

# THE Union Seminary Magazine

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VOL. XVI

APRIL—MAY, 1905

No. 4

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## THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.<sup>1</sup>

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THE fundamental question in Christianity is the origin of the Scriptures. This question is fundamental because the answer we must give to almost all other religious questions depends on the answer we must give to it. What we are to think about God and his attributes; about law and its penalties; about sin and its consequences; about Christ and his great salvation; about the Spirit and his offices; about the church and its ordinances; about life and its duties; about death and its issues; about eternity and its rewards for the righteous, and its retributions for the wicked; what we are to think about these and almost all other religious subjects, depends on the conclusion at which we arrive as to the source whence the Bible has come. If it was written by mere men, in the use of their own unaided powers, then its contents are only human speculations, having no value except what human reason can confer. But if all its parts, the Old Testament as well as the New, the poetry as well as the prose, the historical as well as the doctrinal and devotional parts, were written by holy men as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, then its contents come to us with an authority from which there is no appeal, and that demands immediate and unquestioning submission and obedience.

But how may we know that it was thus written? How may we so assure ourselves of it, that we may rest the whole weight of

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<sup>1</sup> Substance of an address delivered at the Union Seminary Conference on the Bible and Christian Work, May 12, 1904.

# Missionary.

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## HELPFUL MISSIONARY BOOKS.

BY REV. S. H. CHESTER, D. D.,

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I WAS asked to write a brief article for the next issue of UNION SEMINARY MAGAZINE on some of the best missionary books.

It depends, of course, upon the purpose for which they are wanted. If I were advising a prospective foreign missionary as to what books he should read, my advice would be that he spend all the time available for his preparatory reading in the study of the country and people of his prospective field. If he were going to the Orient, I should advise him to have nothing to do with any study of Oriental languages this side of China, Japan, Korea or India. If he were going to a Latin American country, I should advise him to get the best theoretical knowledge possible of Spanish or Portugese, but not to make any attempt whatever to speak either of these languages until he reached his field. Otherwise he would be certain to catch up false accents which it would be more difficult to unlearn than it would be for him to learn to talk the language, and which would spoil much of his preaching by causing him to say one thing when he meant another. Portugese especially is almost as bad as an Oriental language with respect to the difference made in the meaning of words by the slightest change of accent. The getting of wrong accents fixed in one's mind leads to such unhappy *faux pas* as was made by the Rev. Edward Lane when he preached a sermon filled with frequent repetition of the most earnest exhortation to his hearers that they should not lay up their *scissors* on earth where moth and rust corrupt, but that they should lay them up in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt. When the writer was in Brazil, the Rev. Alva Hardie was attempting to give the Brazilians the benefit of some of his study of their language on

the steamer as he went out. He wished to say that the fame of a certain historical character would go "sounding down the ages." What he did say was that the said fame would go "sweating down the ages." His courteous Brazilian hearers did not even smile, except inwardly.

Most books on what is called "Comparative Religion" have been written by men who had too much respect for the heathen idolatries as they are to-day, a respect derived from studying the ancient books which describe the beginnings of these idolatries thousands of years ago. They have one and all pursued a course of degeneracy culminating in demonolatry, and as we find them to-day are not worthy of being compared with anything decent, least of all with Christianity. There is one book on Comparative Religion, however, which for thoroughness, soundness of view, comprehensiveness and fulness of information and elegance of style is worthy of a place in every missionary library, and especially of earnest and thorough study by every prospective foreign missionary. I refer to *Oriental Religions and Christianity*, by Rev. F. F. Ellinwood, D. D., the Nestor and sage among missionary secretaries in America.

For the use of missionary pastors the indispensable missionary book is the recent revised edition of the *Encyclopedia of Missions* published by Funk & Wagnalls. This book has the advantage over the old *Encyclopedia of Missions* in that it consists of only one volume, that it costs only \$6.50, that the articles are more condensed and better selected as to topics, and that the information is modern. With this as a basis, and as the source of general missionary information to be drawn upon in all kinds of emergencies, the writer is inclined to think that missionary biography should make up a large part of every pastor's missionary library. History is philosophy teaching by example. Biography is history suffused with the interest that attaches to personality. To the list of biographies of the old missionary heroes and pioneers, whose names are too familiar to require mention, one has recently been added which is of peculiar interest, and which should not be overlooked. The most interesting country in the world to-day is Japan. The man who, I believe, did the most to make Japan the wonder of our modern world and worthy of the interest and sympathy which she has aroused in this most modern of countries was Rev. Guido Fridolin Verbeck, a mis-

sionary of the Reformed Church of America, whose life has been most worthily written by Rev. William Elliot Griffis. A very simple and very informing account of the Japanese people and Japanese missions is given in the *Gist of Japan*, by Rev. R. B. Peery, of the Lutheran Mission. *The Mikado's Empire*, and the recent fine work of Mr. Sidney L. Gulick, *The Evolution of the Japanese*, are for those who are willing to wade through dryness to thoroughness of knowledge.

The best books on Korea, from a missionary standpoint, have been written by Rev. James S. Gale. I do not regard *The Vanguard* as first-class literature simply as a novel, but I believe it is the book from which the ordinary reader will get the most vivid, as well as truthful, idea of the most remarkable missionary work of our time. While the book is criticisable from a literary standpoint, it is intensely interesting and readable. Rev. Daniel F. Gifford's book, *Every-Day Life in Korea*, is also well worth reading. Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop's *Korea and Her Neighbors* would be admirable if it could be edited down to about one-third of its present size.

The remark made about *The Mikado's Empire* will also apply to that monumental work on China by S. Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*.

By far the best descriptive books on China are those written by Rev. Arthur H. Smith. Any one who cannot read and enjoy his work on *Chinese Characteristics*, whether he had any special interest in missions or not, would be a hopeless person to deal with if one had to furnish him reading matter that would interest him of any kind that he ought to be interested in. As a general discussion of modern China (if such a term can be in any sense applied to that venerable empire), the recent work of Rev. Arthur J. Brown, Secretary of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church North, *New Forces in Old China*, is one of the most intelligent, thorough and informing. The works of that wonderful old man, diplomat, scholar and literateur, as well as missionary, Rev. W. A. P. Martin, D. D., should have a place in the reading of all those who desire to be really intelligent about China. Dr. Martin's views on matters of missionary policy have not commanded the assent and approval of Chinese missionaries in general, but his knowledge of Chinese literature, history and character, as well as his power of putting what he

knows into racy and readable form, is perhaps unequalled among writers on China. When the life of Hudson Taylor has been written, as it probably will be by his gifted daughter-in-law, Mrs. Geraldine Guinness Taylor, it will be the most thrilling story ever told in connection with Christian Missions in China.

It is becoming evident that this article would stretch itself beyond the limit if continued after the same fashion with reference to the literature of all the great mission fields. More of the same kind can be had if desired for another issue of this Magazine. This one is designed to be suggestive rather than complete, and may be properly concluded, I think, with the remark that whatever has been written on the subject of missions, as well as whatever shall be written hereafter, by Mr. Robert E. Speer is perhaps the best thing that has been or will be written by any one on the particular phase of the subject which he discusses. His last work, which is his great work, *Missions and Modern History*, is such a work as, if he had written nothing else, would have entitled him to a first place among those who have lifted missionary literature up to a plane where it demands and commands the respect of all those who know what real literature is