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Art. III. Testimony to the truth of Christianity, given by K'ing, late governor-general of Canton, minister plenipotentiary, guardian of the heir apparent, &c. &c.

Within a few years past, three Chinese statesmen have written and published their opinions regarding foreigners and foreign affairs, thereby affording clear indices of the march of improvement, and demonstrating that a spirit of inquiry is waking up and gaining strength in this land. We hail it as the dawn of a glorious day! The three men to whom we refer, are the late imperial commissioner Lin Tsehui, the present governor of Fukien Su Kiyi, and the late cabinet minister K'ing. Notices of the works of the two former will be found in our previous volumes (see Vols. XIV. page 543, and XIX., page 457, Vol. 600, 6001). K'ing, following their example, has published a work in seven volumes—only a single copy of which, so far as we know, has yet fallen into the hands of foreigners, and this we have not yet had the pleasure of seeing. One volume is said to contain miscellaneous papers, from which we have extracted the following remarkable paper, inserting the original and an English translation. In many respects, we regard the paper as one of great value, and as one which augurs well for the progress of Christian truth in China. The concluding prayer is written in the set style of four characters in each sentence, usual in such compositions.

Form of prayer to the God of heaven, with a preface, composed by K'ing governor-general of Kwangtung and Kwangsi. In the Dictionary of Kanghi, it is said, "Jesus, western nations designate the Savior of the world." The books translated by western men, and the actions he wrought with great perspicacity, His teaching regards the worship of the God, and repentance for sin as its essentials; by which he meant to say that, in the world, only this one Being is the God of heaven who creates and destroys; who can rule all things and creatures, who is everywhere present, and knows all things. Looking down upon the earth, and mercifully considering mankind, he commanded his royal Son, Jesus, to descend and to be born into this dusty toilsome world. He [accordingly] gave up his body to save the world; he died and rose again to life; and many were the miracles he wrought. Of the believers in Him, none worship images or pictures; but whether in public or in private [these are the things they do]:—purifying their hearts and sorrowing for their errors, with their faces turned towards the God of creation in the expanse of heaven, they kneel and worship, confessing their sins and begging for blessings.

Last year, I was commissioned by the emperor to go to Kwangtung, and also received his commands to superintend the affairs of the foreigners there. Having made strict inquiry concerning the religion practiced by western men, in order to ascertain whether it were corrupt or pure; and all the time I was among them, having been a critical observer, I came to know that what they teach is truly altogether good. And it seemed to me right to memorialize the emperor, and request that, showing kindness to men from far, he would not persecute or prohibit them [from teaching].

Now it happened that my official friend, Mr. Li, told me of his sickness during the previous winter, and how that, when all recourse to the gods and demons, to doctors and diviners, had utterly failed, he was so anxious to hear of what western men teach concerning praying for blessings; and at once turning his face towards the sky, he made earnest supplication, and called on the God of heaven, and the name of Jesus. The next day he was quite well; and from that time whatever he asked in prayer he at once obtained.

He, having called upon me to write a form of prayer to perpetuate this extraordinary answer of grace, I prepared one for my note book, which I gave him to examine:—

"God only is perfectly just; he opened the heavens, and spread out the earth; all that has form he protects, all living beings he makes to rejoice. He mercifully regards mankind. Looking down upon the earth, there is nothing he does not hear, nothing he does not behold; He demonstrates are the works of God, shedding lustre through all time! But, O alas! that ye, living men, are ignorant of God the Lord; and though fully fed and warmly clothed, are ungrateful for these gifts of God! Corrupt, deceitful, gainseeking, and passionate, you willingly provoke God's anger! In a twinkling, death may come, and the punishment of Hades be inflicted. O, that you, men of the world, would change your hearts, and reform your lives! 'Do good and call down felicity,' are words ever to be remembered! From this time forward serve God, and whatever you ask he will give. He will deliver you from eternal punishment, he will save you from the miseries of sin. May the boundless thoughts of God cause all blessings to rest upon you! Ever hear us!"
Canton Hospital
Testimony to Christianity
J. C. Stewart to P. P.
To Dates