetings there with a little Communion service. About twenty of us sat down around a long table in a little back room of the chapel property and there away from the din of the busy market street we partook of the bread and wine and remembered what our Master had done for us and the world, and those plain back country farmers went off to their country homes as the dusk came on, strengthened from having met together. They know little of the outside world and its policies and crises but they know that they have derived help along their way from the carpenter of Nazareth and it is our task to keep them inspired to the task of letting others know of it.

From Pashan we went directly overland to Fengtu and met the remainder of the delegation there, they having come up from Chungchow by small boat. It is about sixty English miles from Pashan to Fengtu and the road leads through as beautiful a country as I have ever seen. Our way led us up high mountains, past beautiful waterfalls, down long narrow valleys finally bringing us out along a little stream that led us to the Yangtze again. Mr. Bell and I walked, making the trip in a little less than two days. We had two days at Fengtu and had fairly satisfactory meetings though not so good as at the other places.

From Fengtu we went on to Fowchow and had five days of meetings there with a programme similar to that at Chungchow. On one of the days we had the ceremony of laying the corner stone of the new church which is being built there by Mr. MacAmmond. It was very fitting that Mr. Longley was there to lay it since he was our first resident missionary pastor in Fowchow. Fowchow is going to have a very fine church and they have the nucleus of a fine church membership too, as good as or perhaps better than anything that we have in any other station. We have a very 'up and coming' group of workers there and it is a privilege to attend their workers meeting which is held every week. Mr. Li addressed the one that was held while we were there and it was a great inspiration to us.

The Fowchow meetings differed from those at Chungchow in that few had been brought in from the country district. However all the country teachers and some of the country members were brought together at one of the country market towns, the double dragon market, thirty or more English miles from Fowchow. We had two days of very fine fellowship there together and in many ways I think it was the best conference that we had on the two districts. Everyone seemed to be in a receptive mood and they were not only ready to discuss farm problems but were keen for spiritual food as well. We have a new man set apart this year on the Fowchow district for rural evangelism to serve the whole district. He was with us in this conference and was a great help. When the evening of the second day arrived, although we had had a very full day of meetings, closing again with a Communion Service, the delegates implored us to stay another day or failing that at least half a day. We had our programme made out however and so had to decline. We went from there to Changshow where we had one day before going on up to Chungking.

Since our arrival in Chungking we have attended the meetings led by the delegation from the N.C.C. The testimony meeting held at the close of the conference was very fine and the testimonies seemed to be quite spontaneous and from the heart. It did one good, too, on the last night to see a whole church full of Christians from four different societies and at least four countries, all take the communion service together in a quiet and reverent way. When I am inclined in the next year of ups and downs in outstation work to grow discouraged I shall remember that gathering and take courage. Something great has already been accomplished in China but there is so much more yet to be done that it seems insignificant. The

purpose was to inspire our leaders with the greatness of the task before the church in the "five year movement". Two and a half or almost three of the years have already passed and this is the first delegation that we in Szechuan have had from outside so it certainly was welcome.

And now it remains for our workers in the outstation work of these two huge presbyteries of Fowchow and Chungchow to try to do the follow up work—to keep alive the sparks that we hope have been struck and fan them so that they may break into a great blaze. It is a mighty task. We begin next week with the Fowchow District, holding classes for the members and parents' meetings in the schools of the various country places. The programme that we have mapped out will keep us almost continually on the road until after the new year.

Before closing I would like to give you a little account of a scene on the river bank at Chungchow one day last September while I was there. It is illuminating in that it throws light on the difficulties that confront our men at the present time.

Our Chungchow presbytery chairman; whom we shall call Mr. Fish for convenience (since his name has that sound even though not that meaning in Chinese) and I were down at the river bank. He is one of our most faithful pastors and is in the work for the love of it. He never spares himself, walking over mountain and down dale in his exceedingly hilly district even though he is lame and walks with a considerable limp. But I must come to my story. A crowd of a score or so boys and men were hanging about as is usually the case wherever a foreigner is. My name was asked and what society I belonged to and how long I had been in the country, etc. There was also some discussion about the Roman Catholics and Protestants, the Heavenly Lord and the Christ societies, both of which have causes in Chungchow. From this opening Pastor Fish began to talk to them of the differences between their old forms of worship and the religion of Jesus as taught by our church. He had not been talking more than four or five minutes when a young man, called to his friends to go, saying to them as they moved off, "that fellow is talking absolute nonsense." This rather broke up the little gathering. The one who had called out and his friends did not go far however and I followed them and said, "he is not talking nonsense, that is what he believes, you may believe differently but that does not make it nonsense." "He is a running dog of you foreigners" said the chief speaker. "He is only preaching that for the rice he gets to eat. It is a matter of dollars and cents to him." This he said with all the

venom he could muster. I came to the rescue of our faithful shepherd of course by denying the charge.

It was of little use however. He declared his unbelief in any religion. I affirmed my belief in its great help and witnessed to the great help that I had received personally. What help he interjected? Our Chinese religions speak of trusting in "Heaven", you blindly trust your Jesus, both are alike useless. I assured him that we did not blindly trust in and believe in Jesus as an object or an idol but that we believed in Him because of His teachings and their value in the realm of living. He was of course not convinced. Words could do no more. I could only hope that my life would not belie my witness and where misunderstandings so easily arise and jealousy and hatred are so rife as they are in China today that is not easy.

GARDENING

During the month of February there are two matters that should receive the attention of gardeners.

If your garden is large enough to spare space for growing potatoes you may get two crops a year of these, and so save household bills. The plantings to be made in February and September. The February planting should be made during the first half of the month, by which time any fear of the young sprouts being nipped by frost will have disappeared. Prepare well manured drills, and plant your seed potatoes about one foot apart, and cover with soil to a depth of five or six inches. The drills should be at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet apart, as when the plants have grown to the height of eight or so inches they need to be moulded up on each side. If this is not done some of the tubers are sure to push their way above ground where they will be exposed to sun and weather and be quite spoiled for table use. If the rows are put too close together there will not be sufficient soil for moulding. There is little use in planting potatoes in tree shaded ground.

February is also the month when tomato seeds should be sown. The seeds take some time to germinate, and generally speaking about the middle of the month is a good time to make the sowing for by the time the plants appear frost will be over. If a very early crop is desired sow in pots or boxes and keep indoors until all danger from frost is gone.

For the past few years tomatoes sown in Chengtu and other places in Szechwan have suffered very badly from blight. In some cases the plants are killed, and in others the blight attacks and ruins the fruit. In this connection some of us have observed that the blight is worse in the Spring, and attacks the plants when they have reached the height of 12 to 18 inches, and are just about putting out their first blossoms. At this time of year (April and May) we are likely to have some hot dry weather, and it is surmised that the tomato plants need a lot of damp to keep them strong and able to throw off the attacks of blight. Those plants which survive this period or are of a later sowing, do much better once the heavy rains begin; and the wetter the summer months the less there is of blight, and the better the crop yield.

At home farmers are now using some kind of paper mulch which is sold in rolls, and which they unroll on the ground at each side of the row of plants which it is desired to protect, and it is said that where this is done much better crops are gathered. Now we cannot get this paper mulch in Szechwan, and therefore we must devise our own substitute; something that will not keep the rain out but which will help to keep the ground in the immediate neighbourhood of the plants from becoming parched and dried out. If such a thing can be done, it, together with liberal waterings, may protect our tomatoes against blight. At the least this is worth trying. The best time of day in which to water your plants is in the early morning.

Another thing that has been observed is that plants that have been transplanted from the seed beds become blighted, while those that are left in the seed bed do not blight. In this connection it might be worth while to make experiments, and instead of sowing in seed beds, sow your seeds in hills in the place you want your plants to grow, and later thin out to one or two plants to a hill. In this way the roots will not be broken or disturbed and should be able to strike down deeper into the soil, as well as not be put back by replanting. Another plan would be to sow the seeds in small pots or boxes, and when planting out time comes plant box and all without disturbing the roots. When so sowing choose boxes or pots that have holes in the bottom so as to give an outlet for the roots to get out and strike down into the soil. When plunging these boxes or pots into the ground plunge deeply so that the roots will be as far from the dry atmosphere above as possible.

G.M.F.

THE CHENGTU METHODIST ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

Before describing it permit me a preface by way of explaining some things which may not be familiar to all your readers. Every four years there is held in some place in the United States a delegated Methodist General Conference of nearly a thousand members, lasting nearly a month, upon which devolves, among other things, the duty of considering proposed changes in policy and practice, not only in the home land but also in the score or more important missions carried on in various parts of the world. These missions, develop into conferences and in turn send delegates in proportion to their membership and of nearly every race and color with equal responsibility in voting for the election of bishops and members of important church boards. As important mission fields such as India and China came to realize their need of greater unity in their own territories central conferences were developed to which increasing power was granted. Bishops were elected for them, and at the last General Conference the privilege was given to elect their own bishops.

Bishop Wang was elected from North China and Bishop Gowdy from the Fukien Province. The two West China conferences are in charge of Bishop Wang, as well as two conferences in the North. To those who have had the privilege of meeting and hearing Bishop Wang he needs no praise for his genial spirit, whole heartedness and spiritual mindedness. With all praise and love for the foreign bishops, it gives one a comfortable feeling to be able to carry on without language difficulties.

And now as to what may prove of interest concerning the recent annual Conference. Not only have our general and central conferences an equal number of clerical and lay members, but the annual conferences as well. This involves the election of lay delegates, one from each circuit, which organize at the place and time of the annual conference, for the purpose of electing an equal number of lay delegates to the above conferences, while the members of the annual conferences elect the clerical representatives.

Dsang Lin Gao, President of the University, who went as a recent graduate 12 years ago in the capacity of lay delegate, is again to go as clerical delegate. Both at the Central Conference which opens March 2nd at Nanking and the General Conference which opens May 2nd at Atlantic City. Those who know him best will have the fullest assurance of his able representation at both places. District Superintendent, Liu Dsi Min will also represent us at Nanking, where his genial spirit and happy ways will make the conference wish we had more such to send. All delegates in both cases were Chinese, except that Dr. Havermale received a few votes as alternate.

The Chungking Annual Conference was held while the representatives of the National Council were there, the same being true of the Chengtu Annual Conference, thus saving the time and expense of an extra journey. It is to be hoped that they felt amply repaid by all they heard and experienced, such a rare opportunity as it was to hear and be taught by these eminent spiritual leaders. It is a long, long way to Chengtu, but the way is getting shorter.

The missionary women, not including the missionary wives, have their own conferences, meeting at the same time and in the same city as the men's, thus affording opportunity for meeting together at the morning and evening spiritual feasts, at the holy communion, and whenever matters require consultation of both bodies. Although the entrance requirements to the women's conference are rather stiff, the numbers of Chinese members is already nearly equal to the foreign.

When we met together to consider the place of the next conference Chungking received the largest vote. Before the vote was taken a sally of mine brought laughter and applause. I said that I would like to go to Chungking for the conference, since, judging by what my ears heard about the new city, it was a place to which I had never been. Both the men and the women will have joint conferences there, especially because it is confidently expected that these two largest cities in West China will within a year be connected by a good motor road, when the time needed for the journey will be only a day or two, instead of the former ten days.

The number desiring to enter conference and their average fitness was phenomenal and worth mention. We require first entrance on trial with examinations, then two years on trial with further examinations. Nevertheless studies taken in university and theological school are accepted if considered equivalent. The number entering on trial this year was nine

and last year nine. Of these 18, 9 are graduates from the University, two of these taking post-graduate courses and others desiring to do so. Of the remaining 9 five are now taking university courses, or have done so, while the others are graduates of the old bible school or the old middle school. I doubt if the majority of our home conferences could show a better record. True the most of them are not looking forward to the ministry, but to other church work. We could not receive and support them if they were. In the present financial stringency the best we can hope for is to hold our own in some things, retreat in others, facing disaster in some.

Our evangelistic work is looking up, but is by no means what it ought to be. We have warned our preachers that their work must show more fruit, or they may have to give way to others who can give proof of their calling. Some of the younger men show more promise than the older. One of our oldest has sold himself to satan. One of our preachers, in addition to much sickness in his family, has been cleaned out by robbers twice.

The educational work, as a rule is prosperous, though of varying quality. There is some discontent among teachers, because we are not able to increase their salaries, while the cost of living goes up rapidly. Some of them find employment in our women's schools. Our women's boards are better off than we financially, and their educational work seems everywhere prosperous.

A new theological union school has been recently opened with university grade required for entrance, though so far none of the students are up to the required grade. The government of course, do not recognize this school. Some students in Arts are also stressing theological studies.

In closing I must mention a calamity which befel the Goucher junior middle school near daylight Nov, 16th. The main building was burned and with it four of the sleep-bound students. Only the coming of the University hand fire engine saved the rest. This is a calamity not to the Methodists only, for there is no other Mission junior middle school at Chengtu. Worst of all, the school will be running in debt for the remainder of the school year, with no way open yet for the further continuance of the school.

SPENCER LEWIS

MUNICIPAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN AT HANCHOW.

The Municipal Public Health Campaign held at Hanchow during November proved to be a most successful experiment. At the invitation of Brigadier General Chen, Dr. Wallace Crawford, Director of Public Health in the West China Council for Health Education, came for a three days intensive campaign and was ably backed up by the three doctors of the local municipal hospital, doctors Cheo, Wu and T'ao. - the two former being graduates of the Union University, Chengtu.

An enthusiastic lead was given by General Chen who personally directed the organization, and himself introduced the speakers at the various meetings, giving excellent addresses in which he explained the chief factors of personal and public health.

Lectures to the troops were given each morning, different regiment being present each day. At these lectures a noticeably quiet and attentive hearing was given by the men. In the afternoons, when the large hall was crowded to its utmost capacity with more than two thousand of the general public the crowds were more difficult to control and at times it was not easy to hear the speakers. On the last afternoon all the schools of the city were invited, and the hall was packed with children of all ages from eighteen downward, who thoroughly enjoyed the show. All the lectures were held in the cinema hall and were illustrated by lantern slides followed by a display of the interesting cinema films which Dr. Crawford had brought with him. These films, which were much appreciated by the crowds, dealt with such subjects as the Beginnings of Life, the Care of the Teeth and the Life History of the Fly. In these lectures the message of health education has been brought home to audiences aggregating about ten thousand.

There was also, for the three days of the campaign a Public Health Demonstration in the City Hall. This is a fine modern building situated in the Public Park, in the midst of flower gardens and beside an artificial lake. It is used for many municipal functions, but on this occasion it was occupied

entirely by the public health exhibit. Some two hundred large picture charts hung on the walls of the two halls comprised in the building. These charts showed the sanitation of the streets and houses and wells; the dangers arising from house flies and mosquitoes and parasites; the methods for their extermination; the importance of vaccination; the dangers of spitting and many other phases of the public health question. In addition there were placed in the hall roll charts on stands, exhibiting health habits, care of children, and methods of prevention of disease.

In the smaller hall was a demonstration of child welfare, in which was shown, among other things, mosquito proof cots of various designs and prices; while laid out on a table was a display of hygienic garments for small children, with two life size dolls on which to demonstrate this wardrobe.

At the other end of the room there was always a crowd round the microscope, evidently fascinated by the revelation of diphtheria germs and round worms. An equally engrossing centre of interest was the line of ten heads modelled in clay, and exhibiting various disease symptoms. Most of these exhibition objects have since been purchased by General Chen for permanent exhibition in the museum building which is also in the public park.

Many thousands must have received a useful message through this demonstration, as the two halls were thronged with curious sightseer at all hours of the day.

Meanwhile some ten thousand health tracts had been distributed in the streets and tea shops, and hundreds more pasted up by Gen. Chen's orders at the most strategic points, so that there must be few people in the city who have not been reached by one or another of these means.

As a result of this campaign Hanchow ought to be a happier, cleaner and more disease free city in the future.

V. H. Donnithorne.

OUR OVERSIGHT

The article in the December number of the News, entitled Hsueh T'ao Nu—An Introduction, was written by Dr. Cyril Canright. We apologise for the omission of his name in that connection.

AGAIN BISHOP MOWLL MEETS WITH BANDITS

It happened on Monday, December 7th. We had left Hochow early the previous morning, and were making slow but steady progress up the small river to Tunglan, where we proposed to leave the boat and go by car to Chengtu.

The setting and scenery were perfect. The water, which before Hochow had been the dirty yellow colour of the Yangtze, had changed to a deep, clear blue-green; the red, gold and many shades of green on the hillsides were lit up with Autumn glory by the warm and friendly sun; and we, in our little room at the back of the boat, were having tea.

Suddenly the serenity was disturbed by three shots ahead. The boat stopped, and six men in long gowns, and with large revolvers came quickly through from the front of the boat. They at once began to search our things, and gave us the impression that they were rather arrogant tax officials making a thorough inspection of our boat. Soon, however, that illusion was dispelled when they began to demand silver; and as our response, or lack of it, did not seem to satisfy them, the leader, a man of singularly desperate appearance, fired two shots unpleasantly close to the Bishops head, and then smote us on the head with his revolver, causing blood to flow from the wounds of the Bishop and Mrs. Mowll.

They seized her wedding ring, the ladies' watches, all the silver which had been brought for possible taxes, and a great quantity of clothing and other articles, including the Bishop's typewriter and a leather toilet case containing two shaving sets, hairbrushes, etc. We cannot deny that from their appearance they needed these articles of toilet, and we can only hope that they have since made good use of them.

Eventually the marauders departed, leaving the boat in a state of indescribable chaos, and the Bishop with a further wound in his back. Then, in the quickly failing light, we endeavoured to sort out and restore to order such things as had been left, while Mrs. Mowll dressed the wounds as best she could with iodine and lint.

Fortunately, the car was not damaged, in fact, as it was placed at the front of the boat, leaving only a very narrow passage alongside, it probably prevented the brigands, who were of course in a great hurry, from taking further spoil.

It was, to say the least, a thrilling experience, and a welcome for the newcomers to Szechwan which will not easily be forgotten. But we praise our Heavenly Father from our hearts that He brought us through so mercifully, and it is quite certain that but for His protecting care much worse might have befallen us. As it was, we experienced in a new and very practical way the strength and peace which the assurance of His presence brings, and it is a great privilege to have even a very small share in the experiences which St. Paul had in his journeyings in the Master's service.

J. W. RUDD.

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