

~~Copy~~ Bowry 1/2 M. E. P. M

Amoy 20 October 1858 9

Dear Mr Matheson

Correspondents at Shanghai and Ningpo tell us that Japan is "all the talk" among the missionaries who are crowded in these two cities: some have gone over to see the newly opened land and report very favourably. But whatever they may do in the north it is evident that from this part of the field none can be spared for such new work.

In connexion with Japan a sad idea rises in the mind. Is that virgin soil to be also handed over, as China has been, to the destroying grasp of Opium? To the honour of the Dutch nation and Government, in the time of their monopoly they have made no such attempt to gather unhallowed gains. And now when British ships are admitted to that kingdom of the remotest East, oh shall Britain again, as here, inflict irreparable injury on the natives and fix another indelible stain on herself? Let the opponents of the Opium trade and the Missionary Societies take up the matter before hand for it is better to prevent evil than to try its cure. The proper preservative would be that no British ship should be allowed to clear out of any British or consular port bound for Japan with any Opium on board; and in like manner should not be allowed to enter any Japanese port with such cargo or to land it. There are no vested interests to be pled there; and if no appetite for Opium exists among the Japanese, the more need that care be taken lest any such appetite be formed.

Speaking of treaties reminds me that one of the places said to be opened by the new treaty is Formosa; that is the only one of the places to be opened, which has any claims on us, and it would certainly seem proper that some of the Societies which have already occupied Amoy should also occupy Formosa, because the dialect is the same; so that the missions on the two sides of this Channel would be able to assist one another, and the missionaries could cross over occasionally for change of air, without loss of time and without throwing away <sup>any</sup> opportunities of usefulness. In the drafts or guesses at the Treaty which have appeared it is said to be Taiwan which would properly mean Taiwan Foo, but probably the meaning is just the island in general, no special port being yet fixed; and it seems probable that the port fixed may be either Tamsui or Keelung at the north

end of the island, just the places which would naturally be in the most intimate relations with Amoy. These ports have been already much visited by ships; those who have been there speak highly both of the country and the people. On my way down from Tingpo this summer we were becalmed a day or two close to the north end of the island; I was much struck by the magnificence of the mountains some of which are above ten thousand feet high, though of course I could not see the plain covered with luxuriant vegetation and teeming population.

In one of the printed abstracts or guesses at the Treaty it was said that Chang chau was to be opened; that is undoubtedly a misprint for Chau-chau, the Foo City under whose jurisdiction Swatow lies, and may probably mean merely the opening of Swatow. There could be no meaning in speaking of opening Chang chau, for Amoy is just the nearest place to it where ships can lie. But there can be no doubt that the new Treaty will speedily make it possible to carry on regular mission work there. Within what time it may be possible to reside permanently on the mainland near this is more doubtful. Last month I paid a visit to Chang chau with two preachers; but the same evening we arrived there came on a tremendous storm of rain so that next day we could do almost nothing; the second evening I slept on shore in the house of a friend of the old teacher; the following morning the water had risen almost to the roadway of the bridges and the lower streets of the suburbs were already flooded; so it was necessary to return to Chioh-hey and Amoy as speedily as possible. It seemed to me that the people were more disposed to listen and better inclined towards ourselves than on former occasions; besides the man in whose house I slept another asked me to pass the night with him to escape from the rain.

I have since learned that the young teacher (son of the above mentioned teacher) who has a school at a village some seven miles beyond Chang chau, keeps the Sabbath still with several of the pupils of his school; my informant was a young man of that village, a relative of Tek Sam the Pechua assistant, who said that he himself often joined them in their Sabbath readings of the Christian books. That may be only filial obedience, but let us pray that it may be more.

Meantime while our eyes are turned with longing expectation towards new fields of labor, we are caused much sorrow and anxiety by those where the Gospel has already taken root. You are aware how heavily God's hand has been laid ~~upon~~ by sickness and death on Pechua and Naping, at by persecution at the latter place lately; within the last few days they have been suffering still further insult and mal treatment, and we feel considerable fear lest they should be so excited as to return in Chinese fashion, evil for evil; this state of matters renders it also almost hopeless for them to get another house for use as a chapel when they have to leave the present one in the beginning of next year. But it is

great cause for thankfulness that as yet none of the members in the hill country have fallen away, unless it be one young man who is in a rather doubtful state, he was driven away from his village some months ago, not for the gospel's sake, but in company with his fellow villagers who were all dispossessed of houses and fields, by a stronger branch of their clan; he went to a village five or six miles from Pechuia and much farther from the other chapel, and since then he has been very irregular in his attendance and is said to have been also led into compliance with some unchristian customs; but of late he seems to be showing a better spirit. If the church at Pechuia had been of a more warm and earnest character he would have been in less danger. But our chief sorrow and anxiety is about the state of the Pechuia church itself: the particulars have at various times been told but perhaps they may not be realized in their total sum. One young man, formerly chapel keeper, but who had for about a year back been employed as an assistant evangelist, has fallen under such grave suspicions of vice and has been so unsatisfactory in other parts of his conduct that we have had to cease employing him, and much fear he has quite apostatised. Another, who has been employed since before I came, has several times been alluded to as suspected of opium smoking; there never was sufficient ground established to warrant any action against him, and for a while there has been no additional suspicion, but the unpleasant feeling has never died away, and it much mars his usefulness. These two are the persons spoken of in a late letter (not written by me) as suspected of opium smoking, the first being I believe not suspected of that, but of quite as serious sin. The step-mother of the first young man has ~~left~~ left off attendance on worship, and a younger brother of the second has long been suspended for opium smoking with scarce any appearance of repentance, and now less than ever. Another young man has become involved in idolatry and given up attendance so as to require suspension: besides which some other members show too decided coldness, and love. Add to this the removal of five by death since my arrival, and nine by change of residence, several of these because of the violence suffered by them about two years ago, and thus you may have some idea of the weak and broken state of this poor much tried congregation. Besides all this, which is all among the members, several candidates who gave at one time great promise have quite left us, among these being the younger brother of the Singapore preacher, while only one or two new inquirers have appeared for more than a year, and these not all decided. In view of all these things I often find myself able to find expression for my feelings in the sad language of Jeremiah Job and the more mournful Psalms, where the inspired writers mourn over the desolation of the Lord's vineyard, of his church and people. And I collect these facts into one paragraph that the Lord's people in his church at home may lay them to heart, towards the end of

206  
increased soul searching and prayer. For it seems to me that there must be correction and instruction here both for the Chinese Christians and ourselves the Missionaries and for the Church at home. Among the lessons which I think I can read some are too private and personal to be of use to others, but some are of a more general bearing, as for example, That when God has been pleased to bless the work of a missionary to the founding of a church of living believers his first duty is to see that they be properly nourished and watched over, so that he ought not to go and look for other distant fields of work or otherwise leave them (except because of sickness war, or such urgent necessity) until he find others fit and willing to take the oversight. And again That there has been especially at home far too great a spirit of boasting and self laudation and exaggerated statements, instead of an humble thankfulness to God for what He has done, heart felt confession of what we have not done, or done wrong, and earnest prayer along with effort. To take examples of this from other parts of the work besides those already spoken of; if I have once visited such a place as An-hai or Poonan, given an account of it, sent our assistants or spoken of going again, I find such places in print as Stations with occasional services! There was more foundation for some such language in regard to Tung-ngan, but too much was made of it also, and it now seems very doubtful whether more can be done there. Except at places where congregations already exist our work must be tentative; e.g. at Kwan-khau, a large village between this & Tung-ngan, preachers were sent regularly for a month or two and they had taken a small house to stay in, but it was found not to answer expectation, it became quite an unsuitable place for labour, so that we have given up sending there, unless in God's Providence some special leading circumstances should again direct our attention to it; and we are now making tentative experiments more towards Chang-chau and An-hai. But at home these tentatives are spoken and written about as if they were some great results. Again, to take another example, a few young men and lads are taught Chinese reading in my house, and receive occasional instruction from the American Missionaries and myself; two or three of them staying with us. This we have seen described in various high sounding phrases at home, culminating in the announcement that I had a College in my house! In like manner I was astonished to see in the Synod accounts an entry of expenses "at Chioh-hey" which is in fact a station of the American Brethren. Oh let us be careful, as Paul says not to go "beyond our measure," and rather to say what is under than over the reality.

I rejoice to say that Mr Smith has now for some time been able to preach plainly and admirably in the Colloquial, and is now preaching every Sabbath to the Christian Chinese congregations either here or up the country. The immediate ~~cause~~ <sup>cause</sup> of his taking this work at present is the absence of Mr Talmage for a few weeks on account of his family's health. Mr Grant is also making satisfactory progress in study. You have doubtless heard of the tremendous hurricane at Swatow. In case you should not have had any subsequent information from Mr Burns. I may mention that we have seen a Captain who met with Mr Burns there safe and sound after the catastrophe.

Now may the Lord be merciful unto you and to all His Church in our beloved native land that so through their labours and supplications His name may soon be known among all nations. I remain  
Yours most truly, (29) C. Stearns Douglas