

# THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

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## I.

### THE MINISTER OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.\*

WE gather this morning to begin the duties of another academic year. The beauty of a bountiful nature, coming with gifts of sunshine and perfumed breezes and variegated landscape, seems to us a type and confirmation of the glory of the kingdom we serve. As the greatest thing in our civilization is its store of moral ideals and productive moral forces, so the greatest among these are the inspirations communicated by Christianity. Above the State rises the kingdom of Christ, as the cathedral towers above the city. And the service of this kingdom, the illustration of its ideals, the communication to men of its moral forces, the advancement of its sweet and gentle control over the purposes and conduct of men, till the common life of the multitude, and even the public policies of the State, are swayed by its sceptre and made instrumental in the carrying out of its eternal and divine plans, seems to us the most glorious service in which a man can engage. The lofty conception of the whole design and the sweep of the whole onward progress glorify the commonest and most obscure service. The ministration by the bedside of some unknown and insignificant sufferer takes on meaning in our eyes under the interpretation given it by this larger view. We forget that most of us are called to the humblest labors. We view ourselves as parts of the most extended operations. We may be like the solitary picket, who waits in the darkness to repel some danger or notify some attack that never comes, or even

\* Address at the opening of the session in the Pacific Theological Seminary.

### III.

#### MISSION POLICY AND POLITICAL PRINCIPLES.

THE external relations of Missions and Politics are important and obvious. For example, diplomacy and guns opened Japan to missionaries, and Missions have been one of the great civilizing influences in that land. In some countries, especially China, the relation has been embarrassingly close, from the missionary point of view. Much has been written on this phase of the subject by both political and missionary writers. It is the purpose of this article to call attention to another phase of the same subject and to discuss a more fundamental relation between the principles of Missions and those of Politics, taking for this purpose the main propositions of the recent book on the *Control of the Tropics* by Mr. Benjamin Kidd. The earlier book by the same author on *Social Evolution* might be taken as the basis of an argument for the social necessity of Missions, since missionary effort implants that altruistic principle which Mr. Kidd says is "the clue to the efficiency of our civilization." The later and smaller work deals with the principles regulative of the political administration of tropical regions, and the points suggested by it may illustrate the right administration of Missions.

Before entering on the special principles set forth in this work, it will be well to discuss briefly some of the broader considerations bearing on the nature of the relation which may be expected to exist between Politics and Missions, using the former word in its noblest sense and with reference to the foreign relations of Christian nations. The phrase "the control of the tropics" is suggestive of the fact that both deal with the same regions of the earth's surface. Mr. Kidd, from an industrial point of view, remarks that the tropics are "territories for the most part practically undeveloped," and enlarges on their vastness and productiveness. It is only necessary to mention Africa, India, Malaysia and tropical America, in order to enforce the missionary parallel to the statement cited. The word *tropics* must not be taken strictly; for the principles which we are to discuss are not dependent primarily on climatic conditions but on differences of civilization and racial character; and hence they apply broadly to all the

nations whose civilizations are widely different from our own and generally far inferior, some of them living in the temperate zones and a few in the Arctic regions. Broadly speaking, therefore, the missionary question and the political problem of governing and elevating lower races deal with the same peoples.

On the other hand, the essential difference between Missions and Politics in two very important elements must be insisted upon. One is the working of the Holy Spirit and the other is the individual aim of Missions.

God, in his Spirit, brooding on the face of the waters, is present in all the movements of humanity—social, political, intellectual and spiritual. Nevertheless, the Church, in distinction from the State, does its work in obedience to the direct command of Christ, with the promise of His presence, and with the active coöperation and direction of His Spirit. This point is of vital importance; nothing must be allowed to obscure it; and the divine factor must be taken into account in any comparison of Missions and Politics, commerce or social progress. The aims of Missions and Politics differ, broadly speaking, in that the latter strives to save States and the former to save men. To quote a missionary: "The great aim of all missionary effort is the bringing of the individual into personal relations to the Lord Jesus Christ."\* The effect of this distinction cannot be better stated than by a quotation from the recent Student's Lectures at Princeton Seminary by Mr. Robert E. Speer, of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions: "Missions have not aimed at sociological or political results, but they have produced them. They are the mightiest force in the world in these directions. But they have been this because they have never sought and therefore have found. The instant Missions ceased to view themselves as directly a work of individual regeneration and fixed their aim instead upon social or national reformation, their power would be gone and they would affect neither nations, nor society, nor individuals, as they do now."† The primary aim of Missions constitutes its peculiar divine call.

Another element, however, exists in missionary work, which is essentially social. Christianity in its very nature produces the Church, by virtue of the divine life which binds all believers together, and the Church is a society of men. Wherever two or three are found believing in and serving the Divine Master, they will be bound together by this common faith and obedience. Hence Missions, which must always begin with individuals, can never rest with treating them as separate. The most numerous

\* *The Student's Missionary Appeal*, p. 457.

† *Missions and Politics in Asia*, p. 259.

and difficult of the problems of Missions concern the Church and therefore involve social factors. And it is, in all likelihood, fallacious to say with the author last quoted that the study of Politics "is valueless as to mission methods save in a negative way."\* The presumption is against such a view, for many of the factors which are most influential in political problems enter also into Church growth. Among these are climate, geographical conditions, and, above all, racial character. Do not these constitute the soil, good or bad, into which the divine seed falls and whose importance is so clearly recognized by our Lord?

With these general considerations in mind, let us return to *The Control of the Tropics*. The main propositions of the book can be stated in the author's own words: "In the first place the attempt to acclimatize the white man in the tropics must be recognized to be a blunder of the first magnitude. . . . In climatic conditions which are a burden to him; in the midst of races in a different and lower stage of development; divorced from the influences which have produced him, from the moral and political environment from which he sprang, . . . he tends himself to sink slowly to the level around him." Again, the author urges that the one principle of success is to keep those who administer the Government in direct and intimate contact with the standards of that civilization at its best. The other principle is this: "There never has been and there never will be, within any time with which we are practically concerned, such a thing as good government, in the European sense, of the tropics by the natives of these regions." From this and the wide difference in civilization, it follows that "progress upward must be a long, slow process, must proceed on native lines, and must be the effect of the example and prestige of higher standards." It is not necessary to prove these statements in their full extent; and, indeed, proof or disproof must be left to writers on Politics.† Probably all acquainted with the facts will admit both the tendency to degeneration and the general unfitness of the native races for self-government. At all events, we shall accept the general soundness of these principles in the political sphere and test them in the sphere of Missions.

\* *Missions and Politics in Asia*, pp. 260, 261.

† In the New York *Independent* for March 9, 1899, evidence is presented by Alfred R. Wallace and by Prof. Blackman, of Yale University, which tends to prove the practicability of the colonization of the tropics by Europeans. Even if this be granted, it does not invalidate our argument, which concerns the relation of Europeans to the native races and the ability of those races to govern themselves. It is not implied that the native races are incapable of ever becoming self-governing; but only that this incapacity is a present fact, that it can be overcome only by a slow and gradual process, and that it must be recognized as a factor in missionary problems.

In order to make the points clearer, let us restate them in terms applicable to missionary work and then test them by the facts of that work. So restated, they are as follows :

1. The missionary cannot completely assimilate himself to his environment, because of the wide difference in civilization between himself and those about him : and he is subjected to deteriorating influences, on account of which he must be kept in contact with Christianity at its best.

2. The native Church, in races such as we are considering, cannot within any definite period administer its own affairs on a high standard, and its progress upward must be a long, slow process, proceeding on native lines and under the example of higher standards.

It will be remarked that the first principle concerns the foreign missionary, and the second the native Church, thus being complementary.

The first point concerning the foreign missionary is that he can never become assimilated to his environment; from which it follows that he cannot be a homogeneous element in the native Church, but must always work with it from outside. To quote another, " Missions as missions are to preserve their identity and the Church is to administer what properly belongs to it."\* The separation need not be based on ecclesiastical theory, and still less upon any un-Christian assumption of race superiority, but upon a profound difference in character. Some may be disposed to deny this difference, or to insist that it is not insurmountable. Undoubtedly the possession of a common life in Christ, the unity of spiritual aims and trials, the acceptance of a common faith, and the devotion to a common cause do bind the missionary more closely to the native than can ever be the case with merchant or administrator. Add to these positive influences the absence of the national ambitions and rivalries that so often neutralize the highest purposes of politics, and one might easily think it possible to overcome the divisive influences. But experience has proven the reverse; and it may be affirmed that the most utterly self-forgetful and spiritually minded missionaries never become perfectly at home with native character. The truth is that spiritual and moral chasms cleave humanity more deeply than any intellectual or economical differences. Christianity is the only religion that can reconcile Jew and Gentile, Asiatic and European, and it requires generations for the task. Other religions are revolutionized when they cross racial borders, as is shown by the Buddhism of China and the Islamism of Persia. St. Paul believed

\* *Report on Japan Missions*, by Robert E. Speer, p. 33.

most emphatically in the unifying power of Christ, and yet the great struggle of his life and of the generation after his death was the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile. The difference referred to above limits the sphere and constitutes in part the necessity of missionary work. The following words of a veteran missionary illustrate the limitations: "I go into a village, and as a matter of course, if I speak I speak in broken accents. I don't understand the people and the native pastors do. They are in touch with them, in sympathy with them."\* On the other hand, the missionary is fitted by his very difference to stimulate the growth of the people in character and so to lead them to share in the blessings of Christian heredity.

The influences tending to deterioration to which missionaries are subject are in part the same as those which have made the demoralization of Europeans permanently resident in heathen lands a sad fact too patent to call for proof. In some respects the temptations of the missionary are peculiarly strong; for he is called on constantly to battle with evils which seem to be impreg- nably intrenched, and the danger is great of making compromises in order to save defeat. His heart grows callous to injustice which never blushes, and he wearies of indignation which is futile and of pity which is helpless. The very Christian charity which compels him to bear with the erring and to remember their environment and training, may cloak weak palliation of evil and toleration of wrong. On the other hand, the very work of the missionary is a protection against his debasing environment, and above all his reliance is in the sanctification of the Spirit. The missionary of civilization, we are told, must be kept in contact with civilization at its best. Christianity at its best is Christ, and the missionary must keep in touch with his Lord. As has been finely said, "We must be in contact with Him who could safely and savingly touch the leper, before we can safely and savingly come in touch with the heathen."† Not less powerful are tendencies to intellectual narrowness and wrong perspective in viewing the facts of the work—tendencies corrected most easily by change of place and work. The regulations of diplomatic and colonial service make provision for furloughs on these grounds, as well as physical need. Missionary furloughs are required on physical, intellectual and spiritual grounds. But these needs are not entirely met by furloughs; and the bond between the missionary and the Church which sent him must be maintained in other ways. Deputations, not merely for the investigation of problems but also for the inspiration of missionaries, are one means. The

\* *Student's Missionary Appeal*, p. 451.

† *Ibid.*, p. 332.

applications of the principle are numerous, but these will suffice to illustrate its soundness.

It may therefore be affirmed that the position of the missionary of the Gospel is, on the whole, analogous to that of the missionary of civilization, in respect to his relation to the people, his temptations, and his need of support and stimulus.

Turning to the second general principle deduced from Mr. Kidd's book, that relating to independence, we find it in conflict to some extent with the predominant aim of missionaries and missionary Boards. The former affirms the present inability of native Churches to administer their own affairs on a high standard, and assumes that the ability to be independent comes only after a long, slow process of growth; while the latter looks forward to the early establishment of "a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating native Church," and generally also to the withdrawal of the foreign missionary by a process of "self-effacement," and by so developing the native Church that his presence will be unnecessary. Both agree as to the desirability of independence, but differ in their estimate of the ability of the people to be independent. The one considers the ability to be inherent, or at least very quickly attained; while the other regards it as the result of a long process. Neither is inconsistent, with every effort to remove obstacles to independence, such as arise from unnecessary complexity of organization or unwise assistance when help is not needed. The question before us may be stated thus: Can we reasonably expect a people which is politically incapable of self-government to be ecclesiastically and spiritually "self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating?"

The gravity of this question is obvious in view of its direct, practical bearing on the administration of missions. Nor is it easy to decide. If it be said that the Church consists of the elect—those who are energized by the Holy Spirit and are, therefore, more capable of self-government than the mass of the people—the reply is that the ideal and calling of the Church are correspondingly higher than those of the State and require higher character. Is it not the testimony of history that the Church shares in the character of the nation? Else, why did Christianity in Asia Minor, planted in its apostolic purity by St. Paul, nurtured by St. John, led first by such men as Timothy and Polycarp and in a later age by the great Cappadocians, the Gregories and Basil, fall to the disgraceful level of the Council of Ephesus, and finally yield to Mohammedanism; while Christianity, preached to the Teutonic races when corrupted by error, mingled with politics and under inferior leaders, grew

strong and finally showed its divine vitality in the Protestant Reformation? The lesson of history is that strength of race-character abides in transfigured form in the Church of that race; that, along with the infusion of divine energy, there is a conversion of natural energy, akin to that in physics by which mere motion is changed to heat or light. This is enforced by the experience of modern missions. Roman Catholic missions in the East have several centuries of history, and they have failed to develop the qualities sought for. In the Hawaiian Islands, the work of evangelization was soon completed, but the racial weakness appears to have checked the power of the Gospel so far as to have prevented the establishment of a vigorous Church. Greenland is another case in point. The Moravians began missionary work in 1732. The whole population is less than ten thousand, all are evangelized, they are under civilized government, and yet there are still missionaries among them. The same in substance is true of Moravian missions in the West Indies. Illustrations are not wanting of the error of expecting the native Church to take up responsibilities for which they are not ready. For example, it is stated by those well qualified to judge that this mistake was made in Japan, where the native Church is unusually vigorous.

It may safely be affirmed that experience, as well as the analogy of Politics, goes to show that the ability to administer Church affairs is not a gift inherent in faith in Christ, but is attained only by a long, slow process. The main factor which will determine the time for assuming such responsibility is the same as that which operates in the political sphere—that is, race-character. It may be objected that this view depreciates the inherent power of Christianity, and that the appeal to history is not conclusive, since we can, it may be said, avoid the mistakes of the past. It has already been pointed out that the divine factor differentiates Missions and Politics. It is the principal factor and makes all things possible in missionary work, but that is no reason for neglecting all other factors. Individual salvation is, in a sense, a crisis, as instantaneous and free from human restraints as was the Resurrection of our Lord. The growth of the Church, on the other hand, is gradual, and in this respect Christianity is a divine power manifested in a process under human conditions. The aim, therefore, of establishing a “self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating” native Church needs careful limitation. Its attainment may be very far off, and cannot be hastened, perhaps, by any methods of work or organization. It is conceivable that some are incapable, at least within a very long period, of such responsibility; and also that in some cases the work of evangelization may



be completed before the native Church becomes self-governing. At all events, it is incumbent on us to build our theories of missionary work on right principles and to avoid the disasters sure to follow ill-founded hopes.

It is inferred from the analogy of Politics that this slow process must be on native lines and under the example of higher standards. The former of these conditions is directly opposed to the genius of so-called Catholic Christianity, whether Roman or Anglican, and of the Greek Church; for with these bodies the form is essential, and an elaborate hierarchical government and ritual worship are transplanted from the regions where they originated to other regions widely dissimilar in civilization and race. A partial compensation to this rigidity is found in an extreme tolerance of native customs and beliefs. Protestants accept the principle more generally, at least in theory; but even with them the creeds, systems, divisions and party names of Europe and America are transplanted to Asia and Africa. The most extreme violation of this condition by Protestants is to insist upon the organic union of the native Church with the Church sending the missionaries. Although very imperfectly realized the principle is absolutely sound, confirmed alike by the successes and the failures of missions. Properly applied it will secure in time a genuine independence and individuality in Church life.

The second condition of this upward progress is the maintenance for an indefinite period of the relation between the mission Church and the home Church, by which the former is stimulated and guided by the latter. In its essence this relation must be moral, rather than governmental, and its efficiency will depend upon the spiritual character of the agents of the home Church and not upon any racial or financial prestige. The most objectionable form of this relation is the financial, by which funds given by the home Church go directly to enrich members of the native Church, thereby fostering hypocrisy and cupidity. The recognition of these evils is the occasion of the widespread efforts to attain self-support. That some relation should exist follows from the slow process by which administrative ability and moral character are developed. In this aspect, missionary activity is not merely an exterior function of the Church, but an essential internal relation between the members of the one body of Christ. Or to change the figure, foreign missions include not only the offensive operations of the hosts of Christ but also the relations to each other of the various corps of that great army. A practical deduction is that we should cease asking how long missionary work should continue, or when missionaries should be withdrawn from any

particular land. For example, it is true, we believe, that it has nowhere seemed best to withdraw from the work of training the ministers of the native Church, though this is certainly a part of self-propagation, a fact which indicates one point on which there is a general agreement as to the necessity of maintaining the relation we are considering. It must be admitted that missionaries are often tempted to do for the native Christians what they can better do for themselves, and also that unwise complexity of organization has sometimes created artificial necessities. But simplicity has its limits and must grow more difficult with numerical increase.

In general, therefore, we conclude that ecclesiastical and political independence are reached by a growth in ability, which takes place in both cases under similar conditions and limitations; and the question is forced upon us whether a people incapable of one can prove capable of the other.

To return to the broader question of the relation of Missions to Politics, we are confirmed in the belief that this relation is not superficial and negative, but vital and comprehensive. The specific points considered have been points of the first importance in mission work, and in these the analogy of Politics has suggested principles which have proven sound and practical. There is no reason to suppose that the relation would be less close in other points. Each has lessons for the other, in inspiration, method and means. Politics have to do primarily with the State, but their work cannot be done by ignoring the individual. Missions must seek the lost, one by one, but they do this through a society which is affected by social factors as truly as any other society on earth. In short, the differences are profound and the correspondences are fundamental.

The Christian view of Politics emphasizes the burden of government and the responsibility of dominion, and thereby transforms empire from an ambition to an opportunity. Blindly and unworthily, yet, under God, surely and steadily, the Christian nations are subduing the world, in order to make mankind free.

Do we rebuke the statesmen for their blindness in not seeing the divine call and destiny? But are we who serve the Church more clear-sighted than they, more devoted to our task and privilege? The divine program of Missions is summed up in the words Preach, Teach, Baptize. To make known to every man before he goes into the dark Beyond the good word of salvation, this is enough to absorb the energies not of a Student's Movement, but of the whole Church of God. The next step is vaster still—to teach men to do the Law of Christ, to apply it to the evils of life.

Christendom has only begun to learn these lessons, but she is called to teach others without delay. The third step is no less vast—to organize those who accept Christ, that they may possess all the benefits belonging to the Body of Christ, and may do His work. Is this reading too much into the word Baptize? The Apostle Paul told the Galatian Christians that they were baptized into Christ Jesus and became one body in Him. The Church is the realization of this Oneness, a higher ideal than “the Parliament of man, the federation of the world.” We call these steps, but they are practically simultaneous. As soon as one man believes he is a disciple; and as soon as two are baptized they are a Church. The individual and social elements are inseparable, and the very first operations of missionary work involve all the problems. How vast the work, how slight the interest, how feeble the efforts and what waste of energy in division! England forgets her party divisions and rival home-policies in the face of her world-wide work. A foreign war snaps in an instant the bars of American sectionalism and unites the whole land in patriotic zeal. “The truth is, the heart of this great problem of Christian unity lies not in the condition of the Churches at home, urgent as that may be, but in the necessities of the Church abroad, with divided ranks, fighting principalities and powers in the dark places of heathendom.”\*

URUMIA, PERSIA.

WILLIAM A. SHEDD.

\* Dr. D. Sage Mackay : *Proceedings Glasgow Alliance of Reformed Churches*, p. 291.