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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

FOREIGN BOARDS IN CONFERENCE

Fifteen or twenty years ago the numerous Foreign Mission Boards of the various denominations in America came into contact with each other, generally in conflict over some alleged breach of missionary comity, or some other real or apparent antagonism of interests. For fifteen years, however, the officers and secretaries have met annually in council to consider the problems and opportunities presenting themselves in the spiritual warfare of Christians for the conquest of the world. The denominational Societies are coming more and more to be looked upon, not as separate armies, but as regiments of one army under one captain. Tactics and fields may differ but interests and purpose are one.

The fifteenth conference of the Boards of United States and Canada, which was held in New York, January 29th and 30th, considered the important questions concerning the force needed, the place of the native Church, Anglo-American communities in foreign lands, the opportunities in Russia, the Moslem problem, salaries and furloughs, the Laymen's Movement and the place for an Ecumenical Conference in 1910.

Special reports were heard from laymen who had visited the mission

fields in 1907 and at a dinner, nine secretaries who have recently returned from tours gave their impressions. John R. Mott, who has visited five continents in the past two years, gave it as his conviction that *now* is the moment of supreme importance for a forward movement. The importance of putting more responsibility on native workers was emphasized. Some of the lessons learned in the past fifteen years were given as: Christian comity, importance of training in self-support, how to secure greater efficiency in the missionary force, and the value of young men as missionary leaders.

There are still some lessons to be learned, but much progress has been made toward the ideals of Christian unity and efficiency. Interdenominational Home Mission Conferences would also be of value and might be the means of correcting some evils due to unwholesome competition on the home field.

MEN'S CONVENTION, PHILADELPHIA

The burden of the world's evangelization is no longer to be left on the shoulders of women and children. Men are beginning to realize that the campaign of the Church for the conquest of the world is their business. Over sixteen hundred men of the Presbyterian churches of the Eastern

as Kalopothakes, Constantine and Sakellarios, of whom Doctor Kalopothakes, now in his 85th year, is the only one now living. From 1873 to 1886, the Southern Presbyterian Mission was the only one laboring in Greece; and from that date the native Greek Evangelical Church has been independent and missionaries as such have been withdrawn. The *Star of the East*, a four-page weekly published in Athens, has a fair circulation. For some years a "Child's Paper" was also published. The British and Foreign Bible Society works in Greece under serious governmental hindrances. There are evangelical congregations meeting in four or five towns of Greece, and the outlook, tho not rosy,

is hopeful. In Turkey, work for Greeks was begun in 1826, with but indifferent success. The chief centers have been Smyrna, Constantinople and Ordou. Various missionaries of the American Board have from time to time labored for the Greeks; and there are at present four ordained missionaries who use the Greek language. For the 300,000 Greeks of Constantinople there is but one missionary and two Greek preachers. For all the five million Greeks of Turkey there are less than twenty-five Greek preachers. Truly, "the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he thrust forth laborers into his harvest."

THE RELIGIOUS IMPLICATION OF THE MONROE DOCTRINE

BY REV. CLELAND B. MCAFEE, D.D., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Few fictions of international law are more influential in national relationships to-day than the Monroe doctrine. No nation but our own frankly recognizes its validity, but no nation can disregard it. The Doctrine, stated with sufficient exactness, is simply a declaration that the United States can not permit any European power to extend its possessions or its domination on the American continent, nor to interfere in the internal life of that continent. At first that was in self-defense; now it is in the interest of democratic institutions. There must be one place where the race shall have full chance to learn self-government.

Recent years have brought to view two unavoidable corollaries to the Doctrine. The first affects European nations. The final reprisal of nations

is the seizure of territory or of ports, or at any rate such conflict as disturbs and overthrows government. This reprisal may naturally follow any breach of international contract or any denial of justice between nations. Let a South American republic and France come into conflict, the South American republic being at fault. At once we are concerned. If we stand by the bare Doctrine, we shall insist that France abandon a just claim, and we shall be defending injustice and national dishonor. If we permit France to enforce the claim, we endanger a Doctrine by which we have stood these years. The logic of the situation, whether we wish it or not, demands that we shall ourselves secure the proper recognition of just claims on the part of the South American gov-

ernments. In some sense, we become a court of last resort for claims which European nations can not adjust without force in South America. That is an immense extension of the Doctrine.

The second corollary affects national relations within South America. Many reasons conspire to make governments irascible and to foster revolutions, whereby commercial and diplomatic relations are disturbed or destroyed. The growth of the so-called "sphere of influence" theory, so clearly in practise in Africa, and so recently applied for a time in China, indicates the feeling that petty squabbles or inhumanities must not be permitted by civilized nations. That is a theory capable of gross abuse. It may become a cloak for aggression and absorption. But its peril need not hide from us its power. The South American governments hold wide European relations. They are, in spite of our Doctrine, part of the family of nations, and if strife needs to be allayed there, if inhumanity needs to be estopped there, it is quite as essential that it be done as tho it were in Africa. Only we have notified European nations that we can not permit them to act. Which means, manifestly, that we must hold ourselves ready to do it if necessary. That is, the Monroe Doctrine forces a quasi-protectorate over South America.

Neither of these corollaries is pleasant, but fortunately neither is pressing. Large and frequent occasion will not arise for the exercise of either of them. Only the States petty in area and in spirit are apt to be involved in any case. Brazil has an area not far from that of the United States proper, tho the latter has five times its population. The Argentine Republic has an area of about one-third

the United States, with a population of about four million. These and such large States are no more likely to need interference than are we ourselves. But when it is remembered that Central America with a total population of one million less than that of New York City alone has six separate governments, and that South America with a total population of less than half that of the United States has thirteen separate governments, it will be seen at once both how scattered must be the people, and how little real national power there can be in any one State. Dictatorships are entirely logical. And dictators always require attention. It would be intolerable that we should intermeddle with South American affairs for our own sake or to their injury, but it is inevitable that we shall concern ourselves with conditions there for the world's sake and for their own sakes.

So far, the Monroe Doctrine seems purely political and social. Actually it has far more pressing implications. The passion of men for the helping of their brethren is a world-passion now. The fever of the Gospel has bitten believers everywhere. Men are not content to hold civilization, or education, or religion, as a possession, disregarding the needs of others. They are held in trust for administration for the world. They are not things that can be forced. They can only be given. But this Doctrine determines who shall do the giving. We who in everything else hold restraining hand against other nations will surely be required to carry this burden ourselves. European nations have powerful missionary agencies. Some of them feel a slight but constantly lessening obligation for certain sections

of South America. In both British and Dutch Guiana and in a few of the more conspicuous seaports some work is being carried on. The weight of the work increasingly will come upon the United States and the Christian Church here.

Three great fields of labor open at once: First there is the large pagan population not professedly Christian, living in the interior of the various countries. In Brazil there are a million, in Venezuela five hundred thousand. Others are scattered throughout the interior. They are not even baptized pagans. They are frankly, confessedly and undeniably heathen. Their religious rites are as pagan, in many respects, as those of Africa. There would be a large field for us in South America if there were no others but the native and utterly unreached pagans.

The second field commands divided interest in the American Church. It includes the great mass of people who are already under the control of the Roman Catholic Church. But the Roman Catholic is one of the great Christian churches of the world. Are its people fair subjects for Protestant missions? Is its territory fair field for Protestant work? Every Protestant in this land knows members of that great Church, priests and people, who have the spirit of Christ, and who could not be besought for the Protestant Church without a kind of proselytism which is repugnant to the Protestant spirit. That fact makes it difficult to arouse great interest in South America as a mission field. For all that, it is a great mission field.

The indictment of the Roman Church in South America has five very clear and easily proved items.

First, it has set superstition in place of faith. The faith of its service and of its religious system is not high and pure in South America. It accents ceremony unduly. It deals with men on the level of mere childishness. Thereby it has beclouded the great truths of the Christian faith. Its processions with rude or beautified images of the Virgin Mary, of the saints, and even of the Holy Spirit Himself, are superstitious and do not develop in the people the true faith of Jesus Christ.

Second, the Roman Church has failed to educate the people with whom it has had every chance. From the year 1500 when Brazil was discovered, and 1513 when Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and claimed the Pacific for Spain, and 1521 when Cortez conquered Mexico, the Roman Church has had a firm hold on South America. Its history has many chapters of heroic missionary labors, but it is not a history of schools or of the training of the people. It is painful to insist, but it is undeniably true, that in Christendom to-day illiteracy is vastly greatest where the Roman Church is nearest supreme in power. Not even in Russia where the Greek Catholic Church has been in power is illiteracy so great as in South America. Our own recent experience in the Philippine Islands is a case fresh in mind. It will always be impossible for the Roman Church to explain the condition in which the United States found the Philippine people in the single item of education. The school systems of the various South American States are either a laughing-stock of the educational world, or are the direct and continued work of the Protestant Church.

Third, the Roman Church has failed to demand morality from priests and people. Even in the grosser forms of immorality the Roman countries have an appalling record. A gentleman from South America declared to me his continued acceptance of the Catholic faith in spite of the fact that he knew a hundred priests in active service whose lives were so immoral he would not think of allowing his wife or daughter to know them personally. After sixteen years' residence in one of the South American States, another man said that the state of priests and people was most accurately described by Paul in the latter part of the first chapter of his letter to the Romans. Illegitimacy is frightfully common. Of course we do not say that the Roman Church teaches any such evil. It is not meant that there are no clean priests and moral people. It is true, however, that with three hundred years of the finest opportunity any Church ever had, the Roman Church has failed to inculcate a solid and prevailing morality among its priests and people. It is meant that immorality, gross immorality, does not of itself act as a bar to good standing in the priesthood and membership of the Church.

And if you pass from these forms of immorality to others, more general and popular, you find the same indictment. In Carpenter's "Letters from South America," written for a newspaper syndicate, he calls Buenos Ayres the largest Roman Catholic city in the world, says that ninety-six per cent. of the people of Argentina are Roman Catholic, and goes on to say that it is a nation of gamblers and that lying is common among men, women and children. Bull-fights, cock-fights and

like cruel spectacles may occur in Protestant countries, but they are never held under Protestant auspices or with Church approval. All these things go on in the South American countries with Church approval.

Fourth, the Roman Church has developed into a burden on the people rather than an inspiration to them, from which they are forced to free themselves. There is in the Roman Church, where ignorant people are concerned, an enforced system of benevolence, which issues from no willing heart. The very simplest offices of religion are burdened with fees. From the baptism of infants to the burial of the dead, the question of money is a perpetual one. That is the more marked and the more regrettable where poverty is so great as in the countries we are considering. The representatives of one South American country, asking a Protestant missionary to establish a school system, did it with the express explanation that it was to rid them of the perpetual oppression of the Church.

Fifth, the Roman Church refuses to encourage fair consideration of the truth. Its priests repeatedly warn their followers against any Protestant teaching as infidel and dangerous. Colporteurs of the Bible Societies have repeatedly been mobbed, some have been killed, under priestly instigation. One of the defenders of a milder form of opposition has said that the people are childish yet, and that they should not be confused by the introduction of any Protestant teaching. The reply is that after three hundred years of Catholic training they ought not to be children in mind. They ought to be capable of dealing with truth. Any movement to restrain

the study of the Bible and the free consideration of truth is a movement of cowardice, even tho it be consistent. Mr. Lecky quotes a saying of Veuillet, a French journalist, addressed to Protestants and Liberals: "When you are masters, we claim perfect liberty for ourselves, as *your* principles require it; when we are the masters, we refuse it to you, as it is contrary to *our* principles." That is true, however Veuillet meant it. The Roman Church, when it has a free field, takes as much as it can and gives as little as it can. It has ample chance for itself in Protestant countries; it gives Protestants no chance in its own countries.

Any man partially informed regarding the Roman Church in South America can furnish abundant specifications for this five-fold indictment. South America is to-day one of the most thoroughly Roman Catholic sections of the world and at the same time one of the most backward sections of the world in education, morals, religion, society and all else that goes to make modern Christian civilization. The latter fact makes a terrific indictment of the responsible Church. This is no experiment of the Church. It has had three centuries of a better chance than has been had by any Church anywhere else in the world, and it has produced the result which we know. The outcome of our knowledge ought to be a keen sense of responsibility for the second great field in South America — the work among the nominal Christians. For the honor of Christ, we must set up the true faith where it has been falsified and beclouded. It is unbearable that a travesty of our Lord should be held as the truth. Protestant ag-

gression has its beneficent effect on the Roman Church itself. The Philippine Islands reveal that fact very strikingly. The Roman Church there to-day is a vastly different institution from that which ruled before the American succession. The Roman Church in the United States of America is a vastly different thing, different in morals, different in customs, different in spirit, different in tone, from the Roman Church in Brazil or Bolivia.

The direct results of Protestant work in South America are added argument for it. By all accounts there are thousands in South America who have turned away from the Roman Church unsatisfied, or who seem only waiting for the knowledge of personal and unmediated relation to Christ to accept it with joy. There occur in South America such scenes as are described in foreign lands, in which men rise up with new sense of forgiveness and follow Christ as a new-found Master, tho they have named His name from infancy. It is the custom of some of our American Catholics to speak of such men as "renegade Catholics," and the spirit involved may be recognized by the fact that Protestants who become Catholics are never reckoned renegades. The fact is, however, these men are not renegades. By hundreds they have turned from the Roman Church in eager acceptance of the salvation of Christ. Those who question the wisdom of missions in South America have to deal with the fact of these thousands who have become unsettled in the Roman Church, as new light has come, and the hundreds, already become thousands also, who have accepted the teaching of the Word of God when it was first

brought to them. To them the Roman Church has not brought salvation. To them the Protestant mission has brought it. There are thousands more like them. This is no campaign to destroy the Roman Church. This is a campaign which frankly recognizes its failure in the task of evangelization thus far, and its hopeless inadequacy for the future.

The third great field for Protestant operation in South America is the rapidly increasing immigrant population. Here is a most remarkable country. Every possible climate is to be found. Cape Horn is as far below the equator as Central Canada is above it. There are snow-clad mountains and equatorial plains. There are immense forests and untold mineral deposits. Here is the largest area of habitable land yet uninhabited in any part of the world. Three-tenths of the whole land area of the world is in South America. There are only two great languages, Spanish in various forms and English. In addition there are only remnants of earlier tongues. Immense amounts of foreign capital are being invested. The richest tin mines of the world are in Bolivia. The same country has produced more than four billion dollars of silver and has immensely rich mines of it still. English companies have one hundred million dollars invested in the nitrate works in Chili. Brazil is the chief coffee country of the world. Gold mines of Peru have been purchased for several hundred thousand dollars by Americans. Every great city has its many commercial and professional foreigners. The majority of these have no bonds that draw them to the Roman Church. Some are of the finest type of men and women produced

by other nations. A few have fled there because of the lax morals of certain centers and have made a Botany Bay of some districts. As the unsettled portions of the land are occupied, the crowded parts of the old world emptying into this new and attractive territory, the opportunity for evangelization will be larger and larger. The hope of the whole land lies in a new infusion of life. The Latin races are showing a painful incompetency for the fierce new struggle for supremacy. Widely they are proving incapable. They are all Romanized, and the Roman Church has not been able to save them nor to develop them into masters of their own situations. Into these races, new and redeeming life must come. Some of it will come from other races, doubtless. Most of it must come from the new hope and life and spring that are found in the pure faith in Jesus Christ which can be learned from the Word of God.

Who is to carry the Word of God? The Roman Church has had its chance and failed. It shows no sign to-day of purpose to redeem its failure. Our Monroe Doctrine holds the nations of Europe off at arm's length. It says nothing about religious activity, but the interest of the European Church can not be claimed from other and pressing obligations peculiar to it. The Church in the United States must evangelize South America. It is the Samaria of the last commission for the American Church whose Jerusalem is its own vicinage and whose Judea is its own land. We shall not execute that commission by zeal for the "uttermost parts," if we omit from our prayer and labor our own needy neighbor on the South.