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THE BIBLE A LAW FOR NATIONS.

THAT Church and State are both Divine institutions, and that each occupies a sphere, in an important sense, separate from and independent of the other, are truths that are now very generally accepted among all classes of Presbyterians.

That Christ is the Head of the Church, Her King and Lawgiver, in some sense, is universally admitted in theory, however imperfectly exemplified in practice.

That Christ is also King of kings and Lord of lords, that is, King of nations as well as of the Church; and that the Bible is the law of nations as well as the law of the Church, are truths that are now become prominent, and that seem to demand special emphasis.

As different planets revolve around the same central sun, each in its own separate sphere guided and controlled by the same law; so Church and State, having different spheres, are nevertheless both subordinate to Christ, and subject to the law which He has given for the guidance and control of each.

The Scriptures are not only a rule of faith, but a rule of practice as well. They teach us not only what to believe, but also what to do; not only our duty to God, but our duty to man. There is no sphere of human conduct exempt from their control; no relation in which man can be placed in which he may act independently of their claims.

From this it follows that all organisations of men, as such, are bound and controlled by the same law—not only the individuals composing these organisations, but the organisations themselves, as moral entities or legal personalities. A bank, a railroad, a joint-stock company of any kind, has a legal existence of its own, and, as such, is as much bound by the law of God in its corporate capacity as are the individuals composing it.

The current saying that “corporations have no souls,” is not only thoroughly false in the sense in which it is used, but embodies a principle

conscience' sake had left upon their religious life a lingering touch of noble melancholy.

Most imperfect and hasty as are these jottings, touching the fringe only of a wide subject, their design will be attained if they should draw any readers of the *Catholic Presbyterian* to study the principles which underlie congregational worship, or to estimate in a candid and catholic temper, both the excellences and the defects of that form and order in the service of God which we have "received by tradition from our fathers."

J. OSWALD DYKES.

CENTRAL EQUATORIAL AFRICA, A NEW FIELD FOR MISSIONARY EFFORT.

GREAT interest has been awakened in the geographical discoveries that have been made in Central Equatorial Africa during the last twenty-five years. The names of Livingstone, Burton, Speke, Grant, Sir Samuel Baker, Schweinfurth, Cameron, and Stanley are as household words throughout the civilised world. History furnishes no names superior to these in daring enterprise, persistent energy, unsurpassed skill and tact in trying emergencies, or of nobler ambition, not only to unfold all the geographical secrets of the country, but equally to ameliorate the condition of its miserable inhabitants. A new era, through their agency, now dawns upon that unhappy land, and we anticipate for it, under the controlling power of Divine Providence, a future as bright as its past has been dark and gloomy.

Notwithstanding that the journals of these explorers have been read with great and general interest, we apprehend there are but few who have any adequate idea, either of the extent or magnitude of their discoveries, or of the very important results to which they are likely to lead. A door of access, as it were, is opened to a new world, out of which will issue streams of commerce to enrich the civilised globe, whilst into it will flow the richer blessings of gospel grace, to make glad what has heretofore been sorrowful, to illumine what has been profound darkness, and to harmonise what has been universal discord and bitterness.

This vast region of country, embracing more than 2,000,000 of square miles, may now be approached from different points, and by various lines of travel. First, along the Nile and the great fresh-water lakes in which that river takes its rise; second, by an overland route from Zanzibar to Lake Tanganyika, or by the Zambesi and the Shire rivers to Lake Nyassa; or third, from the Atlantic, through the Ogovi and the

great Congo rivers. Certain obstacles, in the way of falls and cataracts, will have to be obviated by means of short railroads or canals ; but the profits of the traffic will amply justify the necessary expenditure.

One of the most important features in the physical condition of the country is the almost interminable extent of its internal navigable waters. In this respect, it is perhaps unsurpassed by any other portion of the habitable globe. In the very heart of the country, there are twelve or fifteen fresh-water lakes, varying in size from 100 to 1000 miles in circumference, each with numerous tributaries, and each having a grand artery, through which its waters are poured into the Mediterranean, the Atlantic, or the Indian Ocean. One of these great rivers, the Congo, is now known to be the third, if not the second largest river in the world. Taking these great lakes into account, as well as the three vast rivers, the Congo, the Nile, and the Zambesi, with their numerous and large affluents, there are not less, perhaps, than 25,000 miles of navigable waters in the heart of the country, along whose shores and adjacent regions there are probably more than fifty millions of immortal beings, waiting to receive the light and blessings of the Gospel.

This vast and newly-explored country is no doubt the choicest portion of the whole African continent. It combines the threefold advantages of a salubrious climate, a fertile soil, and extraordinary facilities of internal intercourse, as well as easy access to the civilised world. With the exception of a belt of jungle country along the eastern and western sea-board, where miasma is undoubtedly very prevalent and inimical to the European constitution, all the interior is salubrious, as may be inferred from the large amount of health vouchsafed to Stanley and Cameron, notwithstanding the trials and vexations to which they were exposed, as well as that enjoyed by Livingstone during so many years' residence in the Lake regions.

The natural products of the country, too, are rich and varied. Bananas, plantains, cassava (manioc), yams, potatoes, ground nuts, millet, Indian corn, rice, and other articles of food, grow in great abundance, so that, except in times of war, the people scarcely know what it is to want for food. Articles suitable for exportation are quite as numerous. Those best known to the civilised world are ebony, ivory, palm-oil, bees-wax, gum-copal, India-rubber, cotton, and coffee. In many places Stanley found ivory so abundant as to be a drug. If a railroad or canal could be constructed around the lower falls of the Congo—and this, we suppose, would be no great affair—more palm oil would flow down to the Atlantic by that channel than by any other on the whole coast. The same remark is applicable to the amount of ivory, ebony, bees'-wax, and India-rubber that would speedily offer themselves for exportation.

The inhabitants of this great region, with the exception of a few mixed tribes along its outer borders, all belong to one great family. A line starting from the Cameroon Mountains on the western coast, second degree north latitude, and drawn, with some slight variations, directly

across the continent to the same degree of latitude on the east coast, divides the negro race into two distinct families, perhaps of nearly equal size. The one, occupying the country north of this line to the southern borders of the Great Desert, is known as the Nigritian stock, from the fact that they are to be found mainly in the valley of the Niger. The other, and the one to which our article mainly refers, is known as the Ethiopian or Nilotic family, from its supposed descent from the ancient Ethiopians, whose chief residence was the banks of the Nile. This family, with the exception of a few Arab residents along the eastern coast, the Bushmen, the Hottentots, and the Namaqwas, near the Cape of Good Hope, and a few mixed bloods along the western coast, includes the various tribes,—among them the Zulus, the Bechuanas, and Kafirs in South Africa,—which overspread the whole of the southern half of the continent. The Mpongwes and the Congoes on the west coast; the Zulus and the Kafirs at the Cape of Good Hope; the Swahilis and the Wangwana on the east coast; the Wanganda and Wanyoro in the Lake regions, show linguistic affinities that cannot be mistaken. One general language, with great divergence as to dialects, prevails over this whole region of country. There are not only verbal resemblances, but there is a peculiar grammatical structure, scarcely known to any other language, that pervades and characterises all the dialects of this one great family. A very large number of words are common to the Mpongwe dialect on the west coast, and the Swahili on the east, as may be seen from a grammar of the Mpongwe, published by the missionaries at the Gaboon years ago. If the words used by three or four tribes along the coast of Southern Guinea could be fully collated, they would be found to contain not less, perhaps, than four-fifths of all the words used over the whole of this vast region.

But apart from these verbal resemblances, there are certain features of orthography that establish the relationship between these dialects quite as clearly. To mention no others, the use of *m* and *n*—as if they were preceded by a sort of half-vowel sound—before certain other consonants, at the beginning of words, is very peculiar. *M* is constantly used before *b*, *p*, *t*, and *w*, as in the words, *mbolo*, *mpolu*, *mtesa*, and *mvera*. So *n* is constantly used before *k*, *t*, *y*, and *gw*, as in the words, *nkala*, *ntondo*, *nyassa*, and *ngwe*. The combination of *ny* occurs in the names of most of the great lakes, as *Nyassa*, *Nyanza*, and *Tanganika*. A still more striking feature of relationship between these dialects may be found in the combinations by which proper names are formed. The names of a large proportion of the tribes encountered by Stanley and Cameron on their journeys across the continent commence with the letter *u*, as *Uganda*, *Unyoro*, and *Ujiji*, &c. Now, by prefixing *ma*, and dropping the initial *u*, we have *Maganda*, a person or citizen of *Uganda*; *Manyoro*, a person or citizen of *Unyoro*. So by prefixing *wa* instead of *ma*, we get *Wagunda*, they, or the people of *Uganda*. Now, in the Mpongwe dialect, *ma* is simply a contraction of *oma*, person, and

wa or *wao* is the personal pronoun for *they*, showing how these proper names are formed. Again, many of the names of these tribes terminate in *ana*. *Ana*, in the Mpongwe dialect, is an abbreviation of *awana*, children or descendants. If the names of Bechuana and Wangana could be analysed, they would be found to mean, the children or descendants of *Bechu* or *Wanga*, this being the way of giving names to any particular family that separates itself from the parent stock.

But the peculiar character of this language is more remarkable than its wide diffusion. Taking the Mpongwe dialect as a specimen, we have no hesitation in saying that it will be difficult to find any language, ancient or modern, that is more systematic or philosophical in its general arrangements, more marked in the classification of its different parts of speech or their relationship to each other, or in the extent of its inflections, especially those of the verb. The existence of such a language among an uncultivated people is simply a marvel. It would be incompatible with the length and design of this article to attempt to give even an outline of this wonderful language. Let it suffice to say, that as many as three hundred oblique forms can be derived from the root of every regular Mpongwe verb, each one of which will have a clear and distinct shade of meaning of its own, and yet so regular and systematic in all its inflections, that a practised philologist could, after a few hours' study, trace up any of even its most remote forms to the original root. It is not intended to convey the idea that all these forms are habitually used, for that would indicate a much more extended vocabulary than could reasonably be expected among an uncultivated people. But there is no form of the verb, notwithstanding its extensive ramifications, that would not be distinctly understood by an audience, even if they had never heard it used before.

It will be seen, therefore, that the vocabulary may be expanded to an almost unlimited extent. It is not only expansible, but it has a wonderful capacity for conveying new ideas. The missionaries labouring among these people, after they had acquired a thorough knowledge of the structure of this wonderful language, were surprised to find with how much ease they could use it to convey religious ideas. In their native state the people had no knowledge of the Christian religion, and, of course, used no terms for saviour or salvation, for redeemer or redemption, &c. They had, however, the terms *sunga*, to save, and *danduna*, to redeem, or pay a ransom. Now, according to a well-established law of grammar, *ozunge* is a saviour, and *isungina* is salvation; similarly from *danduna* comes *olandune*, the redeemer, and *ilanduna*, redemption:—so that they could at once get a tolerably correct idea of these terms, and there was no need (as there is in most unwritten languages) to call in the aid of foreign words. Without multiplying illustrations of a similar character, it will be seen that the language is not only flexible and expansive to a very remarkable degree, but is suitable beyond almost any other known language to convey religious instruction to the minds of the

people. It has been preserved, no doubt, by a wise Providence for this very purpose.

The providence of God towards this great family, therefore, seems to be very marked and significant. They have been preserved for centuries in great numbers and vigorous manhood, notwithstanding their perpetual intestine strifes and the cruel desolations that have been occasioned by the slave trade, along both their eastern and western borders. They are in possession of a country that is not only healthful and productive, but whose navigable streams seem to have been traced out by the finger of Divine Providence for the twofold purpose of facilitating intercommunication among the people themselves, and of furthering the rapid diffusion of the Gospel wherever it has once gained a footing. Then their language, with all its wonderful characteristics, seems to have been kept by the Divine hand as an easy channel through which the light and blessings of the Gospel might, in God's own good time, reach their dark and benighted minds.

We do not forget that these people occupy a low place in the scale of social life. Many of the tribes through which Stanley passed are undoubtedly cannibal. But the larger and more influential communities regard the practice with detestation. Those who are addicted to it will, no doubt, abandon it with the first dawn of Christian civilisation. The Fijians fifty years ago were quite as ferocious cannibals as any to be found in the heart of Africa at the present day. But now they are dwelling in the peace and light of the Gospel, and such, we have no doubt, will soon be the case through all the vast region we have had under consideration. We need only look to the Zanzibar coast or to the western side of the continent to see how peaceable, how gentle and docile these people become, when brought in contact with civilised life, and especially when brought under the influence of Christian training.

We do not suppose, however, that the evangelisation of this country is to be effected without great sacrifices on the part of the Christian Church. It is too grand an achievement to be made without cost. Many lives may have to be sacrificed to the malaria which prevails in some parts of the country. Some may become the victims of savage violence, others may succumb to the hardships and privations of missionary life. But under the lead of the great Captain, ultimate success is absolutely certain. Fifty years ago the western coast of Africa seemed to present far more formidable obstacles to the spread of the Gospel. These obstacles, however, one after another, have gradually melted away. Churches have been established in many directions; twenty or more dialects have been reduced to writing, through which the knowledge of salvation is freely communicated to the people; hundreds of Christian schools have been set up; and not fewer, perhaps, than 30,000 souls have been brought into the fold of Christ. We may confidently anticipate greater and more rapid results in Central

Africa, if only the Church of Christ, in all her various branches, can be aroused by that solemn call of Providence which has laid this great country open before her eyes, and brought it within the scope of her missionary effort.

J. LEIGHTON WILSON.

THE DEATH-BED OF JOHN KNOX.*

HE has come down the pulpit stair,
 Creeps slow along the street ;
 And eager groups are gathered there,
 The care-bent man to greet.

And loving eyes look fond farewell
 On him they'll see no more ;
 And boding hearts in fear foretell,
 " John Knox's work is o'er."

He has gone up into his bed,
 To rest him and to die ;
 He layeth down his fainting head,
 And lifts his soul on high.

He who ne'er feared the face of man,
 Before his God lies low ;
 He who fought sternest in the van
 Breathes sacred quiet now.

He lieth in a solemn calm ;
 No sound is near him heard,
 Save voice of prayer and holy psalm,
 And of the blessed Word.

But list ! he speaks. " The hour is near
 That I have sighed to see ;
 Have prayed with many a groan and tear,
 Might shortly come to me.

" Sore weary of the world am I,
 And thirsting to depart ;
 Now God doth end my misery,
 And comforteth my heart.

" Thou know'st, Lord, what my wars have been,
 What burdens I have borne ;
 Thou know'st the sorrows I have seen,
 How weak I am and worn.

* See " Life of Knox," by Dr. M'Crie.