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THE LINE OF OUR POLICY.

OUR mission is to lead the advance-guard of Christendom, in all matters of duty and reform. From our position, we ought to give the world an example of Christian life, modeled by the word of God alone. Our mission is not only negative, to testify against all current evils; but positive, to exemplify every virtue. A Covenanter should not be so much a fault-finder, as a fearless denouncer of sin, and a living epistle of Christ.

Engaged in such a noble mission, to be successful we must pursue a line of policy suited to our radical principles. A weak, vacillating policy to carry out a radical testimony, must prove a contemptible failure. The energy of discipline must, of necessity, bear a proportion to the strength of principles. A strong line of defense will naturally be thrown around an important point; a strong line of assault will be formed against a place strongly fortified, if there is a real purpose to capture it. Our mission compels us both to act on the defensive and vigorously to assail the stronghold of the enemy.

We propose in this article to confine our remarks to the line of our policy toward the civil government. It has always been understood to be our duty as Covenanters, to bear the most radical testimony against the Atheism of the national Constitution; and as it guarantees and gives authority to State constitutions, and by its supreme jurisdiction binds them all together in one compact system, we have felt the necessity of making a clean sweep, and standing aloof, both from national and local politics. This testimony has not been in word and tongue only, but in a rigid, unswerving discipline as well. If at any time or place the policy has grown weak, it has been due to the rise and progress of defection. Covenanters, therefore, watch with jealous eye any step toward a weak, indeterminate dissent from the political organizations of the country. They not only refuse to take the oath of allegiance, but also to vote for others to take it in their name. To avoid the indirect support of a godless system, and all appearance of evil, they have uniformly considered sitting on juries as an act of incorporation. To doubt the logical necessity of this, has always proved

Missionary Intelligence.

SYRIA MISSION.

THE following two letters have just been received. The first is addressed to the Senior Editor, and was not intended for publication. We feel satisfied, however, that it will be read with interest, and we hope it will be the means of drawing out the liberality of the Church to make as comfortable as possible the condition of those who are enduring so much toil and so many privations for the cause of Christ. Let prayer without ceasing be made to God in their behalf, and let the response to the circular of the Board, published in this number, show that our hearts are in the work. The letter is from Rev. R. J. Dodds, Aleppo, October 12, 1868. After a brief reference, for the sake of comparison to a moving by his father's family when he was a child, he proceeds:

Many a time I have moved since then, but that first was to me the most romantic moving of all; although some subsequent ones have been more joyous and some more sad, and my last one, which was from Latakiyeh to Aleppo, in the beginning of last June, was in more primitive style, and contained more points of interest for an American correspondent.

In this case, instead of having advanced in the lapse of forty years from a wagon to a rail road train, we went back to camels and mules. The road, in truth, in many places would not admit the passage of a wheel-barrow, much less a wagon. Our best way, if it had been practicable, would have been to sell out our goods at auction, and go light, with the hope of purchasing again in Aleppo. But the times were hard in Latakiyeh, and things would not bring their price. So we packed up every thing in boxes, and engaged cameleers to transport them to Aleppo. The first set of cameleers whom we hired backed out of the bargain when the time came, as is usual in this country, which delayed our starting for another week. In the meantime we had dismantled our house, and nailed everything up; but brother Beattie kindly took us in till the next week, when we had engaged new men and animals under surer bonds than the first. This delay was not altogether an evil, as it enabled us to recruit our strength for the journey after the fatigues of packing up.

At last we were ready to set out on Monday, the 8th of June. We started about the middle of the afternoon. We had already sent forward our heavy goods, such as bedsteads, bureau, cooking utensils, crockery, stoves, library, &c., on the backs of ten camels. When we set out ourselves, our caravan comprised ten mules and two horses. Mrs. Dodds and I rode on the horses. The six children rode in four boxes, fastened together in pairs by ropes, each pair of boxes slung over the back of a mule, so as to hang at its sides; the boxes being furnished with posts to support a muslin cover, and curtains for defense against the sun. To make up for the want of inns by the way, we had to lay in a supply of provisions—bread, biscuit, sugar, tea, salt, &c., sufficient for the whole journey. We had also to take along such uten-

sils as were absolutely necessary for cooking on a small scale, and likewise knives, forks, spoons, plates, bowls, &c.; also beds and bedding. All that we could hope to get by the way was eggs, chickens and milk. These preparations for cooking, eating and lodging, of course loaded a couple of animals. A servant whom we took with us for the journey rode another. The rest carried those lighter articles of household furniture with which we did not think it worth while to trouble camels, and trunks of clothing. Thus equipped, we set out about four o'clock on Monday afternoon, having just arisen from our dinner. We traveled till about dark, and then encamped under the open sky. Not needing to eat, we spread our beds, lay down on them, and slept as much of the time from then till daylight, as the fleas which we had brought with us from Latakiah would permit. At daybreak we arose, and commenced to load up, and were again on the road a little after sunrise. About 9 o'clock, having found plenty of shade and water, we stopped to cook and eat our breakfast. After resting an hour and a half we set forward again, and proceeded till about noon, when coming to a mulberry orchard, by the side of a river, we alighted and unloaded, and waited till the heat of the day began to abate. About three o'clock we dined, and at four were again on our way. We traveled till dark, and then encamped for the night, as on the previous evening. The next morning—Wednesday—we were again on the road about sunrise. About eleven o'clock we stopped for breakfast, and as we were close by a town we got up a very good breakfast; but the sun was shining fiercely, and we had no shade, so that we could not enjoy it much. We could easily have got shelter in the town, but there the fleas and dirt would have been a worse calamity than the sun. After breakfast we proceeded on our way for another half hour, and encamped under a spreading willow, by the side of a pool of filthy water, for the night. After sufficient foraging we were enabled after sunset to dine comfortably on roast fowls and other delicacies, and as soon thereafter as possible spread our beds and lay down to sleep. Having learned by experience the inconvenience of traveling in the heat of the day, we arose at midnight, and were mounted by two o'clock in the morning—Thursday. About seven o'clock we halted a few minutes by the side of a beautiful spring, and took a light lunch of bread and cheese, and after a nine hours' ride we arrived at Idlib, between ten and eleven o'clock. At Idlib we put up with our catechist Mualim Isa, and ate and lodged under his roof and at his charges. This was the first time we went under a roof after leaving Latakiah. At Idlib we were astir at midnight, and mounted at two o'clock in the morning, as on the previous day. This was on Friday. On the evening of the same day, an hour or two before sunset we arrived at Aleppo, a little fatigued, but in good health; and here we have been ever since.

Our covenant God was very good to us. He gave us strength according to our day. The journey was one which a family with so many small children could hardly have hoped to make at that time of the year—near midsummer—without some one or other of the company suffering from sickness. The road is one which is not always free

from robbers. The first half of the way is very mountainous, and we passed over many a break-neck place, where an American horseman would think it prudent to alight and lead his horse. But the Shepherd of Israel watched over us and brought us all in health and safety to our place of destination.

Whether we shall ever have to move again, and how often, I do not know. But one thing is certain; we have here no continuing city, but seek one to come; and while living as pilgrims and strangers it is sweet to reflect that God telleth our wanderings. The hardest thing connected with our last moving, was the parting with dear brethren and fellow workers. Surely the Lord will put our tears in his bottle; are they not in his book?

I have just written for the *Reformed Presbyterian and Covenanter* an account of a late missionary journey which I made to Idlib; but I send it open through the Chairman of the Board, that he may have the benefit of its perusal. The work at Idlib is at the present time more prosperous than here. Aleppo devils are generally of that kind which go not out but by prayer and fasting. I have been wrestling with God more importunately since coming to Aleppo than ever before. We may have long to wait for the early and latter rain; but they will surely come, and then there will be a harvest. In the meantime, there is already much seed in the ground, and we are daily sowing more. The Lord Jesus bless his own work.

Mrs. Dodds joins me in much love to yourself and Mrs. Sproull and all your family, and to all our dear friends in Allegheny and Pittsburgh. Yours in Christ Jesus,
R. J. DODDS.

ALEPPO, October 12, 1868.

MR. EDITOR—I don't know why we should always keep our very venerable Board of Missions between us and your Magazine. It gives the Board some trouble, and retards the circulation of the news. Not that we have much news to circulate; but a little fresh news is commonly more prized than a larger amount of stale news.

I just returned the other day from a visit to our out-station at Idlib, where I spent two Sabbaths. I believe there has never been a surveyor's chain carried on the road; but I judge the distance to be not less than 35 miles—perhaps it may be forty. On Friday, Sept. 26th, I engaged a muleteer to take me thither for fifteen piastres, about 60 cents. He was to start from a certain khan, in the city, at midnight, and accordingly about midnight I repaired to the khan, and found that he was not yet quite ready to set out. In fact he did not get ready till day-break. In the meantime I threw myself down and took a nap, and he was within an ace of starting without me. He was so displeased at me for insisting on riding on a saddle (which he said was not in the bargain), although the saddle was my own, that he would have been well satisfied to have left me, even at the sacrifice of five piastres of earnest money, which I had from him.

However, about day-break, I was on the road, and I arrived at Idlib about an hour before sunset, having made no stoppage on the road.

There are no inns on the way, nor even khans, to stop in, nor for the first 20 or 25 miles, so much as a tree to give shelter from the heat of the sun. For all that distance it is impossible to find even a rod to whip one's horse.

On the evening of my arrival, about a dozen of inquirers gathered around me at the usual place of meeting. I read the Scriptures and prayed and discoursed with them. In the forenoon of the next day, which was Sabbath, I preached to an audience of fifteen or sixteen, from Galatians 3:13. In the afternoon the same audience met in Bible class. The same persons, sometimes all and sometimes a part of them—never less than eight or nine—met with me every evening throughout the week; and I preached to them, and read the Scriptures and prayed with them every evening. On the following Sabbath I again preached in the forenoon and conducted Bible class in the afternoon, and had a meeting in the evening for reading the Scriptures, prayer and exhortation, with the same audience as on the previous Sabbath. On Monday evening when they met as usual for prayer, I read to them, without note or comment, those hortatory passages which we are accustomed to read at home on sacrament Mondays, and so bade them good-bye. At half-past ten the same evening I started home, where I arrived about an hour before noon the next day.

Those persons in Idlib who met with me, meet all the same, twice on the Sabbath, and on the evening of every day, with our catechist, Muallim Isa, who in like manner reads the Scriptures and prays with them, and instructs them in Bible knowledge. He also watches over their conduct with a godly jealousy, and is not slow to reprehend any delinquency which he witnesses in them.

Some of your readers may be curious to know what sort of a people these are who assemble to hear the word of God in Idlib. Well, they were all brought up in the superstitions of the Greek Church, except two who were brought up in the equally gross superstitions of the Armenian Church; but they are all Protestants now, as far as intellectual conviction goes. Whether they are Christians or not, is another question. Some of them may be, but certainly not all. Some of them have repeatedly endured persecution for the truth, to the extent of imprisonment, and most of them meet with strong opposition from the female part of their families. Six or seven of them are desirous of being admitted to communion with us; but I doubt whether any of them are fully prepared; perhaps two or three of them may be, but not more.

The school was small when I was there, on account of the prevalence of ophthalmia and intermittent fever among the children and their friends. In ordinary times it contains more than thirty scholars. Muallim Isa makes all his pupils familiar with the Scriptures, Old Testament and New, and takes special pains to instruct them in all those points in which the church in which they were born is in error; as for example, the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, without traditions and Decrees of Councils; the sufficiency of Christ's satisfaction, without being supplemented by good works and pious mortifications; the sole priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the falsity of transubstantiation

and the sacrifice of the mass and the wickedness of associating the Virgin and saints with Christ in the work of intercession, and of worshipping pictures and crosses, &c.; so that all of them who have been long in the school, have at their fingers' ends a multitude of testimonies of Scripture bearing on all these points. For my own part I think the work that we have on hands there is worth much more than it costs. We have not gathered a harvest yet, and may not for some time; but the Lord has said, "My word shall not return unto me void."

But this is enough for one letter.

Yours, in the Gospel,

R. J. DODDS.

LETTER FROM REV. J. BEATTIE.

LATAKIYEH, September 22d, 1868.

MY DEAR BROTHER—As the Doctor has but little time for exercising the pen, the duty of corresponding with the Board rather forces itself upon me. Since writing you my last, B'shara, one of our old teachers, has come to our help, and, under his direction, school will be opened at once. We expect his sister to assist Miss Crawford in the female department, but are not yet sure of getting her, as it is somewhat uncertain whether her mother will consent to her leaving her. Should we be disappointed in securing her services, B'shara's wife will give assistance till a teacher can be obtained.

I think I told you in my letter to the Board, the Doctor's people had removed to the mission building. Since then Miss Crawford has also gone over to take up her residence there with them. We have not, as yet, been able to test the matter, but from intimations given, there is good reason for believing that scholars will not be wanting to fill our vacant rooms, both from in and out of Latakiyeh. We exceedingly regret the want of funds just now to accommodate the Fellahs, especially the pupils from the Gendariyeh school—who, under the good instructions of Usuf Gedeed, have been so well advanced in their studies as to require but comparatively little time and money expended on them, *i. e.*, the more advanced of them, to qualify them for teaching village schools. We calculate it will require £10 a year to meet the expenses of each pupil in our boarding department. Could some system be devised by which this amount might be raised to the sum of £200—the present outlay of twenty boarders—without interfering with the present funds of the Mission treasury, it would furnish assurance of continued support and stability to this department—without in any way embarrassing the other branches of our work; and now I repeat what I mentioned before, *viz.*, the proposition of laying this burden on the Sabbath schools of the church, or on the shoulders of the children. The Sabbath school of the Second Church, New York, has heartily taken up the matter, and shown a spirit which I should like very much to see imitated, and which I think would be imitated,