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THINKING IN CONTINENTS

SOME of the early missionary pioneers had visions of world campaigns to win the world for Jesus Christ. The promise to Abraham was that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. The commission of Christ to His disciples was world-wide in scope and the early missionary apostles started out to go with the Gospel into all known lands. When Church and State became united, plans for political conquest were linked with those for spiritual victories and the spiritual end was defeated. Then came the Reformation and the division of Christendom into independent and non-co-operating sects. The result has been the multiplication of missionary agencies with the division of missionary effort. The Church of Christ has failed to unite on any general program for world evangelization and much time, money and labor have been wasted.

Today missionary statesmen are making a heroic effort to correct the mistakes of the past. They are meeting in conference, are planning campaigns to occupy continents, are promoting union work and are dividing territory to prevent overlapping. The Edinburgh Conference and the interdenominational Missionary Conferences in America and England have made long strides toward the desired goal of united missionary effort to evangelize the whole world.

The latest special conference to study missionary strategy and co-operative effort met in New York last November to consider the Continent of Africa. It met under the auspices of the African Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference and studied in statesman-like manner the problems presented by the whole continent. One of the most able and striking papers—by the chairman, Dr. Cornelius H. Patton—appears in this number of the REVIEW. It views Africa as a whole—the

Looking Through the War Clouds

BY ROBERT E. SPEER, NEW YORK

FOUR great mission fields have been included in the actual area of the war. The tides of battle rolled to and fro over each of the three great African Colonies of Germany—German Southwest Africa, German East Africa and German West Africa or Cameroun. Some years before the war, a British writer in a striking article pictured the possibility of a future battle between European powers on the great African lakes, watched in confused alarm by the African people. Sooner than he knew his imagining came true. In mission station after mission station appalled African Christians heard the tumult of war and saw the African tribes armed against one another in a conflict whose causes lay thousands of miles away.

The second field included in the actual war area was the Province of Shantung in China, where, in order to make the Pacific safe for the ships of the Allies, Japan wrested from Germany the harbor of Kiao Chou Bay and the city of Tsing Tau and the claims which Germany had extended into the Province of Shantung.

The third mission field affected was the Turkish Empire, where the British armies now moving northwest from Bagdad and northward through Palestine are traversing the scenes of the Old and the New Testaments, the machine guns pattering today in those very fields "over whose acres walked those blessed feet which 1900 years ago were nailed for our advantage to the cruel tree."

The fourth mission field harassed by the war is Persia. The armies of Russia or Turkey, or both, have held every mission station in Western Persia, and some of these stations have changed hands three or four times during the war. In each one of these four fields the mission work has gone on without the permanent abandonment of a single mission station and in most of these stations missionaries are at their work today as though there had been no war. In some of the African stations the largest Christian congregations assemble that can be found anywhere in the world. In the midst of upheaval and change one force which has held steadily on its way has been the force of Christian missions.

The more important question, however, is as to the influence of the war during the year that has gone by on the mind of the non-Christian people. Has the war sealed the thought of Asia and Africa against Christianity as a Western religion, destroyed by the breakdown of Western industrial civilization? Not so. The men of Asia and Africa are able to make distinctions as well as we. As Prince Damrong said to us in Siam, "Do not fear that we think Christianity is responsible for

the war. We understand perfectly well that it is not Christianity which has failed, but the Western nations, and that if only peoples of the West had practiced the precepts of Christ there would have been no such awful struggle." What Christ came to do, what spirit and message the missionaries bear from Him to the world, is clearer to the minds of the non-Christian peoples today than it was a year ago.

The year has seen an appalling financial burden laid upon missions as a result of the increase in the price of silver. This increase is due to many causes—to a diminution in the output of silver from the mines, to the immense increase of other forms of currency, increasing thereby the proportionate value of silver; to the hoarding of silver in India and China and the great demand for silver for currency in these lands and for the Chinese and Indians involved in the war; to the decrease of trade, diminishing the demand for exchange on the West. The result has been the advance in the price of the silver currency of lands like China where the Mexican dollar has nearly doubled in value, and in Persia where the Toman has more than doubled. Now the Rupee in India and the Yen in Japan have also advanced. Some mission boards have had to appeal to their constituencies for additional contributions of over half a million dollars merely to provide for the depreciation in the silver purchasing power of American money. If the price of silver continues to increase, this situation will become yet more difficult.

But there are deeper aspects than these in which the year that has gone by has brought to light the significance of the missionary enterprise as affected by the great war.

In a day, and against the background, of disorder and destruction, we see Christian missions as a great, peaceable and constructive agency of equalization, transformation and freedom. The American people believe that the war in which they have become involved is a righteous and necessary war. But war can never be anything else than destruction, the wiping out of wrong and the tearing down of false power, and never in human history was there such a titanic work of destruction going on as now. If the billions of dollars and the millions of men engulfed in the war could only have been devoted to the great processes of human progress, we could have lifted humanity forward in this decade by the sheer leap of a century. This may not now be. But it is against all this inevitable shadow that we see more clearly than ever the honor and glory of the missionary ideal and its work of unselfish and creative love. "I confess," said Sir James Meston, the Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces, at the opening of some new buildings of the Department of Agriculture in the Ewing Christian College at Allahabad, India, "that after I have been here and spent an hour on the farm, I always go away seeing visions. I see a vision of a very different India from what we have now—of an India in which the whole countryside has been metamorphosed by agricultural skill and science; in which its rustic people are comfortable, in which the land is immune from the

ravages of famine, in which the ground is producing three, four, five, six times what it produces now; and as a correlative to that I see a vision of the great towns, busy with the hum of looms and a purr of electric machinery, which I hope means smokeless chimneys, turning out the comforts and luxuries which a prosperous countryside will require. It is a vision of the future of a great and prosperous country striding forward to higher things."

War can not work a transformation like this. It can be wrought only by the constructive ministries of good-will. In the very darkest hours of this war and the most cruel places of the earth we have seen the missionaries accomplishing these ministries. At the meeting of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, on October 22nd, the Board looked upon the vivid symbol of them when a faded and frayed American flag was presented to it with the following letter:

Gentlemen:

American missionaries in the foreign field love the American flag; no less has the American flag cause for gratitude to American missionaries in distant fields. The American flag is honored in the Orient—an honor due in no small degree to the missionary's influence; and, on the other hand, many American missionaries owe to the American flag their lives and the lives of many natives who have clung to them in times of trouble.

I have the honor, on behalf of the members of Urumia Station, to present to you a well-worn flag which was graciously used of God in defending the rights of the weak and defenseless in Urumia, Persia, during a time of great turmoil.

This flag was hoisted over the gateway leading to the main compound of your Mission Station in the City of Urumia (West Persia Mission) soon after the evacuation of the city by the Russian Army on January 2, 1915, and before the entrance into the city of the Kurdish vanguards of the Turkish Army on January 4, 1915. It thereafter flew uninterruptedly until after the Russian Army had re-entered the city, May 24th, 1915, and again taken up the reins of government—a period of about five months.

During those months it was an instrument under God's grace in saving the lives of 15,000 defenseless Christians, who had taken refuge under its shadow, and indirectly it was a strong influence for quiet and order in a much wider circle.

Could this flag speak, it would tell you heart-rending tales of sorrow and suffering, of injustice and extortion, of cruelty and death; it would preach powerful sermons on faith, love, sympathy; it would make you feel the gratitude which it read in the 15,000 pairs of eyes that were daily upturned during these sad months—a gratitude which is alive today, toward God and toward Christian America, and which will live on through generations.

Fraternally yours in the great Cause,

(Signed) HUGO A. MULLER.

The flag would not have been there if missionaries had not raised it, and after all it was the missionaries and the ideas which they represent which gave the multitudes safe shelter under its folds, for the armies of its government were 6000 miles away.

In a day, and against a background of strife and division, the year has shown us Christian missions as a great agency of friendship and unification. The war has opened awful chasms in humanity, and its

breaches have not left unaffected the international missionary fellowship, but they have not destroyed it and in the midst of all the inevitable divisions of the year something of the principle of super-nationalism has been maintained by the missionary enterprise alone. The American Lutherans have cared for the German missionary work in India, the American Presbyterians have helped to provide for the French missionary work in Africa, and for months at the beginning of the war the discontinued salaries of German missionaries in India were met in part by the British missionaries from their own scanty allowances. And how can the hurt of the world ever be healed, the chasms which have been cleft closed again, except by the balm and the bond of a great forgiving and unifying religious faith save by the acceptance of the Christian principle of the unity of the body of humanity with Jesus Christ as its one Head? "Yes," said a Japanese banker in New York, not yet a member of the Christian Church, who had just been to hear a Christian sermon, "I believe that what the preacher said is true, that if mankind ever is to be made one it can only be in Christ."

Amid the great influences which thunder through the world today, but which after all can only do their work upon the surface of human life, we see the missionary enterprise with a new vividness as a great force, cutting into life's heart and penetrating to the central character of mankind. There are days in human history when war is the lesser evil and when its necessary work must be done. But its influence can only be structural and not organic. It is surgery cutting away diseased and vicious tissues, but it is not, and never can be, one of the deep and organic processes of life. New ideals, new motives, a new spirit and a new and living power are needed to change the world, not a reconstitution of political relationships but a regeneration of the soul of humanity. Mr. Morgenthau discerned this and spoke of it in his tribute to the missionaries in Turkey on his return from this two years' service as American Ambassador in Constantinople. "A residence of over two years in Turkey has given me the best possible opportunity to see the work of the American missionaries and to know the workers intimately. Without hesitation I declare my high opinion of their keen insight into the real needs of the people of Turkey. The missionaries have the right idea. They go straight to the foundations and provide those intellectual, physical, moral and religious benefits upon which alone any true civilization can be built." How deeply this influence has penetrated into the world's life no one can adequately tell. In the years gone by, those most competent to judge have declared it to be the most powerful and penetrating of all influences.

The following is the statement by Sir W. Mackworth Young, K.C.S.I., Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, upon his return to England:

"As a business man speaking to business men, I am prepared to say that the work which has been done by missionary agency in India exceeds in importance all

that has been done (and much has been done) by the British Government in India since its commencement. Let me take the Province which I know best. I ask myself what has been the most potent influence which has been working among the people since annexation fifty-four years ago, and to that question I feel there is but one answer—Christianity, as set forth in the lives and teaching of Christian missionaries. I do not underestimate the forces which have been brought to bear on the races in the Punjab by our beneficent rule, by British justice and enlightenment; but I am convinced that the effect on native character produced by the self-denying labors of missionaries is far greater. The Punjab bears on its historical roll the names of many Christian statesmen who have honored God by their lives, and endeared themselves to the people by their faithful work; but I venture to say that if they could speak to us from the great unseen, there is not one of them who would not proclaim that the work done by men like French, Clark, Newton and Forman, who went in and out among the people for a whole generation or more, and who preached by their lives the nobility of self-sacrifice, and the lesson of love to God and man, is a higher and nobler work, and more far-reaching in its consequences.”

The influence that has wrought thus in India is changing the moral ideals of one-half of humanity. In a recent article in a Japanese magazine the writer pointed out the transformation that had taken place in the meaning of Japanese words in the last twenty-five years, beginning with the Japanese word for God, into which the influence of Christianity had poured an absolutely new meaning. What subtler influence can work upon a nation than this? And it is working not only through the resistless evangelization of a changed national speech, but it is striking home ever more and more to the individual heart.

The one great lesson of the year which is to be carried up into the coming day is the lesson that now, not less but more, must all those forces be intensified and flung forth which can build creatively the new order which must come upon the earth. If, as we believe, we have entered the great conflict to check wrong, to make the world a safe place for freedom, to forward the cause of brotherhood and equality, to secure justice for the weak and to establish the law that strength is given for service, then, the forces which were best fitted to produce these results before the war, and on which alone we can rely to produce them afterwards, must not be abated or diminished now. Every worthy end that the nation believes that it has in view now in the war is an end for which the Christian spirit has wrought and must still work. No matter what sacrifice must be made, the missionary enterprise must not be sacrificed. Even though its maintenance during the coming year will cut into the capital of the Christian Church that price must be paid. The men who are giving their lives on the battlefield are not serving the nation out of their income, they are pouring out the last and utmost measure. Christ has a right to ask, in the service which alone can establish righteousness upon the earth, that his people shall give him not a fraction of their income only, nor all of their income alone, but that they shall lay down at his feet their very last and all. This is the word of the old year to the new, of the new year to the old.