

THE CHRISTIANITY OF HUNG TSIU TSUEN

ROBERT JAMES FORREST

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A REVIEW OF TAEPIING BOOKS.

By ROBERT JAMES FORREST, EsQ.,

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ARTICLE IX.

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By ROBERT JAMES FORREST, EsQ.,

H. B. N.'s Acting Consul.
NINGPO.

IN Considering the Taeping rebellion I conceive this to be the time to store up materials for after use. Passions and prejudices are too strong now on matters Chinese, to hope for a true or impartial history of this great omen, this wonderful rise and fall of a power that swept through the fairest portion of the Empire like a flight of locusts and cost twenty one millions of lives before its downfall. As far as Shanghai is concerned the magnitude of the great rebellion has been entirely lost sight of, and probably all that interests, or has interested, residents here is the history of Gordon's campaign. The fall and recapture of little towns like Kading and Taitan excited more attention among foreigners than the fall of provincial cities, the subjugation of distant provinces, and the fate of the southern capital itself. The memory even of the Kiangsu campaign is fast dying out, and the monument on the Bund will soon be the only sign left wherewithal to call to mind the exciting times of the Taeping campaign.

Should some future diligent historian of China trouble himself to wade through contemporaneous records in order to arrive at the facts of the rebellion, especially as regards the ultimate interference of foreign governments, he will not fail to be a little amused at the alternate favour and hatred with which the Taeping movement was regarded. While rebellion was confined to the southern provinces of China and did not much interfere with foreign trade, foreign sympathy, if I may judge from published papers, was with the rebels. Our difficult position at Canton, the obstinacy and corruption of the mandarins and the fast increasing belief that oppressed nationalities have a divine right to rebel, all tended to a favourable view of the movement. Then came our war, and with it many years of obstinate and senseless existing hatred of every thing connected with the government. Our difficulty became Taeping opportunity, and while we were

marching against the Imps in the north, the half starved and nearly conquered rebels made a grand dash for Chehkiang and Kiangsu. With a stroke of military genius not sufficiently known or appreciated, Chung Wang b, threatening Hangchow compelled his foe to raise the siege of Nanking, and the cities, along the Grand Canal soon changed masters. But about the same time that the rebels came against Shanghai the Taku forts were taken, and affairs in the north soon began to mend. The defence of Shanghai by the allies was the death blow of the kingdom of Great Peace. All former friendliness to the rebel cause changed; the abuse so freely heaped on their adversaries fell upon them, and the forces of England returning from the northern campaign were set in motion against their late enemies' enemy. Foreign residents, especially in Shanghai, were for putting to the fire and sword every thing rebel, forgetting altogether that in so doing they were killing the goose that laid the golden egg --- that the extraordinary prosperity of Shanghai at that time was, caused principally by the rebellion. In the pages of the local press from 1860 until 1864 is to be found every epithet of abuse known to a language, not at all poor in

such expressions, all directed against the rebels, and yet if it went to the vote to-morrow how many foreigners would not wish them back again?

So if I were to tell that order did really reign at Nanking, --- very like the Warsaw article it is true, but still order, --- that there were some uncommonly clever generals among T'ien Wang's officers, notably the Chung, Ying, and Mo Wangs --- that in places not actually the seat of war the ground was well cultivated --- that the conduct of the Taeping troops was not one bit worse than that of the imperialists, --- and that the inhabitants of such towns as Shaoshing and Hangchow have asserted that their lot under Ch'angmao rule was infinitely better than their unhappy fate when those cities were recovered and fell for a time into the hands of barbarian officers; --- if I stated these things, with every proof, I should be reviled as a rebel and a speaker of blasphemy against the brilliant political dawn now spreading over the empire. I never saw a foreigner return from Soochow (his excellent sport the result of the late troubles) who did not indulge in strong invectives against the rebels for the destruction of the enormous suburbs of that city. And yet the rebels burnt neither Soochow nor its suburbs. The imperialist soldiery did it

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seven days before Chung Wang left Woosi! But facts, no matter recorded, never overthrow prejudice. The suburbs of Soochow will always rise in judgment against the Ch'angmaos though they were innocent of their destruction; and my experiences of Taeping rule, although the result of a long residence at the Capital, will never be favourably regarded, if in any way opposed existing ideas. But there is one subject on which I can safely speak, and that is the theology of T'ien Wang and his followers. If any one disagrees with me I can refer him to my sources of books of the heavenly dynasty published by authority at Nanking. These books were presented to me by command of his Celestial Majesty through the agency of the well known prince of Kan, who after teaching the Christian religion in the interests of the Baptists or Independents at Shanghai, became a prince of Taepingdom, and was shot the other day on the walls of Changchow-foo.

The early theology of the Taepings, as far as limited sources of information would admit, has already been excellently and ably described by writers and sinologues. Their essays and translations might have convinced theologians that but little could be hoped for from the so-called inspiration of T'ien Wang; and missionaries might have been taught to despair of converting to any known or rational sect of the Christian faith one who was the uterine brother and equal of Christ, and to whom was confided by the Almighty personally the interpretation and establishment of the faith. Such however was not the result of our earliest knowledge of the Taeping religious leanings: for I call to mind (whatever may be their opinions now) that in 1859, 60, 61 and 62 there existed a large party who believed the rebel movement to be essentially a Christian one, and one through the agency of which, if successful, the darkness covering China was to be changed into the light of true religion. And it is very curious that a movement which in this our revolutionizing nineteenth century could most easily be defended on a dozen strong, almost unanswerable, grounds, was defended only on its weakest and most ludicrous point, its grotesque Christianity! On the capture of the cities on the canal, missionaries proceeded to Soochow, and were well received by the chiefs, who listened with patience to their messages, gave them no unfavourable opinion of their spiritual condition, and secretly looked on them as political agents. The invitation sent by Hung-tsiu-tsuen to the Reve-

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rend Issachar Roberts, his old school master, to proceed to Nanking, where he was made a Heaven's Righteousness (T'ien-i) and had some temporal advantages thrust upon him, excited the emulation, perhaps the envy, of other foreign religionists. The new vineyard was tried by several excellent ministers, but found to be barren. T'ien Wang as well as his chiefs expected from their foreign visitors temporal as well as spiritual advantages. If the tracts and books bestowed on the celestial soldiery, after yielding up the instruction contained in them, were converted into cartridges, copper caps were still required to make them ultimately useful, and these the foreign guests were unable and unwilling to give. So the heavenly capital was soon deserted by all missionaries except Roberts, whose gifts being purely theological, and not calculated to instruct either soldiers or people in their temporal avocations, were soon neglected. He became a burden to his supporters, and his ultimate flight to a British gun-boat, when supplies ceased, is a well known story. Had a man of hard worldly talent occupied Roberts' place and original influence at Nanking, the fate of the rebels might have been other than it was. Had the chiefs been taught to avoid foreigners and to keep their weapons in better order, to make their soldiers drill and not

devastate the country, T'ien Wang might still be fulminating his doxologies from Nanking.

According to the official catalogue the books published by authority at Nanking up to 1852 were twenty eight in number and consist of forty eight volumes. I have the whole of them with the exception of the Trimetrical classic, and one volume of the New Testament. They are very badly printed on bad paper, but this is hardly to be wondered at. The style is execrable, and in places it is impossible to trace any meaning in the text. Characters are falsely used, some only half cut, or plainly mark the southern and lowly origin of T'ien Wang and the want of education in his officers. The reading is dreary in the extreme. There is no imagination, no imagery displayed, even in the record of visions and visits to heaven. The rhythm sometimes attempted is suggested by Gutzlaff's Translation of the Bible, and the poetry is feeble beyond expression. It is nothing but a perpetual ringing of changes on the Doxology, with Tung Wang for Holy Ghost, and the assertion that the Heavenly Father has sent Hung to rule over the hills and streams, and spread Great Peace over the earth! I became possessed while at Nanking of a

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manuscript, in which was recorded day by day the edicts, promotions, and visions, of the Heavenly King and his son the Junior Lord. This book commences with the Chinese New Year in 1861 and finishes with an ode about the end of May of the same year. It is curious as probably the last work dictated by the chief, for in May 1861 proclamations were issued in Nanking informing the myriad places that God had appeared to His Majesty's wife and informed her that her husband was to work no more. This book from which I shall make extracts below is more carelessly written than any work I have seen from Nanking, in fact a considerable falling off is observable in the later Taeping books from those first published, in which at all events some little care is to be distinguished.

T'ien Wang asserts that his heavenly father frequently visited him on earth, and in the "T'ien fu hsia fan chao shu" --- the "book concerning the descent of the Heavenly Father," full particulars are given of one of those divine visits, which will not fail to amuse, if they do not edify, my readers. In December 1852, the northern prince and followers went to pay a visit of congratulation to the eastern prince Tseng, and after they had retired God came down and spoke to Yang-shui-chao, Huchu-mei and two other women apparently relations of T'ien Wang and female ministers of state, desiring them through Tung Wang to tell the chief that a little less severity ought to be exercised with regard to the women in the great Dragon Palace. So the gong was beaten, and Tung Wang having heard the women's tale announced his intention of going to the celestial court to tell the heavenly commands. I quote the result from the published notes of a well-known sinologue. "The Eastern Prince then commanded the Northern Prince and all the officers to go first to court. The Northern Prince was about to proceed thither accordingly, when he suddenly addressed Chin-teh-sung, the chamberlain of the northern palace, saying: 'Do you go quickly to the Eastern Princes' sedan, and request the favour of his instructions as to whether we are first to go to the hall of audience or to enter straight into the door of the palace.' The chamberlain, receiving this charge, went at once to the sedan of the Eastern Prince and requested one of his servants to obtain and communicate to him the wishes of the Eastern Prince. The servant said, 'The Eastern Prince is enjoying repose in his sedan, I dare not disturb him.' The chamberlain of the northern palace,

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hearing that the Eastern Prince was enjoying repose, did not presume to repeat the enquiry, but hastened back to inform the Northern Prince, who thereupon hastily descended from his sedan and proceeded on foot to the middle of the road, where he knelt down and enquired saying. --- 'Has the Heavenly Father troubled himself to come down into the world again?' To which the Heavenly Father replied in the affirmative, and told the Northern King to convey the sedan into the hall of audience. The Northern Prince replied 'I will obey the injunctions of the Heavenly Father.' Whereupon he hastily ordered the female officers of the celestial court to inform the Celestial King of the circumstance; which done he together, with the ministers of state conveyed the sedan of the Eastern Prince within the gate of the palace. The celestial king Hung having heard the message hastily went on foot to the second gate of the palace to receive the Heavenly Father. The Heavenly Father on his arrival was angry with Hung saying, Tsiu-tsuen, you are very much in fault, are you aware of it? The Celestial King kneeling down with the Northern Prince replied saying, I Your unworthy son knows that he is in fault and begs the

Heavenly Father graciously to forgive him.' The Heavenly Father then said with a loud voice. 'Since you acknowledge your fault you must be beaten with forty blows.' Then the Northern Prince and officers prostrated themselves on the ground and weeping implored the Heavenly Father to manifest his favour and remit the punishment which their master had deserved, offering to receive the blows themselves. The Celestial King replied, 'Your unworthy son will comply with your requisition' and prostrated himself to receive the blows. The Heavenly Father then said, 'Since you have obeyed the requisition I shall not inflict the blows. But the women Yang-chang-mei and Shih-luy-lang must be sent to the palace of the Eastern Prince; with regard to other matters you must wait till your brother Tseng sends up his reports. I shall now go back to heaven,' and the Heavenly Father returned to heaven. The Eastern Prince afterwards awoke from his trance and remarked on hearing that the Heavenly Father" had again come down, 'Has he indeed, truly he gives himself a great deal of trouble on our account.'" The machinery of these celestial visitations was simple in the extreme. A western pretender would have scorned such a childish mode of deception. We may smile at the idea of Ting, Prince of the East, speaking in the name of the Almighty,

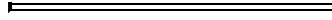
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And telling his chief to wait until his brother Tseng (himself) sent up his reports; but the captains of the empire of Great Peace knew that the inevitable sword was ready to cure all doubters, and quietly accepted, if they did not believe, the manifestations. The reports of Tseng, given by him to the T'ien Wang by divine direction, reveal an awful state of things in the imperial. palace. Here is a portion of the book concerning the descent of the Heavenly Father, which I again take from the notes before referred to: "through the grace of the Heavenly Father the number of ladies at the court is very great you should not kill for every trifling offence. When the ladies wait upon you, my elder brother, it is of course their duty, but sometimes they way be apt to excite your righteous indignation, in which case you must treat them gently, and not kick them with your boots on; for if -you kick them with your boots on it may be that some of the ladies are in such a state as to call for the congratulations of their friends, and then you will interfere with the kind intentions of your Heavenly Father who loves to foster human life. Further when any of the ladies are in the state above alluded to, it would be as well to manifest a little gracious consideration and allow them to rest from their labours. Such a treatment would be proper, and if still any of the ladies should commit any trifling fault it would be as well to excuse them from being beaten with the bamboo!" I was told by Chung Wang's brother in Nanking that T'ien Wang murdered such wives as offended him, and this extract places the matter beyond much doubt. Of a verity a heavenly king ruling a heavenly dynasty and entitled to the tender spiritual cares of foreign missionaries! Further on in the same book Tung Wang gives some hints concerning the education of the Junior Lord. He tells T'ien Wang that if not looked after the boy will break some of the splendid toys given to him by God the Father! that if he goes out in the rain he will get wet. He also calls his Celestial Majesty's attention to the dragons painted on the walls of the palace and engraved on the utensils used therein, stating that they are precious dragons, and not imps, which the chief is commissioned to destroy. The Celestial King replied. "Your observation, brother Tseng, is correct, Formerly when our Celestial Brother came down upon the Ping-tsai hill he commanded me saying dragons are fiends. I then asked my Celestial Brother. 'Is the dragon depicted on the hall of the golden dragon also to be considered a fiend?' To

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which my brother replied. 'The dragon depicted in the golden dragon hall is a very precious emblem and not a fiend!'" Here is a vision recorded by the king's brothers in "The book of the evidence of what the prince's brothers saw with their eyes and heard with their ears." "At 11 o'clock on 1st day of 3rd month of T'ien-yiu year we (Jen-fah and Jen-tah) were thanking God and the Heavenly Brother, who bestowing heavenly grace upon us deputed heavenly officers and hosts to accompany our true sacred lord the T'ien Wang to heaven, and our lord has vouched for the facts. Musicians with harps, reeds, drums and all manner of music accompanied him. The thunder went before his face like a cock. The celestial host conveyed his chariot by the great road in the east up to heaven. On each side of the gates of heaven were innumerable beautiful damsels to receive him. He dwelt there two days and then descended, and informed us and the Junior Lord saying: 'I shall rule all people in the myriad places. The bounty of the earth is for me to eat. I am indeed the son of God the Heavenly Father!' A few days afterwards he again went to heaven and did battle with the imps and devils, and while slaying the imps and devils he exclaimed, 'O my brother help me,' and by Ako* he meant the Heavenly Brother. He again called out for the officers of Yang's household and for Chao-yuen-lang, saying Chao was sent as an example. God then gave him the seven characters

天王大道君王全 T'ien Wang ta tao keuen wang chuen. He then went up into the highest heaven and slow one by one the imps and cast them into hell. Our lord has verified this and says: What time I was slaying the imps God was behind my brother, who was behind me. We three Lords led on the hosts and pursued the imps and fiends, God then gave me a seal and I slew the imps and stayed not my hand; my brother then took the seal and showed it to the imps who ran away, and the seal is that where-with the Lord made heaven and earth. Sometimes God took the seal, sometimes Christ, and sometimes I myself. So the seal is common to us. Wherever that seal was taken the imps fled and our Lord looked and lo! eminent relations flocked and congratulated him, and wicked men came who were envious of him and abused him with a loud voice Then the Heavenly King reviled the devils saying: 'I am truly the heavenly son by



*In Cantonese the expression used when speaking to in elder brother.

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heaven's command for the extirpation of evil and the exaltation of the good. Don't you know it. Depart quickly! Dare you look upon me. I am king in heaven and earth and have caught you imps and devils as in a net, you cannot escape my hands.' Then he sang the ten odes of great luck." These odes follow but I will not attempt them.

It was hardly to be supposed that Hung-tsiu-tsuen would long tolerate the advice of the Eastern Prince when he began to intrigue in the affairs of the palace, although such advice might have been inspired by the Heavenly Father himself. So on a certain night soldiers were ordered to Tung Wang's quarters, his head was cut off, and his immediate followers slain. His palace was razed to the ground, and his name was no longer to be mentioned in the heavenly capital. By proclamation the heavenly king announced that the unfortunate victim having "Attained merit deep as the azure heaven had suffered for the sins of the world and gone to the skies!" After Tung Wang's death the king and his wives alone appear to have been recipients of heavenly visits. Hung appears to have found too much danger in the outspoken inspirations of the Eastern King to allow any other follower to pretend to direct divine favour, and his chiefs, mindful of the fate of him who stood second in the empire, did not care to aspire to miraculous power.

For some years after this murder T'ien Wang was quiescent and gradually lost ground. His grand northern campaign against the imps' den as he called the province of Chili had ended in disaster. The last man of the great army which had marched full of hope from Nanking to take Peking, and utterly exterminate the imps, had fallen by the Tartar sword. The rowdies of Shanghai had guided square rigged ships against Chinkeang and the imps themselves had cast a wall about the heavenly capital. Foreigners troubled themselves but little about the heavenly doings, and affairs seemed hopeless. Yet according to Chung Wang's account the chief was always cheerful and confident that his Heavenly Father would vouchsafe ultimate deliverance. The deliverance came and the Heavenly King's success once more astonished China, and drew upon him the wonder and attention of foreign nations. As city after city fell, the cause carried with it belief. Missionaries explained to the chiefs the sympathy of western nations, and plenty came simultaneously with foreigners to the half starved capital, where Hung

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amused himself with controversy with foreigners, and the gospel according to Issachar Roberts. By degrees as the full religious aspirations of the king were manifested his friends became alarmed for his spiritual condition. Fearing that his ideas on subject of the Trinity and the procession of the Holy Ghost, were a little misty, some well meaning foreign brethren prepared the Athanasian creed for his instruction. His majesty acknowledged with gratitude, and dollars, the tender pains of his brethren, but told them that as he had been to heaven and they had not, they could not possibly know as much as himself concerning the Godhead. It must have amused the old heretic to see with what reluctance his foreign brothers saw the reality of Taeping matters, and how unwilling they were to leave the new field. I remember one night near Soochow an earnest missionary talking to a real Kwangsi rebel who had intruded into my boat, "You believe in our Heavenly Father?" said the missionary. "Yes!" "And in Christ?" "O yes!" replied the ruffian. "You must not murder." "Oh we never do that!" "Nor abuse women! nor steal!" "Oh never!" The man departed with much religious instruction leaving a favourable impression on the mind of his instructor, but not forgetting adroitly to steal my powder flask! Tsiu-tsuen too must have had many a laugh at

some of the idiosyncrasies of those who would instruct him in religion. To one American missionary he sent a crown made of gilt pasteboard and a massive gold ring of considerable value. The recipient of these favours telling me the story said. "I at once sent back the paper crown to his majesty, saying that I lusted after a celestial and not a terrestrial crown, and quoted some texts bearing on the subject; but as I could recollect no text that had anything to say about celestial or terrestrial rings, I kept the bauble, and sold it at Shanghai for 70 taels! "

T'ien Wang's theology after Tung Wang's death underwent some little change. He makes himself and son to all intents equal with God. God, Christ, myself and son are Lords for ever was his assertion on every proclamation. In fact he made a practical sort of Godhead of which he and his son were the incarnate half. Yet in the books I hold in review he is very unitarian. Shang-ti with him was always most honourable. He scouts the idea of the equality of the Son. That a son could be equal with the father was a dogma he would never believe. The celestial insanity is painfully apparent in the king's last documents, but

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it is always on the theological side. In the few secular despatches I have seen of his, he is sensible until the conclusion when he always rushes into some tremendous dogma, and winds up by asserting his equal kingship with God. Among his manuscript gazettes I find the following for the 1st day of 1st moon of 1861.

"The edict of the Heavenly King. To my nephews He and Seng, to the princes of Kan, T'a, and all celestial captains, commanders and guardians of the heavenly capital both within and without.

"God and Christ have come down among men, and heaven and earth are renewed.

"God and my Elder Brother ordain that I and my son should rule and my palace is established and renewed.

"The father and son, the grandfather and grandson are Lords indeed, and the kingdom of heaven is renewed.

"God and Mama, the elder brother Christ and his wife came down together, and heaven is renewed.

"The heavenly day of great peace is manifest in the myriad places, and the bounds of the earth are made new.

"Heavenly captains and legions assist me in my work, and rewards and distinctions are renewed.

"On earth as in heaven my sacred commands go forth, and the mountains and seas are renewed.

"The snakes and beasts are slain, and mankind is satisfied and tranquil. Officers and men are renovated.

"All is mine for ten thousand and a thousand times ten thousand years, and the order of the world is renovated.

"The winds and the rains are obedient unto me, and the grace of heaven is spread out. Every thing is renovated."

This is the song he sang, when Soochow and the Grand Canal were his, and the imps no longer menaced his capital.

"God, the Elder Brother, myself and son, are the heavenly dynasty. On earth is great peace and the omens of heaven are manifest, old and young, males and females, behold the signs of the heavens. The great brother commanded and lo! it has come to pass. On the 7th of the 2nd moon my mother beheld the kings of the east, west and south, commissioned to exterminate the imps, come to my Golden Dragon palace to greet me Lord of a Myriad Years, and they went forth with the utmost diligence to the conquest of Soochow. Behold Soochow is now won, and

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Chen-san-mei is thankful for the doctrine of heaven. In the 5th watch of the 6th day of the 9th moon I was thanking God, who vouchsafed an omen --- a perfect dream. I beheld a countless host of captains and celestial soldiers coming to offer me sacred things and precious jewels, and respectfully arranging them in the Presence. I laughed inwardly uttering no sound. This morning early in the 5th watch I was praising God and dreamt that I had obtained another city. Whereon I exclaimed 'On earth no place is useless.' I told all this and commanded the captains to hear me. In the eleventh year of my reign I ascended into heaven. God and Christ were with me to exterminate the snakes and devils. On either side heaven's officers and servants protected and aided me to battle and exterminate. I fought until I could no longer move. Myriads of heaven's officers and soldiers protected me and did my behests until I slept and awakening renewed the fight. Time after time did this occur. God and Christ were with me in the work of exterminating snakes and devils with innumerable officers and soldiers. They supported my body. Whatever I wished to do there were people to do it. So I sang this song.

"In my dreams also am I king and in my sleep govern the hills and the streams. In heaven is the Lord and my Elder Brother dwells on high.

"Commanding that I should reign they encompass me as with a cord.

"Below on the earth have I children and brothers and husbands of sisters. (They with) the whole of the celestial servants aid and assist me."

Again I find the following among the gazettes. "During the 5th watch of the 6th day of 9th month I behold an innumerable army coming with presents to God, the Elder Brother and myself. I laughed and was rejoiced. I exclaimed. 'All the length and breadth of the earth is God's, the Elder Brother's, and ours.' All must be regained for us. And the generals said 'Be it according to your word.'"

Here is a specimen of a vision which is recorded in the curious manuscript book of gazettes. It will serve to convince most people of the insanity of the celestial king.

"15 day, 1st month--1861. This morning daring, the 5th watch I had a vision while praising God. He ordered me to slay the tiger imps, those four damnable tigers and two black curs. The

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whole heavens rejoiced to assist the heavenly dynasty; the snakes and beasts fled before the presence of God and my brother. All the great ones and people thanked Heaven for its pains, and heaven and earth rested in peace on the advent of Taeping.

"God in his goodness gave me a sign in a vision. Two of my wives were walking with me on the same road; in front they saw four very large yellow tigers opposed to me. My wives were much alarmed, and I feared that if I advanced the tigers would wound the two women, so I took them back. To my astonishment I found these were demon tigers which pursued us; on hitting one with my hand they all changed into the form of men. Then I suddenly awoke. Considering this prognostic important and being uncertain as to its meaning, I besought God my father and Christ my brother to send me another vision to instruct me ... God in his goodness sent another dream to direct me in the way. I was seeking for the place where I had struck the tiger and at once found it! Lo! there were four tigers and two black dogs lying down together, and I saw that the tigers were all dead, as was also one of the black dogs, but one was still alive. I caught him by the throat and hit him again and again. The dog in the voice of a man said 'I fear' I said 'I am going to kill you,' and I beat him to death. Counting on my fingers I found I had slain four tigers and two black dogs, altogether six beasts. On hearing of this joyful omen my nephew and young brother went forth to conquer and exterminate the imps, and the scribes were commanded to inscribe this."

Probably the last gazette the king ever wrote is this:

"God, my Brother, myself and son sit in the heavenly hall, the fame of the celestial kingdom of great peace resounds through space. In our heavenly kingdom God is chief in everything and Great Peace is spread out upon the hills and streams. Henceforth let our style be 'the Heavenly Kingdom of God' 上帝天國 God is the universal father.

"Let the signet and all the seals be at once changed, and the proper inscription, 'the Heavenly Kingdom of God' be thereon written. Let the same be cut on the jewelled signet. So by all the seals shall the protection of heaven be made manifest.

" Now I hereby declare to heaven, earth, and men, that God the Heavenly Father is alone most excellent, who was from the spreading out of the heavens until now, the exceeding great creator of all things. Bethinking me that God and my brother

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Christ had descended to lead me into the seat of kings, the style of my empire was 'Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace.' But although God the heavenly ruler is my father, and Heaven's Lord, Christ my brother, none have the preeminence but God alone.

Completely fulfilling the commands of God let the style T'ai p'ing tien kuoh changed into Shang ti t'ien kuoh, 'the Heavenly Kingdom of God.'"

I could quote many more of these extraordinary documents, but the similarity is tiresome. Of some I can make nothing. In fact I may make the same apology as Jen-fah and Jen-tah who inscribed the celestial visions: "We have written as commanded by our true sacred lord, but as the king speaks heavenly language we can only comprehend two or three sentences out of every ten." What I have given may help to convince investigators that the so called visions of Hung were merely the ravings of a man theologically insane. But lest any of the few remaining believers in T'ien Wang as a Christian champion, should object to these extracts as not fully developing the man's creed, I will give a few translations of Hung-tsiu-tsuen's commentaries on the New Testament which ought to place the matter finally at rest. Hung's notes on the New and Old Testaments are written on the margin of the books. He has but little to say on the Old Testament; at which I wonder, as he was loud in his wish to imitate David in the torture of the inhabitants of Rabbah during my stay in Nanking.

On the 4th chap. Matthew the king says as follows. "God is flame, the sun is also flame, therefore God came with the sun. Respect this! "

"God is the holy spirit and came with the Holy Ghost (leng); after fifty days the Holy Ghost descended and there was a flame and wind, the flame and wind both proceeded from God and accorded with one another: God is. flame, therefore a flaming spirit; my brother is flame, therefore a great splendour. I am the sun and, am therefore brilliant. Respect this." . Further on he upbraids people for saying the kingdom of heaven is in heaven, when Christ says it was coming quickly, and behold it is now come!

The cleansing of the leper is thus explained. "God rested on the head of my Elder Brother who, when he spoke, uttered the Words of God, and therefore cleansed the disease" (smallpox), Speaking of the pacification of the storm in 24 v. of 8th chap. the

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king says. "The wind employed by heaven was the Tung Wang, so of course he was obedient. Respect this!" On Matth. 24 (The sun shall be darkened) is remarked: "My Elder Brother when in the world went about secretly because he feared the people. I am the sun; I descended into the world and became man, when I changed I became non-luminous. My wife is the moon. She descended and was incarnate and no longer sheds light. The heavenly captains and hosts, even the stars, became incarnate, and fell from heaven upon the earth. My Elder Brother ascended into heaven on the clouds and shall gather his people together from the four quarters. All must confess this. Respect this." T'ien Wang mystifies the faithful in his interpretation of the verse in chap. 27 where Christ says Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani. Christ, he says, in these words

secretly confessed that Hung was to be lord and rebuild the temple. No one in Nanking would care to contradict this curious translation.

On Mark Chap.1 v.11 (And there came a voice from heaven) ,he remarks with regard to the Holy Spirit, "It is God. He descended upon my Elder Brother and led him away. How can it be that one Holy Spirit became my brothers body? There is besides another Holy Ghost which makes up the Trinity even Tung Wang. This must be known. Christ plainly said there is only one very God. How then did his disciples fall into the mistake of saying that Christ is God. If theirs is the correct explanation why there must be two Gods. It may wrongfully be explained by saying that Christ is God and that on his ascent he was united with God. How is it that before the time of David my Elder Brother saw God and that God spoke to him; and how is it that when I went to heaven I saw that there were in heaven, God the Father, and the Mother of heaven his wife, and brother Christ, there was also ,my heavenly sister in law, who is now descended. Truly the Persons are the Heavenly Father, the Heavenly Mother, my Heavenly Brother and his wife."

His remarks on Luke are few and consist of an untranslatable interpretation of the conception, and various warnings against those who consider the Son equal with the Father. Hung is not favourable to St. Paul. He says of Paul's, command to uncover the head while praying 1 Cor. 1, 4. "The covering of the head has nothing to do with the desire of the heart, cover or uncovers as you like! Respect This!" And further on. "Every one born first receives the soul, and. afterwards the body of flesh.

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The Lord of souls creates a soul and then sends it into the mother to get a body put to it. The body is begotten of the mother but the soul is of the Lord of souls. The holy kingdom in heaven is the great heavenly hall of God, there are thirty three heavens; earth is the heavenly hall. The great heavenly hall is the place of souls, earth of bodies."

On the third Epistle of John is the following startling announcement. "God is one and most honoured. Christ is his son. The Son is born of the Father, originally one substance united. The Father is alone the Father, the Son the Son; they are one and yet two, two and yet one. As to the Shenglung (Holy Spirit) that is Tung Wang. By the will of God all plagues and pestilences were upon the Leng Tung Wang. He was also God's beloved son and with the Elder Brother and myself born of one mother, born before the heavens and earth. God the father is the only true Shen, and only true Shengshen; God says beside me than shalt have none other Shen, none other Ti. The Shengshen is God, if there was another Shengshen there would another God. The Shengfung is also the breath 風 of the Holy God Shangti. Not that this Fung is the Shengshen, for the fung is the Tung Wang who from heaven above sends down wind. Respect this."

He has, as might be naturally expected, some curious notes on the Revelations: On 3rd ch. 12, 13 (Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, &c.) Hung remarks. "Now that the Elder Brother has descended, the Celestial dynasty has a temple of the true God, the heavenly father Shang ti, and a temple of the elder brother Christ, engraved with the names of God and Christ. The kingdom of God the Father and the New Jerusalem which came down from heaven is fulfilled in the present celestial capital (Nanking). Respect this." On 6th ch. 12, 13, 14 (the sun became black as sackcloth of hair and the moon became as blood) is remarked. "I am the sun, my wife is the moon; to turn black like blood covertly signifies descent and incarnation. The stars of heaven, are the celestial troops! By falling to the earth is covertly meant a descent into the world to exterminate the imps. The passing away of the heavens as a scroll, and the removal of every island and mountain from its place, covertly reveals that in heaven and earth the old is to be exchanged for the new; and now the map of the empire had been made new under the T'ai-p'ings. The captains of the earth

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hiding themselves in dens and rocks is a covert revelation that the serpents and -beasts were to be slain and the imps exterminated. All this is now fulfilled. Respect this."

11th chapter 15, 18 he says: --- "Now the heavenly father Shangti the elder brother Christ have come down and taken myself and the Son to be lords. All countries have already submitted to God and Christ who have brought me to rule for all

generations. It is fulfilled. Respect this! " On 12th chapter we are startled at finding that --- "The Elder Brother, myself and the Tung Wang, before the heavens and earth, were by the favour of the Heavenly Father, born from the womb of his original wife the Heavenly Mother. Afterwards the Father sent the Elder Brother to be a redemption for sin, and to enter into Mary to be incarnate. This is why the Elder Brother said --- 'Before Abraham was I am!' When I was in heaven at the time of Abraham I have some recollection of knowing that the father was about to send the elder brother to be born of the seed of Abraham. I therefore went down and blessed and saved Abraham. At that time too, I knew that the Father was going to send me to rule the world, therefore I had a desire to show myself below as Lord: afterwards when I received the Father's commands to enter my mother's womb and descend into the world, I knew that the imp Yenlo (Abaddon) would raise a disturbance, so I besought the father that no harm should arise through him. Afterwards the father commanded me from heaven to be born from the womb of another mother from heaven so that I might be incarnate. I remember that I entered into the womb of this mother, and that the father gave a sign, namely clothing her with the sun to make manifest that that which she had conceived was the Son. I knew that the serpent devil Yenlo also knew that in the womb of this mother was I. Shangti especially sent me into the world to exterminate this serpent. Therefore was it that he wished to devour me and usurp God's heritage; but God is omnipotent and the son born to him could not be injured by the serpent. Behold I testify the truth of myself. In former times Melchisedec was I, and after the Elder Brother had ascended, the child born of the sunclad woman was myself also: now the Father and Elder Brother have come down and brought me to be the lord especially to exterminate this serpent. Lo! the serpents and beasts are slain and the empire enjoys Great Peace. It is fulfilled. Respect this! " On the 14th ch. 15 v. (the angel with the sickle)

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is recorded-" Now is the time for the grain to be ripe; I am the' lord of the harvest and Tung Wang is the Ho-nai. 20th ch. 10 v. the king says, "What John saw was the celestial hall in heaven above. Heaven above and earth are alike. The New Jerusalem is the present Nanking. God and Christ have descended to make us lords and open the lower celestial hall, so the heavenly hall of God is among men. The wife of the Lamb of God (Sheng kao), is my heavenly sister in law. When I was in heaven how many times did I not see her! Now this heavenly sister has also descended and called me husband's brother (Shuh). Respect this!"

The last commentary is this. "Now since God and Christ have both descended, what holy disciple does not rejoice, and since they have verified the Gospel which has been delivered unto you why don't you believe? This is truly the prediction of my Elder Brother (with regard to me); I also will come like a thief when you don't expect me! Respect this." At all events no one will fail to acknowledge the truth of the last assertion, and it affords a good concluding point. It is Hung's last commentary and the only true one! He did come as a thief; as the desolation of vast tracts of country testifies to this day.

Considering the life of Hung-tsiu-tsuen, I am in no wise astonished at the grotesque monstrosity of his belief. The very slight knowledge six months in Robert's Canton school could have given him of Christianity; his after poverty, troubles and persecution s- -- all tended to confuse a mind already prone to disease. Then came his regal success. To him, the poor peasant, who had not cash enough wherewith to bribe the examiners at Canton, or the runners of a country tribunal; to whom even the purchase of his daily food was a difficulty; were suddenly given provinces, cities and armies; and the persecuted became the persecutor. His astounding success must have conveyed to his mind, and to those of his followers, an idea that his former ravings during his sickness were realities; that he was indeed the Son of God going forth conquering and to conquer. So neither Hung-tsiu-tsuen's belief, nor its acceptance by his followers, surprises me; my astonishment is reserved for those, foreigners, who with the evidence I have just given at their command, could for a moment believe in Taeping Christianity or the sanity of its chief. Alas for defeat! Had the Heavenly King subverted the empire and established his dynasty, his story would have been accepted by, the whole country, and for-

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eigners would have executed the celestial behests and accepted the celestial gold, without any questioning. A few centuries would have thrown a halo over Hung's works, especially those regarding the unseen world, and have converted the monster into a Saint and Sage. But he rose from the universal rottenness for the bloody service given him to do, and his place knows him no more. For him was ordained a career like that of those monstrous heroes of history, those demigods,

who fulfilling some fixed but unknown law, rise from the decay of dynasties and go forth to chastise nations and afflict mankind. And as in the case of all historic parallels the warning, loud and bloody as it was, has been utterly unheeded; nothing has been changed, and nothing will be changed. Read the history of Justinian in Gibbon's Rome and you have an exact history of China at present. As soon as the government here can no longer make play things of foreign forces troubles will begin again. How true was the remark of the old Swedish Chancellor, and how applicable now:---"My son! my son! you know not with how little wisdom the world is governed."

LIST OF T'AI P'ING WORKS.

1. T'ien fu shang ti yen t'i hwang chao

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The Imperial proclamations dictated by God the Father. (One volume).

2. T'ien fu hsia fan chao shoo.

天父下凡詔書

The book of proclamations regarding the Heavenly Father's visit to earth. (Two volumes).

3. T'ien ming chao chih shoo.

天命詔旨書

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4. Chiu i chao.

舊遺詔

The old Testament. (Six volumes).

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前遺詔

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貶妖穴為罪隸論

Lit. Degrading the eaves of the imps into the ti (messengers) of sin.

Trans. Book regarding the changing of the name of the province Chih li (directly attached) into Tsuy li (criminally attached). (One volume).

18. Chao shoo kai hsi pan hsing lun.

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22. Hsing chun tsung yao.

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26. Wang ch'ang tzu hsiang chin muh chin urh kung cheng fu yin shoo.

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