

World Missionary Conference, 1910

(To consider Missionary Problems in relation to the Non-Christian World)

THE HISTORY AND RECORDS OF THE CONFERENCE

TOGETHER WITH
ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT THE
EVENING MEETINGS

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CHANGES IN THE CHARACTER OF THE MISSIONARY PROBLEM

I. IN THE FAR EAST

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*Address delivered in the Assembly Hall on Saturday
Evening, 18th June*

I AM asked to report upon China, Japan, and Korea. Our subject falls naturally into two divisions :

I. RECENT CHANGES IN THE CHARACTER OF THE MISSIONARY PROBLEM.

II. THEIR EFFECT UPON MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.

I. RECENT CHANGES

These may be summed up in the phrase : The Awakening of the Far East ; and this phrase may be considered under the Intellectual, the Spiritual, and the Political Awakening.

1. *Intellectual Awakening.*—In the intellectual awakening Japan clearly leads. It is not necessary to present a single illustration of Japan's awakening. Her acknowledged position in war and commerce, in industries and education, shows that Japan now holds a leading place among the nations of the world.

In Korea the awakening is not yet so fully in progress. But with the Japanese in control, building roads, establishing

schools and hospitals and courts of justice, with the profound agitation which the loss of nationality has brought to the Koreans, and with the great religious awakening, the Koreans probably will make as rapid though in part compulsory progress during the next ten years as any other nation in the Far East.

China has more completely changed front in her attitude toward modern progress during the last ten years than any other nation in the Far East. Her educational system, which had remained substantially unchanged for a thousand years, theoretically has been revolutionised since the Boxer uprising, and great practical changes have been inaugurated. Four thousand Chinese students are studying in Japan, 1200 in the United States, and a thousand more in Europe. Under Protestant missionaries in China over 900 students are in college, 20,000 in preparatory departments and boarding schools, 55,000 in day schools. In a word, 80,000 children and young people are under Protestant Christians in China, of whom 16,000 are girls and young women. Seventy-five thousand are in Sunday schools. In addition to missionaries teaching in the Empire, some 700 other foreign teachers are employed, chiefly by the Government. Text-books of Western learning are being introduced, a single Chinese publishing house in Shanghai selling over a million dollars' (Mex.) worth a year. A telegram from Peking, June 11, says that the Board of Education has recommended and the Regent has issued a decree making English the official language for all scientific and technical instruction throughout the Empire, and English is made compulsory in all high schools where science is taught. Summing up the educational situation, Western learning in principle has been adopted in China, and this reform when carried out will effect an intellectual revolution among some 400,000,000 people. Twelve separate lines of railway are in operation or under construction throughout the Empire; and the change in transportation will revolutionise China industrially, as the new schools promise to revolutionise her intellectually. Letters and newspapers passing through the Chinese post-office rose from 113,000,000 in 1906 to 306,000,000 in 1909. Anti-

foot-binding societies, originally organised by foreigners, are now carried forward by the Chinese ; and while the decrease of foot-binding is scarcely perceptible, nevertheless these bands upon 150,000,000 or 200,000,000 women probably will be broken before the century is half over. Indeed, we believe China to-day leads the Orient in her willingness to elevate woman to her true position by the side of man.

No other nation on earth has grappled with a great national evil more earnestly and upon the whole more successfully than China is grappling with opium vice. In the winter of 1904 and 1905, travelling for thirty days in the Szechwan Province, I saw one-third of the arable land devoted to the poppy. The opium evil was the most discouraging fact in China in 1904. Last winter I travelled over the same roads in the same province and did not see a single poppy growing. Doubtless some opium is grown in some out-of-the-way places, and Chinese merchants foreseeing the shortage bought and buried vast quantities of opium, which they are now selling. But the fact that while the consumption of opium has decreased yet opium is selling for five times as much as it brought two years ago, shows that there has been a vast decrease in its production throughout the Empire. Upon the whole, the opium reform is the most encouraging fact in China in 1910.

But the strongest proof of the awakening of China is found in the 300 or 400 newspapers published throughout the Empire, in the Provincial Assemblies which met in 1909 for the first time in Chinese history, in the National Assembly which will meet in Peking in 1910, in the new law code promised at an early date, and in the preparation being made under an impulse from the Throne for the inauguration of Constitutional Government a few years hence.

2. *Spiritual Awakening*.—Along with the eagerness for Western civilisation, the minds of the Far Eastern people are open to the Western religion. This openness to Christianity provides such an opportunity among some 400,000,000 or 500,000,000 people as never confronted Christendom before. But in addition to this mere openness to Christianity, there is—not a general spiritual awakening but—a distinct awakening

in many parts of the Far East. Korea leads in this spiritual awakening as Japan led in the intellectual awakening. The loss of independence has affected deeply the masses, and led them to turn from their dead idols to the living God. The deep peace following the surrender to God is in such contrast to the gloom through which many have turned to Him, that converts instinctively begin telling their neighbours of the peace of God which passeth understanding. Partly on their own initiative and partly under the direction of missionaries, the converts form themselves into groups of from two to five and go out to tell the good tidings. A single church sometimes has twenty to fifty such groups. As many groups as can get the opportunity report at the week-night prayer-meeting, bringing their converts with them; hence the week-night prayer-meeting is often attended by from 500 to 1200 persons, and enthusiasm runs high. Bishop Harris thinks that the campaign in Korea for 1,000,000 souls may result in an addition of 100,000 enquirers this year. The activity of the Koreans is furnishing all other mission fields a lesson in the self-propagating power of the Gospel, and is revealing new resources for the speedy evangelisation of the world.

Japan a quarter of a century ago constituted the most important and hopeful mission field on earth, with the possible exception of India. The remarkable success of Archbishop Nicholai and the Greek Church illustrates the former openness of the Japanese to the Gospel. Christianity will suffer for centuries through the failure of the Churches at that time to capture for Christ a nation then peculiarly open to the Gospel—a nation destined to become for a time at least the leader of the Orient. Recent external successes have led the Japanese as they would have led Americans, Englishmen, or Germans, to pride and worldliness; and these are not the most favourable conditions for the spread of the Gospel. Moreover, the energies of the Japanese Christians, and even of the missionaries, have been absorbed recently in problems of ecclesiastical independence and Church union and self-support. Hence the work of evangelisation in Japan probably is proceeding more slowly to-day than a quarter of a century ago.

In China the testimony of Mr. Hoste, Mr. Brockman, Mr. Goforth, Bishop Lewis, Dr. Brewster, Dr. Corbett, Chang Po-ling, Ding Li-mei, Liu Mark, and others shows—not a general spiritual awakening, but—a distinct awakening among choice spirits in various parts of the Empire. Dr. Arthur Smith writes: “The most important feature of the triennium unquestionably has been the great religious awakening in the churches and schools, in many provinces wholly unrelated to each other.” The Korean revival spread into Manchuria with unusual spiritual manifestations. Churches in many parts of the Empire are crowded as never before, and people listen to the Gospel with unusual interest. During the recent Hinghwa revival a tent seating five thousand people was crowded, and large overflow meetings were held. Similar crowds attended revival services in Nanking and Yangchow. Preaching in some of the revivals in different parts of the Empire has been attended by remarkable convictions of sin and remarkable confessions. Among Chinese students studying at Tokyo, more than one hundred, many of whom will become future officials and possibly leaders of the Empire, have been baptized within a year. May there be a Daniel or a Joseph among them! At revivals under Ding Li-mei at four of our Christian schools and colleges this spring, five hundred and one students signed a written card to devote their lives to the evangelisation of China. This is the most hopeful Student Volunteer Movement yet witnessed in the Empire. Upon the whole, therefore, there has been a sweeping revival in Korea and distinct spiritual awakenings in various parts of the Far East.

3. *Growth of the Spirit of Nationality.*—While this is one of the most important divisions of our subject, it demands little discussion, for the facts are patent. In Japan patriotism has become a religion under the name of Shintoism. In Korea the loss of independence leaves the people very unhappy under Japanese rule. The new spirit of nationalism in China consists not so much in a love of the Empire, especially of the present dynasty, as in the dread of foreigners. Hence it finds manifestation

in the opposition to foreign loans and foreign enterprise. All who live in the Far East recognise this spirit of nationality springing up in very recent years. Similar reports reach us from India and the Philippines. The growth of this spirit ought not to seem strange to Western nations. The surprise arises from the suddenness and the universality and the intensity with which this national and race spirit flamed up all over India and the Far East after the Japanese victory over Russia. The United States, Canada, and Australia have excluded the yellow races. Great Britain conquered China, and she is ruling India. Russia was dictatorial toward Japan and aggressive in the Far East; Germany and France also have been unduly aggressive. Should the domineering policy of the white races result in the unification of the yellow races, they might attempt to drive the white peoples and their commerce from the Orient, and a world-wide conflict might ensue.

Summing up the first part of our subject, therefore, we are sure that there has been an awakening of the Far East, and this awakening has found manifestation in intellectual and spiritual and political forms.

II. EFFECT OF THESE CHANGES UPON MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

1. We should concede a large measure of local autonomy to the Japanese, the Indian, and the Chinese Churches. We should insist only upon the essence of our faith, namely, salvation through Jesus Christ, the experience of the new birth, and the fruits of the Spirit in the lives of our converts. We ought indeed to look for some finer interpretation of Christ and some higher embodiment of His Spirit in the new Christian life of the Orient than we have thus far realised in the Occident, so that we should be ready to learn as well as apt to teach. Indeed, we may heartily encourage in Japan or some other field the plan of a National Church for that nation. If all the Churches can be united into one in any nation, and such action proves to be the forerunner of Church union in the home lands, then we shall all know

that the movement was of God, and we shall rejoice that we encouraged it. But a universal Church of Christ should be our goal; and we should encourage distinct, separate national movements, only so far as they prove to be providential steps towards that goal. Certain facts suggest doubt as to whether the severance of the ties which bind mission churches to their mother Churches in the home lands, and the attempt to gather them into national Churches, is a providential step toward the universal Church of Christ. While the cry is for union, the arguments among the Chinese and Japanese by which the cry is supported are for independence. But union and independence lie at opposite poles; both goals cannot be reached by the same movement. This helps to account for the fact that while most of the Japanese Churches have secured independence, they have not secured Christian union. Again, self-support is the correlate of independence, and already is being thrust upon the Japanese Churches. But this cuts the nerve of missions, leaving the mission Churches to struggle against hopeless odds and the home Churches to die of parochialism and of devotion to interests centred only in themselves. Once more, a long period was required for the Church of the early centuries to shake herself loose from the principles of a pagan philosophy and the practices due to her pagan environment. Is it wise or fair to leave a handful of Christians in each non-Christian land to struggle unaided against a similar environment? Above all, must we not aim at Christian unity on a vastly larger scale than a National Church on each mission field could furnish? Have we not already a far broader and more direct method of universal co-operation furnished us by the Young Men's Christian Association? In this organisation representatives of some two thousand colleges and universities in some fifty nations are banded together in perfect equality under the headship of Jesus Christ and for the advancement of His kingdom. This co-operation has become possible by dwelling upon agreements rather than differences, by fellowship in work and play and prayer, and by the unifying power of a tremendous task. This association has served

as a model for a practical and spiritual, but not ecclesiastical union of the Protestant Churches in West China. The bands binding these Churches are so elastic that if on any question one of the Churches wishes for a time to drop out and not co-operate, it can do so with no challenge of its motives. Here is a federation which, without compelling any brother to yield a single article of his creed and without thrusting a single belief of practice upon others, recognises for practical purposes the perfect equality of all churches which take Jesus Christ as their charter, and agrees with Ignatius, "Where Christ is, there is the Catholic or Universal Church."

Cannot this Conference go far enough to arrange for an International Missionary Commission which shall continue in existence until our next World Conference—a Commission which shall have only advisory authority, and which shall decline even to give advice where doctrinal or denominational differences are involved; a Commission whose authority will grow in proportion to its character, its service, and the number of mission boards it eventually represents; a Commission which shall serve as a sort of Hague Tribunal for the Missionary World? Such a Commission, enabling us to co-operate and to conserve our resources, furnishing us with a statesmanlike plan for the conquest of the world, and, above all, demonstrating to the non-Christian races the essential unity of Protestant Christendom, would be of priceless value to us in the Far East.

2. There should be a marked change in the attitude of the white races toward the other races of mankind. Thank God, the missionaries already are leading in such a change. There would not have arisen the unrest which at times and in places had characterised the attitude of Christians in the Orient, had they been placed by us upon an entire equality with ourselves. Even this Conference, like the Shanghai Conference of 1907, is criticised in its composition. Christ has won on mission fields as able and consecrated workers as sit in this body. Who so well could tell us how they were won for Christ, what most repelled and what most

attracted them in our presentation of the Gospel, and what is most needed to win their brothers and sisters, as those who are one in blood and speech with the millions we must yet win for Christ? Surely they are worthy to sit beside us, for many of them have risked all for the Master. But we are here assembled as a World Conference to plan a campaign for the evangelisation of eight hundred or a thousand million people, and we have invited so few of them to our council-table, that only the great character and ability of the few who are present can save us from humiliating failure. The awakening spirit of race and nationality demands a rapidly increasing change of attitude toward those among whom we labour.

3. The awakening of the Far East demands a vast increase of faith and prayer for power from on high, and a large increase of men and means to meet the opportunities which now confront us. While there should be a large increase in the number of missionaries, even more stress should be laid upon the quality than upon numbers. Some of the best evangelists in Christendom should be sent to Korea this fall, and preach through interpreters at least long enough to determine whether the national unrest can be turned from political into spiritual channels, the conviction of sin deepened, and the people gathered into the kingdom by tens of thousands. In China substantially one-fourth of the human race is awakening. Civilisation is to be recast. No less than fifteen imperial edicts were issued last year bearing more or less upon Christianity. Dr. W. A. P. Martin reports that these decrees are not so favourable as we could like, but he pronounces them more favourable to Christianity than preceding edicts. Within fifty years the new civilisation in China will be largely leavened by the Gospel or else will have hardened into materialistic moulds. In a word, in the Far East as a whole, more than one-fourth of the human race stands at the parting of the ways. Not since the days of the Reformation, not indeed since Pentecost, has so great an opportunity confronted the Christian Church. Oh that out of this Conference may come the spiritual power for the evangelisation of the Orient!

4. Under God we must attempt to Christianise as well as evangelise the Far East. While much remains to be done in the evangelisation of Japan, yet here the problem of Christianisation comes to the front. Japan brings us back to the problem which meets us in the home field, simply because she is in advance of the rest of the Far East, and is nearer the stage of civilisation at which the Western nations have arrived. In her late war she was led by the scientific test of experiment to abandon Herbert Spencer's conception of the State, and the people *en masse* almost unconsciously passed over to the Christian conception of the State. Japan is now standing at the parting of the ways; she is now halting between national selfishness and international beneficence. She has taken Formosa and Saghalien, with some three million people; she now holds Korea with some twelve million more. For fifty million Japanese to attempt to assimilate fifteen million people of alien races, confessedly dissatisfied, and then attempt in addition to exploit some twelve or fifteen million more in lower Manchuria, means a military programme which must increase her indebtedness and absorb the energies of her people. The military spirit says: Follow on in the path in which already you have won such glory, exploit these peoples to reimburse in part your losses, undertake the federation of the yellow races, control and, if the necessity arises, supplant the Manchu dynasty, and as opportunity offers rise to the leadership of the Orient. Satan is taking Japan, as he took the Master and as he has taken many a nation, up into a high mountain, and is showing her all the kingdoms of the world, and is saying, "All these will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." The Christ spirit suggests continuance in the path of sacrifice—such justice and generosity toward the Koreans as presently will make them as proud of the flag of the Rising Sun as Australians are proud of the Union Jack, such respect for the territory of China in Manchuria as will assure Japan without a war the moral and intellectual and commercial leadership of the Far East. At this time, when the Japanese have discarded the Spencerian for the Christian philosophy of the State, when Christian Japanese are rising to leadership

out of all proportion to their numbers, but when only one hundred thousand Japanese out of fifty million are Christian and forty million practically are unreached, the Christian Church, instead of retiring from the Empire, should push forward her ablest and her most apostolic spirits to help capture for Christ and lead to her own highest destiny the present leader of the Orient.

5. The Christianisation of the home lands is another imperative need of the Far East. Were the so-called Christian nations really free from worldliness and selfishness, missions would sweep the pagan world with irresistible power. Our greatest obstacles in the Far East are not Buddhism or Confucianism, but sensuality and commercial greed upon the part of some from the home lands, and autocratic methods and the war spirit at times upon the part of so-called Christian nations. The dread of Japan in the Far East to-day is due to the fact that Japan has followed so closely in the footsteps of the Western nations; and unless we speedily change at home, China must follow the so-called Christian nations and become a military power. That a people who have survived and multiplied for four thousand years, partly because they have ranked their scholars highest, and their farmers second, and their merchants third, and their warriors lowest—that such an empire, on awaking to modern life and looking to Western nations for guidance, should be compelled to turn herself into an armed camp for self-preservation, is a disgrace to Christendom. We are not meddling with alien and distant problems when in the name of the people of the Far East we plead for international righteousness and peace. In a word, the highest and finest effect of the awakening of the Far East, and the turning of the world into a neighbourhood, is not only the pressing demand for the speedy evangelisation of the non-Christian races, but also for the speedy Christianisation of home lands.

6. The tasks which confront us are altogether beyond human power of accomplishment. But no man can forecast the future who leaves God out of the reckoning. Christianity, which already has been the source of several civilisations, is rising unwearied by past tasks and undaunted by the

problems which confront her to inaugurate the Missionary Era. Religious history will recognise down to the present time three great eras in the kingdom of Heaven on earth: the Era of Preparation, the Era of Incarnation, and the Era of the Reformation. To-day the Christian Church stands at the dawn of the Era of Evangelisation of the World. God chose the Mediterranean basin, with its forty to eighty million people, as the theatre for the inauguration of the Incarnation Era. He chose the Atlantic basin, with its population at that time of some two hundred million people, as the theatre for the inauguration of the Reformation Era. Is He choosing the Pacific basin, including the Indian Ocean, with its population of some eight hundred million people, as the theatre for the inauguration of the Era of Evangelisation?

God directed the Greeks in the preparation of the most perfect language on earth, for the preservation and the spread of His truth at the Era of the Incarnation. He guided Gutenberg in the invention of printing, for the spread of His truth at the Era of the Reformation. Has He not also guided us, in the translations of His Word and in the inventions for its multiplication one hundred fold more rapidly than the Gutenberg hand-press, for an era of world evangelisation?

God chose as the best available governments for the Incarnation Era, Judea, which indeed had given the world the Old Testament, but which failed Him in the crisis, and delivered up the Son of God to crucifixion; and Rome, which indeed preserved the peace of the world and protected the first evangelists, but which remained pagan at heart, and at last hurled herself against the Rock of Ages, crying in her dying agony: "Galilean, thou hast conquered." God secured as the political agents of the Reformation Era the European governments of the sixteenth century, fighting among themselves indeed, but far more Christian at heart than Judea or Rome. May it not be a providential preparation for the Missionary Era that, under the stern law of the "survival of the fittest," He has committed nearly two-thirds of the population and four-fifths the area of the

globe to the Christian governments of earth, and indeed over five hundred millions of the people to the Protestant governments of the Anglo-Saxon stock ?

Finally, we ourselves are witnessing three strange and unforeseen movements within the Church which, combined, reveal the Divine eagerness to inaugurate the Missionary Era : first, a movement upon the part of the students of the colleges of Christendom, which is securing the young men and women for the evangelisation of the world ; second, a movement among the young people of the Christian Churches of the world toward a larger intelligence for the evangelisation of the world ; and third, a movement among the laity of the world toward a larger beneficence for the evangelisation of the world. Surely these three movements, combined, constitute a crusade for world evangelisation quite as striking, and far more providential, than the crusade of Peter the Hermit for the recovery of the Holy Land.

And now, what wait we for, save power from on high ?—power such as came in the Era of the Preparation at Sinai, such as came in the Era of the Incarnation at Pentecost, and such as came at the Reformation through justification by faith and the witness of the Spirit. Surely that power is promised us in the Bible. “Ye therefore shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.” Listen to Paul’s prayer for us : “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man ; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith ; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God.” “Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.”