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Of More Value than a Thousand Missionaries.*

NEW CHINA—NEW METHODS.

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IT is not a mere dream that God has a ladder from earth to heaven. Every rung is there, provided by a loving Father; but He expects us to climb up. Every discovery of the right use of the forces of nature is a climb of but one rung upwards, whilst lack of discovery and invention, perhaps, wears out the rung on which we stand and we are in peril of a great fall.

China, like the West, had discovered agriculture in primitive times. It had discovered weapons of defence and attack, had discovered the art of writing, the value of organization into clans and nations, discovered the value of laws and principles of righteousness and benevolence. In a word, it had climbed high above the savage condition of the South Seas, of Central Africa, and of many castes of India and attained to a wonderfully high state of civilization. But it made the fatal mistake of thinking that its sages knew everything and that there was nothing more to learn. On that rung it has stood proudly for the last few hundred years, till the rung at last gave way, and there have been the great falls of 1842, 1860, 1884, 1895, and 1900, i.e., about one in every ten years.

This year, however, we have witnessed a great change. Who can estimate the immense significance of the change? In eleven out of the eighteen provinces we have records of the opening of colleges for the study of Western subjects. We find Japanese text-books on Western civilization translated by the score into the Chinese language and circulated by the tens of thousands throughout the empire.

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The reform of religion by the rise of Buddhism in India and its spread throughout all the Far East was an event of the greatest magnitude. The adoption of Christianity by Europe, America, and Australia was also an event of the greatest magnitude. But the practical reform in education in China during the last year, *if persevered in*, is of greater magnitude, for it will not only act on 400,000,000 Chinese but will re-act again on India, Europe, and America, and it starts with a far greater momentum than any of these other movements. Some 150,000 students who attended as candidates for the Chinese M.A. degree this year, were expected to answer questions about the history of Greece and Rome and the civilization of the West generally. Add to this nearly ten times that number who are candidates for the B.A. degree and we get 1,500,000. An intellectual army of 1,500,000, with their faces turned westward, is unprecedented and its results are difficult to exaggerate. This is the new China that opens before us.

And how has this come to pass? It was not brought about by the missionaries alone; although they live in every province of the empire and have their literature distributed in every town in the empire, and although its quality shows that they, Christian missionaries, have advanced far beyond the Chinese in the interpretation of nature.

Nor has the change been brought about by foreign merchants alone, though the imported articles are sought after by Chinese merchants from all parts of the empire as superior to anything China can produce.

Nor has the change been brought about by foreign statesmen alone, although China has been deeply humiliated every time it has tried to put down foreigners by mere force.

Nor has the change been brought about by Chinese rulers alone, although they have, in many respects, more autocratic power than any rulers in the world.

The change has been brought about by all these various forces uniting in insisting that without change China would be utterly ruined, with change China might again become one of the greatest powers in the world. Stubbornly and long did she believe that she had nothing to learn from the Western barbarian, but under God's providence the combined influence of war, commerce, and the Christian religion, was too much for her, and that is why we witness the great change of 1902 and the beginning of new China.

Here we might with profit review some of the methods adopted from the beginning in order to know where a change is necessary. It would take us too far afield, before an audience of missionaries, to review the political and commercial methods, although these also

are full of interest; so we shall confine ourselves to missionary methods only.

1. The first thing was to understand the people, for unless we properly diagnosed China's disease there was no hope of applying the right remedy. Few, if any, of the missionaries in China adopted the method, considerably used in Japan at one time, viz., of preaching through interpreters. It was believed that to do the work thoroughly one must know the language pretty thoroughly. The result was the preparation of dictionaries. We have exhaustive ones, such as Morrison's, Medhurst's, Williams'. Besides these general ones we have had dictionaries for local dialects in Canton, Foochow, Amoy, Shanghai, and a number of smaller vocabularies in North, South, Central and Western China. Then there were graduated lessons prepared for learning Chinese in many dialects.

2. After getting the language the next important step in the diagnosis of the Chinese was to know and understand their religions. To help in this difficult task we have the standard translations of the Chinese classics by Drs. Legge, Faber, Edkins, and Eitel, with learned dissertations on the relative value of the religions in China as compared with other religions and with Christianity.

3. The third step in diagnosis was to have personal interviews with the religious leaders in China to-day and try the effect of Christian truth on them. This has not been carried out so systematically as the other methods, for the simple reason that the leaders would not dare to receive foreign visitors freely, fearing reproof from their authorities.

4. Not having free access to leaders—whether mandarins, gentry, leading Buddhists, leading Taoists, or leading Mohammedans—the missionaries opened chapels in the main streets, in the hope of catching the attention of some passers-by. But anti-Christian leagues were formed to fine and boycott all who entered a Christian chapel. The consequence was that only strangers and men who had no character to lose came at first to the chapels and churches.

5. To break through the wall of prejudice medical missions were started to deal with disease which no class in China could keep out, so as to prove to all, by kind deeds, that our work was really beneficial and not harmful to China.

6. At the same time journeys were made by the missionaries through the country villages in the hope that the country people would be less prejudiced after free intercourse. This proved to be the case, and the majority of the converts so far have been from among the simple country folk.

7. Many, however, thought that the nation could never be converted as a whole by occasional sermons to the sick or to occasional strangers passing through our chapels, or by gaining over the country-folk, therefore an attempt was made to open schools so as to train leaders. But no students came. The pupils had to be paid to come. Board and lodging, clothing and teaching, were given for nothing for twenty or thirty years! It is only now that the Chinese are willing to pay for Western learning.

8. But the Christian church in the West could not dream of starting schools throughout the whole empire, therefore it occurred to a few that, in addition to preaching in hall and hospital and school, the preparation of high-class literature for distribution among the leaders throughout China might create an awakening among the Chinese themselves, for men might read books quietly in their homes without compromising themselves before the public, and these books were followed up by personal interviews.

9. Contemporaneously with these methods there has been carried on philanthropic work in famine relief, opium relief and other helps to the poor and suffering.

These nine methods have not been in vain. If it be asked what produced the one and a-half million converts, Roman Catholic and Protestant; what produced the Reform movement which shook the throne, causing a palace revolution because the Emperor was on the side of Christianity and Reform, which again brought on the Boxer movement which shook the whole world? Undoubtedly these methods of the Christian church by the testimony of Chinese and foreigners, friends and foes alike, were among the greatest factors in the land.

II. Having dealt with old China and how old methods succeeded, we have now new China and new difficulties and must consider some methods that are likely in turn to overcome these. Merchants and statesmen are devising new methods every day. Shall we be the only class to lie on our oars? God forbid!

Before coming to particular methods, however, it might be well to consider briefly the broad stages of individual life and then of mankind as a whole, as these may furnish us with some valuable principles to guide us.

Every man passes through four stages. First, the brute stage, when he is guided solely by his own desires without regard to anybody else; that is the baby stage. Then comes the docile stage, when he is guided by the opinion of grown-up people, nurses, parents, teachers; that is the pupil stage. After that comes the independent stage, when he trusts to his own intellect and his own experience, for he thinks he now knows everything; that is the

college-graduate stage. Last of all comes the stage, when he combines the best in the physical, intellectual and moral life, not only of himself but of that of the best he can find outside himself as well; that is the ripe stage of wisdom.

It is interesting to find that there is a striking analogy between individual life and that of the human race as a whole. First we find the savage stage when men were mainly guided by their own desires and by great conquerors like Rameses, Nebuchadnezzar, Tsinshih Huangti, Alexander, Cæsar, Omar, Genghis Khan, Tamarlane, Napoleon.

Then comes the stage of pupilage, when all nations seem bound to go to school. This was the time when great religions were formed to supersede the stage of brute force. When Manu, Menes, Moses, and Mohammed arose; also Buddha, Yao, and Shun, Confucius, and Laotze, so as to make men desire to stand in harmony with their respective gods, their prophets and their sages.

Later came the stage of independent thought in Europe, beginning in religion with Luther, and Calvin, and Knox; in philosophy with Bacon, Locke, and Kant; in politics with Frederick the Great, and with Napoleon, and French and American revolutionists, trying experiments by breaking too much with the past. Similar liberty, bordering on licence, may be traced arising in Asia now.

Last of all comes the ripest stage which uses weapons of war for defensive purposes only, which recognises the true place of religion as the crown of education, the true place of independent action as freedom to try the new without destroying the good in the old, and while knowing that only those who resemble God most will prosper most, recognises that true wisdom lies in learning always from everybody and in living at peace with all nations as far as possible.

If these principles be true of individuals and of mankind as a whole, then China, like Turkey and other lands, has only been in the baby and pupil-stage up to the present, and now it is about to change from the high-school stage of mere national domestic teaching to the university of universal knowledge and universal wisdom.

If China be in the stage I have endeavoured to describe, then it is plain that methods adopted among other nations in other stages, whatever they may be, are not the methods most suitable for new China which is now entering on her third and fourth stages of progress. She cannot skip any stage of development and pretend to be on an equality with others.

III. Again there are some essentials underlying all adequate successful methods. For example:

1. A better understanding of the laws of God in regard to life and suffering than that possessed by the world at large. Not that intellectual conceit which will not tolerate any intercourse with those who differ from them. Not mere complacency that we have the highest truth, for that is the Pharisaism condemned by our Lord and is painfully evident in Mohammedanism and Confucianism and in some formal Christians. That is the false coin; the genuine one is that which is constrained by a divine compassion and looks on every human being as a brother. It contemplates the infinite possibilities of the endless life in power and peace and joy, and is daily grieved that so many are ignorant of the ways of power and blessedness, and of this fact that their suffering from age to age can be ended by the knowledge of God and His laws. We need not now discuss eternal punishment as something for the individual in the future, but we know that perpetual punishment is the condition of the ignorant in every race and age in this world. Chinamen will continue to be beasts of burden till they learn that electricity can do the work better. The native Australian and Patagonian will continue to suffer from the inclemency of the weather till they learn how to build a house and how to warm it. The despairing will continue to suffer till he learns that "all things work together for good to them who love God." Even the leading nations will continue to bear intolerable burdens of military despotism and to suffer the fear of invasion by neighbour or anarchist, till they learn and follow the juster laws of the kingdom of heaven. And we also must be careful not to miss these laws.

2. A better organization so that we may utilise our forces to best advantage. Consider the problem before us—how to influence and guide the mind of 400 millions. Many are in the habit of asking for more missionaries and making comparisons with the number of ministers at home to every million of population. That is a great mistake, for, according to that, there should be one missionary for every one thousand of the population, or 400,000 missionaries for all China! Now Mission Boards have never dreamt of such a thing. They aim at sending only an adequate number, not of pastors over native churches but, of missionaries who will train natives to be ministers of the churches in China.

What then is the adequate number of missionaries necessary for this task? We have two principles to guide us here also. The nations in treaty relations with China appoint one Minister to Peking and one Consul to each of the Treaty Ports, and through these they expect to make their influence felt throughout China. The other principle is that adopted by the Chinese government itself. It has divided the whole empire into some 1,500 counties,

over each of which there is what we in China inadequately call the District Magistrate, the true unit of Chinese government. Generally speaking every ten counties has a Prefect superintending those District Magistrates. Every 100 counties makes a province presided over by a Governor and his assistants. Then over all the provinces is the central government at Peking. By this means we arrive at the highly interesting and important fact that the Chinese government rules not only every county but every village and family in the empire by about 2,000 civil mandarins!

These considerations enable us to have some idea as to what number of missionaries is necessary for the guidance of the whole empire. Remember, too, that many choice native Christians can now co-operate with missionaries, as Manchus and Chinese co-operate in the government of the empire. These considerations will show that it is organization we need far more than mere numbers.

3. Now a word about the qualifications of those who guide the empire. The Chinese principle for a millennium has been to appoint only the best scholars to the post of governing the people. Hence, being the picked of millions, they have raised China to the point of pre-ëminence over all nations in the Far East.

Here again we have a valuable suggestion that, if we are to bring about the best result in Christian missions, we are, in addition to piety, to endeavour to choose the best qualified men from our universities, with post-graduate training in missionary principles, for the posts of ambassadors of the kingdom of God in the land.

4. Last of all comes the all-important work of co-operation in organization. The Chinese government does not appoint two magistrates for one county, or two prefects for one prefecture, or two governors for one province. To state such a thing as possible is just like trying to keep order by tolerating a rebellion—a contradiction in terms. The same applies to missions. No Episcopal church appoints two bishops over the same district. No Presbyterian, Congregational, or Baptist church appoints two medical institutions, or two sets of schools, or two sets of evangelists in the same field, for they would regard that as preposterous. Now that God has bestowed His blessing on Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist, almost in equal proportion, are we not denying that real unity which God has sealed with His blessing if we do not agree to organise our work as one body would do? Let us, therefore, divide the field without overlapping and divide our departments without overlapping, then we may naturally expect ten-fold efficiency and economy in our work and the blessing of God to be poured out upon us in ten-fold measure. If we believe our own Sacred Scriptures and are truly more loyal to Christ than to

our respective denominations, we should never forget that our unity is the greatest proof of our divinity. Our unnecessary divisions are a proof that we are too much of the earth earthy, and if we could rid ourselves of this, then instead of having converts by the thousands, we would have them by the tens of thousands. But what is everybody's business is nobody's business. Where can we find an **organizer** for this magnificent work?

This shows the need of the scientific study of the laws of mission success, and the need of a new kind of statistics never drawn up in the reports of missions before, viz., a quantitative table of statistics of the leading methods known in the world with their results, instead of following opinion—often blind—as must be the rule now without these statistics. This careful study would revolutionise our mission methods and make them advance in efficiency over the old ones with the same astonishing rapidity as we witness in so many other departments of modern activity.

My time for the opening paper is up. I can only briefly state some of the methods which seem necessary, viz:—

1. Not merely prayer for the Holy Spirit, but also a mastery of the laws which God has fixed for the obtaining of it and for getting answers to prayers.

2. Not merely elementary education, but also the highest education, for primary and secondary education will then take care of themselves.

3. Not merely extension of the Press, but also the circulation of the cream of the literature in the world.

4. Not merely mastery of the best modern Christian books, but also mastery of the latest books on comparative religion and their influence on the progress of the human race.

5. Not merely evangelisation of any of the lower classes, but also the evangelization and organization of the leaders of every class; the rest will follow like sheep. The conversion of one leader is often potentially the conversion of a thousand followers as well.

6. Not merely friendly conferences and united meetings with all Christian denominations, but also a genuine recognition of the fact that God gives His Spirit to all denominations without partiality, and therefore a determination to divide the field and divide the work without overlapping, and to have far more co-operation than at present exists in educational, medical, and other work.

7. Not merely fresh organization on a basis of a real unity of the Christian church, but also it should be on parallel lines and coincide with that of the Chinese government, i.e., our chief centres where their chief centres are, and our ecclesiastical divisions the

same as theirs—county for county, prefect for prefect, and province for province. Above all, there should be full understanding and co-operation with Chinese authorities and gentry.

8. Not merely study of the value and welfare of the soul in its relation to God, but also the study of the part man should take in political economy and social problems generally.

9. Not merely knowledge of how to influence men individually, but also how to guide them collectively, as all leaders of men must learn or fail.

10. Not merely intense activity and unwearied labour, but also the knowledge of the chief springs of action in individuals and in nations. Some knowledge must precede every conversion, some renaissance before every reform. The measure of harvest reaped is in proportion to the seed properly sown, otherwise it may be wasted on the roadside or among thorns.

11. Not merely effort to get the best text-books studied in China, but also translated and studied in all lands, then the next generation will be friendly, because swayed by the same universal and best ideas which man has discovered and God has revealed.

12. Not merely prayer that the kingdom of God may come and His will be done on earth as it is done in heaven, but also an active part in the federation of the world to the infinite good of all, on friendly instead of military basis, and the preparation of China for that step.

Since Japan, which is only one-tenth the area and has only one-tenth the population of China could, in forty years, make wonderful strides, adopting the reforms which took us a thousand years in the West to discover and adopt, how much more will China astonish the world when once its intellectual army of a million and a half of students are set ablaze with enthusiasm for the new learning, including the power of an endless life? Whatever methods we adopt to put China on the highest road of true progress must be undertaken quickly, lest the Chinese at this crisis lose their way and harm themselves and the whole world.

Judging from the analogy of the value of the application of natural laws to the progress of the world during the last century, we may reasonably estimate that if the laws of missions referred to above were practically carried out, it would be of greater value than if *a thousand missionaries were added to our number!*

“He that hath ears to hear let him hear.” “I speak unto wise men, judging ye what I say.”