

# THE CONTINENT

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## Instead of Fear

Have you ever noticed how words lose their meaning through constant use? They are like knives; the edges grow dull as they are used. There are many such words of which we can think.

"The love of Christ" is an instance. We have heard the phrase used much, have possibly used it a great deal ourselves, but on the whole it means little of anything definite to us. Yet it had a great meaning in the New Testament. Doubtless if a man were to read the New Testament for the first time, he would be struck by the fact that the love of Christ was the biggest thing in it:

"Jesus, looking upon the young man, loved him." "And Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus." "And having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." So it runs all through the book. As a sculptor loves the marble out of which he would make a statue, so Jesus loves the men out of which he would make a kingdom.



This love was behind all Jesus' deeds: "And seeing the multitudes, he had compassion on them." He saw their suffering, their questioning, their fears; and his whole heart went out to them. Why do we not read the gospels with this in mind, instead of trying to pick flaws in them, seeking to support our own theories through them?

There are the miracles, about which we quarrel. The miracles were given us not like a bone thrown among dogs, about which to fight, but to show us what the gospel writers meant us to see, the great consuming passion of Jesus for men, men who needed. It does not make any difference to us how Jesus fed the 5,000. It makes all the difference in the world why he fed them. If he loved them, he will love us; if he helped them, for much the same reason he will help us.

This love of his was not a mere exhibition of sentiment. It had a great purpose behind it. Jesus wanted to free men from their fears; to use his own phrase, he wanted to give them life. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Fear was to him the one great hindrance to the kingdom. It made men slaves, the men whom he would make princes and kings. Because of fear, men were selfish, self-centered. His teachings gather around three great facts, facts which he knew would free men from their fears: Faith in God, trust of men, eternal life.



The first step of Jesus in freeing man from fear was to teach him to see that he was constantly in the presence of a Being supremely powerful and supremely kind. He himself lived his days sure of that great presence. Always he could fling out his hands and know that they would touch and grasp the hands of the great Father. Consequently there never was a trace of fear in all his story.

Even in the times when we think of him as being afraid, that tragic hour under the olives of Gethsemane, it was not fear with which he wrestled. He had the healthy man's desire for life, the life that he knew he had to lay down; and it was the comfort of the Father's presence and the clear vision that it was his will that enabled him to make

the sacrifice. "Nevertheless, not my will but thine!" Man, every man, can be just as brave as this if only he will see clearly the thing which Jesus sought to have him see—that in every circumstance he, too, can cry "Father," and that God is actually as near as any face of human friend by his side.



Added to this was Jesus' idea of trust in our fellows. Since the morning of life man had doubted his fellow-men. So he had become a coward, then a criminal. So wars were born. So the evil things of life that bring luxury to some and suffering to others, born all of them out of that concentration on self that follows distrust of fellows. But because a man could trust God, Jesus believed he could trust his fellows also. He did not have to be suspicious of all; he did not have to be self-centered.

Through this trust Jesus proposed to create a new world order, an order founded not on mutual suspicion but on mutual confidence, where there would be no wars nor strikes nor any of the things where a man seizes for his needs with his might what he ought to get through his love. A hard proposition we think it, an unworkable proposition. Exactly; because through the fact that our fears have been our guides, we never have tried it. Dear is the price we have paid for our lack of faith.

It is conceivable that in thus trusting his fellows a man might suffer death. Jesus himself did. But loving life as he did, so much that he did not want to give it up, nevertheless he knew death was not the worst of catastrophes; for life is immortal. Life could be given to high adventure for God, because it was indestructible. He told his disciples men would kill him, but they could not end him—that he would return to them. To prove it, he did return. If he told the truth about himself, did he not also tell it about us? Man, the common man, is indestructible. He is a son of God.



We live in a great time, a time of the struggling of great forces. Gradually we are realizing the fact that mankind is making decisions now that will affect the course of centuries. The supreme decision is as to whether we shall yield to our faith or our fears, whether we shall go forward or backward, whether we shall build a new world based on Jesus' great ideas of the tender presence of God in our ordinary life, on the resultant trust in man who can be trusted and on the sweeping fact of the indestructibility of life, or whether we shall build a new system on mutual distrust and suspicion, with its consequent new wars national and industrial.

Are we bold enough to follow the leadership of Jesus? That is the burning question of the hour. That is the most deeply personal question. We can decide it right only if we realize, in the same way in which the disciples realized his personal leadership, that he actually came back from the broken tomb to be our guide to high adventure, to the actual carrying out in daily life of his wondrous ideas.

Of these ideas a new world can be born. Who follows in his train?

# EMERGING CHINA

By  
CLELAND  
B. McAFEE

ONE OF MY friends writes me that he hopes he may be able to learn from me "the truth about China." It cannot be told. All one can hope to do is to tell some truths about China, for everything anybody can say about China and its people is apt to be true. How could it be otherwise when the population includes one-fourth of the population of the globe? Unless, indeed, as some aver, not even this is the truth, the population not being more than 350,000,000, instead of the 400,000,000 we all have been listing. Nobody knows the truth about the number of people in China.

But here is a land spreading over a wide area, using several languages so different that men from one province can no more understand men from some other provinces than they can understand a man from America. Here is a land of which no one can in the nature of the case have universal experience. Does it get dreadfully warm in China? It certainly does; and every year considerable numbers of people in China freeze to death. Are the Chinese an industrious people? They are, amazingly so. Are the Chinese indolent, willing to live from hand to mouth instead of carrying on beyond actual needs? Yes, they are. Are the Chinese reliable, honest, dependable? Beyond a doubt. Is one liable to be robbed in China? Indeed, yes; there is a regular robbers' guild in some places, and pickpockets abound. Is China a fertile land? By all means. Think of a land whose acres have been cultivated, with two and three crops a year, for four thousand years! Yet it has thousands of acres of arid land on which no ingenuity has been able to raise crops. Are the hills denuded of trees? Lamentably so. Yet the harbors of its river ports abound in barges loaded down with wood and timbers cut from its hills.

And what of the political situation? What is the truth about that? There is none available. When a newspaper wired to Dr. Arthur H. Smith, fifty years a resident in China, for "the bottom facts about the political situation," he made a now famous reply: "There is no bottom and there are no facts!" Sit in the tea room of a thoughtful English-speaking Chinese gentleman in an interior city, as I did, and say to him, "Is it true, as I have heard about the political situation, that—" and have him interrupt and say, "Yes, very likely it is true, whatever it is you have heard, but you must not suppose it is the only thing that is true." Ask him, "What is the immediate outlook?" and have him fall silent for a moment and then say soberly, "There is no immediate outlook." Say to him in your most judicial manner, "Of course, what China needs is leaders," and have him reply with a weary air, "Leaders? That is precisely what China does not need. It is precisely what China has too much of now. If all the present 'leaders' would go back to their private affairs and stop trying to lead, China would be far better off and might soon come to its strength again." Then let him catalogue for you the "leaders" about whom you have been reading and thinking, and notice how his account brings out their obsession to lead somebody or something and have the question raised in your mind if he is not right. And then sit with another thoughtful and observant Chinese patriot and have him say, "Oh, for a leader for this great land!" Does China need leaders? Yes it does; no, it does not. Both are true; what is the truth?

What does China think of Dr. Sun Yat Sen? Anything you

care to say! He was a pure hearted patriot and a time serving politician, a lover of his country and a tyrant over the common people, a true friend of human brotherhood and a hater of the foreigner, a real Christian and a man wearing the livery of Christ to serve Satan, a self-forgetting hero and a charlatan discovered too late. These are not foreign opinions about him; these are Chinese opinions expressed soberly and with instances quoted to prove every one of them. Did he die poor? Yes, with little more than the clothes on his back; no, for he had large secret accounts in Japanese banks. Was his request to be buried in state at the Purple mountain in Nanking an act of true patriotism? Yes, for it was there that the Republic was born and lived its first glorious weeks; no, it was merely one more grandstand play for personal glory. (But one visitor must bear testimony that the favorable opinions seem more prevalent than the others. The indications of a brief experience are that the death of Dr. Sun will help to restore to him some of the prestige which he had been losing in later years and that he may become a national hero. His death was made the occasion for many violent mass meetings of protest against the "unequal treaties" of which he often spoke and of many outbreaks against foreigners who are as innocent of the conditions brought about by those treaties as unborn babes.)

What about the attitude of the Chinese toward foreigners? Any attitude you care to describe. Are foreigners in China in any danger? Yes, they are; no, they are as safe as they are in America. Is there a growing animosity against foreigners? There seems to be, and it seems to be lessening. Can a traveler pass through China without insult or affront of any kind? He certainly can, as this particular traveler can testify; he cannot, as a passenger on this same train insists out of his own experience. Is there any prospect of another Boxer uprising? None worth considering, if this visitor's inquiry and observation have value, but a very serious possibility of far worse things if a good Yangtze ship



*From Contented Childhood to Blind Old Age China Presents a Puzzle and a Mystery to the Occidental*

captain's opinion is worth anything. Are not the bandits carrying off foreign residents for ransom? Yes, they are, with some frequency, but they carry off twenty of their own people for every foreigner. They took thirty of the students of one college, but they were all Chinese and the bandits carefully returned immediately the one foreigner who happened to be caught in the same group. Do they resent the dominance of the west in matters of transportation, the foreign reservations, import duties and the like? Indeed they do; and they also say that it is exactly this control and these reservations (settlements) that prevent far worse trouble through which they might pass. They want more control in everything, as is natural, and also they feel that they are not yet ready for the control. Again, these are not foreign expressions; they are all Chinese expressions for which chapter and verse could be given.

Are Chinese welcoming Christianity? They certainly are, and they are certainly resenting its appearance. Is there anything in the anti-Christian movement? A great deal which the Christian forces must take seriously to heart, and the largest safeguard against it is the deep down common sense of the Chinese people who will not go the lengths of the young people who are its chief movers. It is no small thing when the parents of lads who attend a mission school are visited in their homes

by government school students and given a beating for refusing to remove their sons from the mission school. But it is no small thing either when a group of students meet for a debate on the effect of mission schools on patriotism and vote that they do more for patriotism in China than the government schools. It is serious when a body of educators demands that the government forbid the continuance of Christian schools except on impossible terms, but it is serious also when another group decide to issue a series of booklets setting forth the true worth and service of such schools. All this is Chinese, and it indicates quite clearly that the truth cannot be accurately stated under present conditions.

Is Christianity a growing fact in China? Yes, as any traveler can testify if he has been where this one has been; but slowly, if he takes the statements of many non-Christian tracts and speeches. Is it any longer a foreign religion? No, for its outstanding leaders are increasingly Chinese; yes, for it came from the west and all its adherents are "western slaves." Have the roots of the Christian faith struck into the soil of Chinese life? By all means, as the growing churches and schools indicate; probably not, since so much of the money for its support must still come from the west. Are we on the eve of a great forward movement of Christianity? It seems probable, the very anti-Christian movement serving to help it forward, or else that movement will check its growth and prevent its rapid spread.

### *China May or May Not Become Warlike*

Is China a menace to the peace of the world? It is not, for it is the largest body of quiet, hard-working, peaceful people in all the world; it may be, for it is shot through with bolshevist propaganda and anti-foreign sentiment and it is engaged in an inner warfare which is training a great body of troops which might be turned against external foes. Suppose militarism is learned from the west, will not China become a peril by sheer virtue of its numbers and its history of submission, through which it has suffered so deeply? Undoubtedly, but will China agree to learn such a lesson? Have not the conditions of the world so changed that militarism is no longer a lesson to be learned? "China will never be a fighting nation," said one Chinese gentleman; "China will do whatever is necessary to maintain itself," said another. Both are truths; which is the truth?

Now all this is not confusion of mind at all. It is confusion of facts, facts which have not yet revealed their true implications. China is today like a mine which is just being opened, with hints of many kinds in the material that is brought out. The most careful student is the most cautious in saying just what the mine contains. When one hears a man laying down exactly what is going to happen or what ought to happen in such a land under the present conditions, one feels like moving to adjourn. All kinds of truths are emerging, but no one has any right to say what their ultimate relation to each other will be. There are careful minds at work on the problems involved, and in some quarters opinions are slowly forming on some points, but everywhere there are reasons for humility in judgment. The man who knows least of all is the only man who knows all about it. Nothing gives a deeper sense of weariness to thoughtful students of China than articles on "The True Situation in China," and "The Fact About the Chinese Situation." This weariness deepens when it is learned that the writer has been in China for weeks or months studying the situation and must therefore know the facts. Any man who has been for months in China ought to have learned by that time how big the issues are and how utterly impossible it is to generalize from any experience he can acquire in that time. What is true in one place is absurdly untrue in the very next place. The estimate of a leader in one province may be wholly false to the estimate of him in the next province. There are many truths about China; it is no time now to say what is the truth about it.

### *Nation Has Marks of Future Strength*

There are, of course, certain ultimate facts which ought never to be doubted. One is that China is to be a great nation or two or three great nations; its future greatness is not to be debated. The people have too many traits which make nations strong, its land is essential to the service of the world, its history shows its abiding qualities. Another fact ought not to be doubted—that the future relations of other nations to China ought to be founded on righteousness and fairness, that all unjust limitations laid on the land must be removed as quickly as possible, and that equal rights must be accorded to its people

among the peoples of the world. A third fact is that Christianity will fit the needs of the Chinese. This is because Christianity is not a religion of the west nor for the west, not a religion of the east nor for the east, but a religion of humanity for humanity. That goes along with its being divine.

To a visitor like the present writer, the condition of the Christian movement in China is inspiring to the highest degree. It is showing itself suited to the Chinese mind and heart and claiming the love and loyalty of increasing numbers among the people. But if it were not so, the fact would still remain—the Chinese people, like all people, need and will receive the faith of Jesus Christ. They may not like western Christianity, but they need not take it. Multitudes of them are sure to like Jesus Christ and they can form their own method of religion around him. These things are the truths about China, but they are ultimate truths, to which every Christian man ought to hold fast in the chaos of truths which lie nearby.

## **Grace Sufficient**

*(Continued from page 948)*

If we hear that message and believe in it, then we shall find coming true the wonder and glory of the second part of the word: "My strength is made perfect in weakness." That means that, where a soul, no matter how beset or heavy laden, hears God say, "My grace in your soul is sufficient," that then a wonderful thing takes place, and that life becomes more useful, more successful, of more worth to God and man, than it ever could be without the struggle and pain and weakness that comes from the constant presence of the thorn. Can we doubt that Paul has done more for Christ and to commend to men the grace of Christ, through the plain proof he gives that one can triumph over weakness and pain, than he could ever have given through a life of unclouded joy and unshadowed success? Who are the men and women that have really helped you most, made you most sure of God and of the beauty and worth of faith in God? Look back through your life and you will find that they are the men and women who faced hard facts with courage, who bore loss and sorrow and loneliness with sweetness and hopefulness, who were calm and glad and triumphant in the face of death and pain and disaster, and so demonstrated the glory of the inward sustaining grace that God alone can give.

O friends, this is our greatest need, our only absolute need. Having this, we have sufficient, let life take what shape it may. It is so easy, and so pathetically, foolishly wrong, to say that religion is a failure, that God does not care for us, that Christ does nothing for us, when we cry out for help and things go on just as before. No one knows how many bruised souls there are, staying away from church, having ceased to pray, their faith and hope fading, because, in time of distress they cried to God, and the evil went on, the pain did not stop, the dear companion was taken, the hard road grew even stonier, the burden's weight was not lessened. They looked for some change in things, when God's whole message is a gospel to the inner life, the good news of grace sufficient, of inner strength to match outer needs, of spiritual grace to cope with life as it is. That grace in the soul is sufficient. And with it we should be content and happy.

### *Grace Changes Our Inner Selves*

"My grace is sufficient." We need nothing else. Whatever your burden, your sorrow, your pain, your trouble, come to God and find the grace that shall change the whole problem by making you different. If we really come to Christ; if we walk in his comradeship; if we "remember him"; if we pray and trust; and, above all, if we go on in faith, sure that he will make us equal to all the calls and challenges of life, we shall find in the silent grace that he imparts the secret of strength and joy.

The very truth of the gospel is in the words of Phillips Brooks: "Oh, do not pray for easy lives; pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life that has come to you by the grace of God."

Come now to God, and say, "O God, let me have thy grace. That is sufficient. That is enough. That is all I need." And life will be new, not because things are different, but because you are different; because, waiting upon the Lord, you shall have renewed your strength, so that you can run and not be weary, and walk and not faint, and be more than conqueror through him that loves us.