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A SKETCH OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF TS'AO TS'AO (曹操)
A.D. 190 TO 220.

BY REV. D. Z. SHEFFIELD.

THE period in Chinese history in which Ts'ao Ts'ao acted an important part may be regarded as the heroic period in the records of this prosaic people. If we look for its analogy in western history, we shall find it in that of Greece during the Peloponesian war. There, as in China, men of the same speech and blood were arrayed against each other in a titanic struggle for dominion and power; and all the virtues and talents and passions of human nature, under the severest strain, were brought into prominent exhibition. Courage, stratagem, fidelity, duplicity, treachery, cowardice, all in turn find their embodiment in one or another of the characters that pass before us in the fierce drama; and these lives, perpetuated in song and play and story, are looked upon with reverence and admiration, or with contempt and execration, by each new generation of men. The period of which we write is commonly known as that of The Three Kingdoms (三國), since by a long civil war China was separated into three nationalities for the space of half a century. These Kingdoms were the Wei (魏), the Shuh (蜀), and the Wu (吳). The Kingdom of Wei was the largest, occupying the northern portion of China, embracing the present provinces drained by the Yellow river and its tributaries. The Kingdom of Wu had its eastern borders on the Yellow sea, and extended over a wide region north and south of the lower course of the Yang Tsū river. The Kingdom of Shuh was on the western border of China, embracing the central and eastern portions of the present province of Ssū Ch'uan, the southern portion of Shen Si, and the western portion of

I regret not being able to do more by way of compromise with Dr. Edkins. Let each reader interested in the question decide for himself which of the two opinions he may wish to adopt. I would, however, ask him not to judge on the matter without having read the complete records. Those who may not feel up to such mental exertion will find yet another view to adopt, a most comfortable one, namely that lately put forward by the editor of the *China Review*, who declares that the Chinese records are all nonsense, and that the facts stated about Ta-ts'in may be applied to almost any country in the world. I shall not attempt to unsettle Dr. Eitel in his private opinion; but there is one point in his remarks which I cannot pass unnoticed. He says with regard to the Chinese historians: "The text is generally of such a nature that translating it is in most cases guess-work." As this remark is liable to produce among readers unacquainted with the Chinese written language an altogether faulty impression regarding the nature of these records, I regret being forced to place on record my dissent. I maintain that, to any one familiar with the historical style, the language used in these geographical chapters is as clear as that used in any other ancient text, historical or philosophical. Mr. Giles very appropriately draws attention to the mistake made by those who confound extreme difficulty with ambiguity. While certain passages are doubtful, as you will find doubtful passages in every ancient text, whether Greek, or Latin, or Chinese, the greater part of the records relating to Ta-ts'in are difficult, but not ambiguous.

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS APPLICABLE TO STATION WORK.

LETTER, I.

BY REV. J. L. NEVIUS, D.D.

A request from the Editor of the *Chinese Recorder* to prepare for publication some account of the character and result of our country work in Shantung, and private letters from various sources asking for information on the same general subject, have furnished evidence that such information may be of service, more especially to young missionaries.

The interest which has been taken in our work in central Shantung, by missionaries in other provinces, is due no doubt to the fact that we have to some extent adopted new principles and methods. It is too early to determine what the final issue of this new departure will be, but perhaps not too soon to derive some important lessons from present facts and experiences, and results so far as developed.

The adoption of the new plan having been the result in many cases of difficulties and discouragements in connection with the previous one, our present position will be best understood by considering the two systems, which may for the sake of convenience be called the Old and the New, in their relation to each other. In the following letters we will present the reasons which have led to the disuse of the former, and adoption of the latter, and the manner in which the transition has been made.

I think it may be stated that thirty years ago, missionaries in China, with few if any exceptions, followed the Old Method. The change of view has not been sudden but gradual and always in the same direction, producing a continually widening and more irreconcilable breach between the two systems. There is now a prevailing disposition in our part of the field, at least among the missionaries of the American Presbyterian, the English Baptist, and the American Baptist Missions, to follow the New Plan, which may still however be regarded as in a formative and tentative stage of development.

These two systems may be distinguished in general by the former depending largely on paid native agency, while the latter deprecates and seeks to minimize such agency. Perhaps an equally correct and more generally acceptable statement of the difference would be, that, while both alike seek ultimately the establishment of independent, self-reliant and aggressive native churches, the Old System strives by the use of foreign funds to foster and stimulate the growth of the native churches in the first stage of their development, and then gradually to discontinue the use of such funds; while those who adopt the New System think that the desired object may be best attained by applying principles of independence and self-reliance from the beginning. The difference between these two theories may be more clearly seen in their outward practical working. The Old uses freely, and as far as practicable the more advanced and intelligent of the native church members, in the capacity of paid Colporteurs, Bible Agents, Evangelists or Heads of Stations; while the New proceeds on the assumption that the persons employed in these various capacities would be more useful in the end by being left in their original homes and employments.

The relative advantages of these systems may be determined by two tests—adaptability to the end in view, and Scripture authority. Some missionaries regard the principles and practices adopted by the Apostles in early times and recorded in the Scriptures as inapplicable to our changed circumstances in China in this 19th century. Having the consideration of this question for the present, it will no doubt be acknowledged by all, that any plan which will bear the application of

the two tests, of adaptability and Scripture authority, has a much stronger claim upon our regard and acceptance than a plan which can only claim the sanction of one test.

As a matter of fact the change of views of not a few of the older missionaries in China is due not to theoretical, but practical considerations. The Old System has been gradually discarded because it did not work, or because it worked evil. In my own case I can say that every change in opinion was brought about by a long, and painful experience, and conclusions arrived at, have been only a confirmation of the teachings of the Bible; and the same conclusions might have been reached with an immense economy of time and labor by simply following the authoritative guide which God has given us. If the New System be indeed sanctioned by the tests of practical adaptability and use, as well as by Scripture authority, an exchange or reversal in the application of the names New and Old would be more in accordance with fact.

In stating what I regard as serious objections to previous methods, I may come in conflict with the opinions of my brethren. I desire however to write, not in the spirit of a critic, much less of a censor; but earnestly desirous of knowing the truth. I have in former years to a considerable extent believed in, and worked upon the Old System and what I have to say by way of strictures on it, may be considered as a confession of personal error, rather than fault-finding with others. To err is human. Foreigners who have come to China to devote themselves to business or diplomacy have made their mistakes; it is not strange, but rather to be expected, that we should make ours. Let us acknowledge them and profit by them.

I am aware that it is possible to state facts in such a way that the impression given will be a false one, and the conclusions arrived at misleading. It will be my earnest endeavor in the ensuing papers, not only to give facts and honest conclusions therefrom, but to present them in such a way that the impression given will be, if not always an agreeable one, yet strictly true and just.

I wish further to disclaim all assumption of ability to speak authoritatively on this subject, as though I had myself reached its final solution. The effect of long experience in mission work has been in my case to deepen a sense of incompetency, and to excite wonder in remembering the inconsiderate rashness and self-dependence of a quarter of a century ago. Still, though we may not feel competent to give advice, we may at least give a word of warning. Though we may not have learned what to do in certain cases and under certain circumstances, is it not much to have learned what *not* to do, and to tread cautiously, where we do not know the way, and to

regard with hesitation and suspicion any preconceived opinion which we know to be of doubtful expediency, especially if it is unauthorized by Scripture teaching and example?

I gladly recognize the fact that the use of other methods, depending to a greater or less extent on paid agents, has in many cases been followed with most happy results, and that to a certain extent tried and proved native agents must be employed. I do not wish to make invidious comparisons, much less to decide where the happy mean in using a paid agency lies.

Let us bear in mind that the best methods cannot do away with the difficulties in our work which come from the world, the flesh, and the devil, but bad methods may multiply and intensify them. For unavoidable difficulties we are not responsible; for those which arise from disregard of the teachings of Scripture and experiences we are.

Let us also remember that while in undertaking the momentous task committed to us, we should by the study of the Scriptures, prayer for divine guidance and comparison of our varied views and experiences, seek to know what is the best method of work, still, the best method without the presence of our Master and the Spirit of all Truth the other Comforter, will be unavailing. A bad method may be so bad as to make it unreasonable to expect God's blessing in connection with it; a right and Scriptural method, if we trust in it, as our principal ground of hope, might be followed a life-time without any good results.

With this much by way of introduction, I propose in the next paper to consider some objections to the Old Method.

“THE NAME JESUS, IN PUBLIC PREACHING IN CHINA.”

I THINK we have reason to be grateful to Mr. McGregor, for the careful and sober manner in which he has discussed a subject of great difficulty and importance. With much that he brings forward I feel the truest sympathy; but with the broad conclusion of his paper, namely that we should attempt the banishment of the name Jesus as far as possible from our public preaching to the Chinese, I cannot but emphatically and unhesitatingly join issue; and for the following reasons.

(1) It appears to me that the table which Mr. McGregor has drawn up, showing St. Paul's usage in writing to Gentile Christian Churches, is beside the mark. The question before us is the best usage in “public preaching;” and St. Paul's terminology in his Epistle may be of little use to us in such a discussion.