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**A CRITIQUE OF THE CHINESE NOTIONS AND
PRACTICE OF FILIAL PIETY.**

Read before the Conference of Canton Missionaries, April, 1878. (enlarged).

BY REV. ERNEST FABER, OF THE RHENISH MISSION.

(Continued from Page 253).

THE FOUR BOOKS ON FILIAL PIETY.

IN the *Ta-hioh*, *Chung-yung* and *Lun-yu*, there are only a few detached sentences on the subject, which are collected in the "Digest of the doctrines of Confucius" pages 79-82. I shall, therefore, not repeat them here, but simply make a few remarks thereon.

Confucius, being asked about filial piety, gave four different answers, fitted to the circumstances of the questioners, Anal. II. 5, ff. (See Morrison's Dictionary, p. 722, ff.) The first 無違 "No disregard!" Confucius himself explains, that *propriety* must be observed to the living and dead parents. The sacrifices to the dead are also mentioned here. The second answer requires from the son *not to give anxiety* to his parents by any unreasonable conduct. The third lays stress on *reverence*, as mere support treats the parents like dogs and horses.* Fourth, everything must be done cheerfully. On Remonstrating some advice is given, the three years mourning is inculcated; proper obsequies and sacrifices to the dead are regarded as very important duties. All these points have been treated already. We see at the

* NOTE.—The correct translation is: the filial piety of now-a-days means the support of one's parents, which they also do to dogs and horses; if reverence is wanting, what difference is there? Dr. Legge prefers to translate, "But dogs and horses likewise are able to do something in the way of support."—Where in the world do any dogs, etc., support their old ones?

many persons in China and Japan. He is also well versed in the Chinese language, their ways, modes of travel and the like; and in every respect, fully qualified for the undertaking. He needs no commendation from me. While passing through Yokohama, in July last, I took occasion to speak with him on the subject. He entered heartily into the project of an expedition, and without hesitation agreed that I might propose his name for the work. He suggested "that he, or whoever undertook it, would need a companion." To this I fully agreed—it will not be very difficult or expensive, I suppose; and there is much to encourage the hope of success. Will not the "Shanghai Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society" take up the matter and see whether the intelligent residents in Eastern Asia are ready for the enterprise, and if so, also take the necessary steps to carry it into execution? And further, will not the Recorder open its columns for information and discussion; and, in other ways, encourage the proposed plan, or suggest some better one? We wait to hear, what the Missionaries have to say on the subject.

I remain, Dear Editor,

Yours very truly,

T. P. CRAWFORD.

TENG-CHOW-FOO, 6TH October, 1879.

The Soochow Prisoner.

DEAR SIR,—

I am happy to state to you that the man who has been imprisoned for three years and eight months, because he acted as middleman in obtaining property, for the Southern Presbyterian Mission is released. The tale of his sorrows might be made long,—his literary degree taken away; several times beaten; enduring the heat of 4 summers; his name a by-word in the province; his venerable father, aged 78, dying and the coffin remaining unnailed till the only son could perform this rite; the wife dead and buried; the family reduced to penury.

In 1874, we purchased a lot in the lower part of the city, near the Confucian temple. The prisoner was one of the middle-men. Afterwards two adjacent lots were obtained. At the Autumnal sacrifice the *literati* declared that if the "foreign devils" built on the Dragon's head, it would spoil the Fung-shui, and none of them could ever rise to be a *Chwang-yuen*. Three parties were indicted, of whom the prisoner, *Chên-yin-fu* was one. We agreed to swap the lot for the large tea-shop property opposite our former chapel and the exchange was effected. A chapel was soon after erected in native style. *Chên-yin-fu* and a man named *Wong*, who leased to us, were imprisoned. The latter after six months was released because of sickness and has since died. There were 20 or 30 men engaged in these transactions with us, but Chinese law is to catch one man and make him responsible for all. For six months these arrests were the topic of tea-shop gossip, and when we were on the streets selling books, questions were daily

put to us. On itinerant trips in distant parts of the province, men have asked me if the "law-suit was ended"? The country people thought he was in jail for joining the church.

Once with a friend I went to see the District Magistrate; the result was the Mandarin summoned the prisoner, a runner took him by the queue, put his head on his knee, and beat him on the face with a leather strap. Application was made to Vice-Consul, Bradford. He replied to the effect, "The party is imprisoned for alienating property into the hands of foreigners; it is a Chinese case and entirely without my scope." Consul-General Myers afterwards wrote to the Viceroy about the matter, but received no reply. In 1877, the case was carried to Peking, and Mr. Seward has showed a very kindly interest in it. He directed the Vice-Consul to take up the case, but the latter declined on a technicality. When the Secretary of Legation went to Nankin, the Minister requested him to bring it before the Viceroy. Afterwards he directed me according to Art. XXXVIII. U.S. Treaty to write to the Viceroy myself and let it be forwarded officially by the Consulate-General. Some months afterwards Consul Wells pressed the Viceroy for a reply. Mr. Wells declined to take the case as it had been carried to a higher court, the Legation, and therefore the lower court had no jurisdiction. Every change in the American Consulate required that the history of the case be written at length. I rather complained to General Stabel that the Consulate had never afforded us real aid. He replied that "he had examined into the case, and found a great deal on the records, and it seemed *much had been done.*" He obtained for me a letter of introduction to the Prefect of Soochow, and from the heat of July, to the snows of January, I visited and wrote to this official.

We gave up the deed of lease and the District Magistrate issued a stamped deed placing the property in our hands till the sum of \$2300 is paid. For four years they have tried to raise that amount and failed. Also were the property to revert to a Chinese, the chapel must be pulled down and stores erected, so it is equivalent to a deed of sale. The people look on the chapel as a very good institution. There is no doubt that the Mandarins intended to let the man die in prison as a public example and his deliverance is counted a special mercy, for had he died there a stain would have rested upon our Mission, for though the *cause* was the hatred of the officials, yet we were the *occasion* of his imprisonment. He was kept in the outer prison and had "favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison," who allowed him a *per cent* on the "squeezes" on new prisoners.

The Viceroy, Prefect and District Magistrate have all stated that it is according to the treaty (and we may accept their interpretation of it) for Missionaries to *rent* Chapels in the interior, *provided* they bring the rental papers to the Yamen and have them stamped. 堂 t'ang is used not in its specific sense as *chapel* but in its generic sense of *institution* or *mission-house*. It seems that we ought to be satisfied with these privileges from which the merchant is debarred.

When I came out every one told me that it was impossible to spend the summer in a Chinese house, and it took several years to learn that

not a fact. If the house is a large one, open to the East and South, with a plot of ground attached, and \$300 expended in putting up doors and windows, you may have the sunshine in winter and the breeze in summer, and with mat-sheds over the courts a lower temperature than in a foreign house, not only securing comfort, but having all pleasing to the eye.

As the rental papers of our Mission Houses are stamped and as no landlord can remove a tenant as long as he pays the rent, we hold them nearly as securely as if the property was owned. I have a nice chapel, but my brethren have just as good ones, put up according to their directions by natives and rented to them at low rates. Had we pursued this policy we would have avoided bringing evil upon men, in the midst of which we could not help them. Do our Mission Boards know that property is not held in the interior by any legal tenure?

We all feel that we were providentially hindered from building dwellings on the first lot we bought, as it would have proved a *malarial depot*. What is to be done with a foreign house in an inland city, if the location is unhealthy? Its value is only the worth of the materials, less the expense of pulling them down. One of our brethren at another station has applied for funds to rent a native house as his family have suffered in health at the place in which he lives.

At my own house, I have a chapel in front, quarters for a Boys' Boarding School, and behind these a commodious dwelling (all up stairs) at \$12. rent *per mensem*. The landlord puts on the repairs, which on a foreign house and wall run from \$50. to \$75 annually, and several hundred dollars when the premises undergo "thorough repairs." Sometimes there are mistakes in the erection of the house, for every preacher is not an architect.

When we expected to build we were going to put up a house with native exterior, for a foreign house in a Chinese city looks like the palatial mansion of some retired merchant near a quiet rural village, hardly suitable for a representative of Him "who had not where to lay his head." Scarcely a part of that kingdom "which cometh not *with observation*." In a foreign port, it would be a species of asceticism to live in a native house, especially where property can be bought and sold, and has its market value. As our houses have no stone gate-ways, with bolts and bars it is convenient that the doors "shall not be shut at all by day." We have, as the Chinese say, "eaten bitterness." "Experience is a dear school," and if any brother wishes to quote the rest of this proverb, I for one can take no offense.

Most Sincerely,

HAMPDEN C. DU BOSE.

Soochow, Sept. 8., 1879.