

Upon entering China the missionary finds himself confronted with a large number of serious difficulties. Although he knows he is a stranger among a strange people, he has yet to realize it, to be painfully aware of it in every relation into which he is brought with the people. He enters into a new world, into a civilization thousands of years old. He meets with traditions, ideas, and social standards and usages, which do not yield to explanation by applying the laws and principles that govern Western social life. Daily he runs up against something extraordinary, something that he never thought of, some phase of human nature which not even Shakespeare has pointed out to him, which to the best of his knowledge of psychology he cannot explain. He is astonished, imposed upon, vexed, angered, ashamed of himself, humbled, becomes pessimistic—learns to know himself, while he is yet largely ignorant of the "Chinaman". He feels that he is a stranger, and the most humiliating about it all is that he feels nearly as much a stranger to himself as he does to the Chinese; he who thought he knew himself fairly well and could tell a person's character by looking him squarely in the face. And besides this he is made painfully aware of the fact that the Chinese do not understand him, even though he can express his thoughts in some way. He is putting up a pretty good fight, but it is largely without results.

Without entering further into this very fertile field of research, on which books might and ought to be written, let us consider that he has to learn a language that by common consent is considered one of the most difficult, if not the most difficult in the world. He is made to feel that, everything else being equal, only in so far as he is able to master the language will he become a useful missionary. For in the elements of the language, to a large extent, lies the solution of the riddles and paradoxes of their social life.

But even a fair knowledge of the language is by no means sufficient for understanding the people. He must associate with them, have dealings with them, learn to know personally their own individual psychological make-up. And what does he find? He finds on the whole an ignorant people. Most of them, it seems to him, act like children. He pities them and decides that he must treat them as such. This pedagogical principle, however, he soon finds that for various reasons he will have to give up. And the sooner he does so the better for himself and the mission work. For the fact of the matter is that the average Chinese refuse to be treated as children. A man has to earn his respect and influence from his fellow-men in China, as well as at home, by his personal qualities and his alertness in understanding human nature. Let the "Chinaman" see naturally from his own point of view, the least indication of injustice on the part of the missionary, and he has lost his influence with that man. It does not matter that the missionary thought he did right and thus had a good conscience. He did not administer justice from the Chinese point of view. Thus through a series of personal dealings with the people and through a number of bad mistakes, perhaps far more serious than he would want to admit, he is gradually led to see things from the Chinese angle and gain the esteem of the people. And it is useless to discuss the good that his preaching may do, so long as he is committing serious blunders.

The climate presents another difficulty. Many missionaries are disabled for longer periods at a time. They may have to be sent home to recuperate; are sent back again, and perhaps home a second time, at great expense to the mission. There are, undoubtedly, missionaries who do not put in more than half of their time on the mission field all in all. Although the average degree of the health of the missionaries is higher than just indicated, still quite a large per cent of the working time of the average missionary is lost.

Besides all this the missionary is very expensive as compared with native help. The salary of one missionary is sufficient for at least five native pastors.

But the missionary has also his strong points. He brings with him new ideas and new forms with which he enriches the Chinese world of thought, and which exercise a healthy influence in helping the Chinese to discriminate between the good and the bad, adjusting, renewing, reconstructing.

Perhaps the greatest advantage that the foreigner has over his native colleague at this stage of mission work in China, is his superior ability as teacher, and that indeed especially as teacher for advanced students. In his position as teacher more than in any other do his superior education and wider scope come to account. This fact has been noted by many of the larger missions in China, and as a result, in latter years, a large number of normal schools, colleges, and theological seminaries, union and otherwise, have sprung up. And not only in the schools, but in mission work in general is the educational principle over against the evangelistic, which was formerly almost exclusively followed, emphasized. This is especially true as the work of the foreigner is concerned.

Also as organizer and superintendent will the foreigner for some time to come be superior to the Chinese. Those whom he benefits most are the native workers. They are used to his ways of saying things, they appreciate his thoughts. He should be their spiritual adviser, their ecclesiastical head and leader.

Finally is the foreigner indispensable as responsible agent of the home Church in having charge of the finances and the proper distribution of these. This could under no circumstances be left to the Chinese, nor would only one or two foreigners be sufficient. Personal acquaintance with each native worker is as yet necessary.

The need of a native ministry is evident for many reasons. The Church has a self-propagating nature. The history of the Christian Church amply proves this. No Christian people have failed to produce its pastors and spiritual leaders. And not until the Church of China also as an organized body largely under the leadership of its own spiritual leaders take an active part in the evangelization of the country, will the nation be won for Christianity.

The native pastor of this generation will not very likely come up to the foreigner on the average. Yet as pastor of a Chinese congregation, which will mean that he is also to work amongst the heathen, he is strong where the foreigner is weak. He is one of the people, is a product of their civilization, knows the ins and outs of social life, and has the confidence of the people. He has the tremendous advantage of knowing the language, and he is, as already intimated, many times as cheap a man financially.