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FROM THE BRITISH POINT OF VIEW.

THE MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE, New York, should find purchasers in America. The eye of its editor marks all that is notable in the contents of English religious periodicals, and, to the extent of the containing capacity of his monthly, he takes it, not in snippets, but bodily, from head to tail: the authors being "solely responsible for the opinions expressed in their articles; the editor for the propriety of giving them a place in the magazine."—*The Rock*, London, September 23, 1892.

221

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CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
THE RELATIONS OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND DIPLOMACY, . . . . .	
<i>Hon. S. G. W. Benjamin, ex-Minister to Persia.</i>	193
THE GREAT PHILANTHROPIES, III., . . . . .	
<i>Ven. Archdeacon Farrar, D.D., F.R.S.</i>	199
CLOISTER LIFE IN THE DAYS OF CŒUR DE LION, <i>Very Rev. H. Donald M. Spence, D.D.</i>	207
THE PRESENT POSITION OF THE HIGH CHURCH PARTY, . . . . .	
<i>Gilbert W. Child.</i>	218
THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD AS TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, V., . . . . .	
<i>Rt. Rev. C. J. Ellicott, D.D.</i>	228
BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES, <i>Prof. George P. Fisher.</i>	235
PRESIDENT NORTHRUP ON "THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN PREDESTINATION," VI. and VII., . . . . .	
<i>Prof. Robert Watts, D.D.</i>	240
LEADERS OF THOUGHT IN SCOTLAND, II., . . . . .	
<i>Rev. Arthur Jenkinson.</i>	244
ERNEST RENAN, . . . . .	
<i>Rev. John Taylor, D. Lit., M.A.</i>	249
ERNEST RENAN—AN APPRECIATION, . . . . .	
<i>Rev. P. Waddington.</i>	251
WHAT IS CONGREGATIONALISM? . . . . .	
<i>Rev. A. J. F. Behrends, D.D., S.T.D.</i>	252
THE CHURCH AND THE LABOR QUESTION, . . . . .	
<i>I. M. Atwood, D.D.</i>	259
THE DIFFICULT VIA MEDIA, . . . . .	
<i>Prof. E. D. Morris, D.D.</i>	261
VOLTAIRE THE FOUNDER OF THE SO-CALLED "HIGHER CRITICISM," <i>Prof. D. Macdill.</i>	265
THE CROWN OF GLORY, . . . . .	267
LITERARY DEPARTMENT, . . . . .	268
CHRONICLE, . . . . .	287
OBITUARY, CALENDAR, . . . . .	288

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# THE MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

VOL. 7.

DECEMBER, 1892.

No. 3.

FOR THE MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN LITERATURE.

## THE RELATIONS OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND DIPLOMACY.

BY THE HON. S. G. W. BENJAMIN, EX-MINISTER TO PERSIA.

THERE are certain papers in our country which make it a point to seize every occasion to deprecate the maintenance of a diplomatic service by the United States. Some of them even go farther, and endeavor to throw contempt on the officials representing our country at foreign courts. We think it would be quite easy to prove that because the work of our envoys and consuls is silent, not often blazoned forth in the papers, it is none the less important and efficacious in proportion as it proceeds in silence, quiet personal influence and effort accomplishing results that could not be effected if attempted by correspondence from a distance or with more publicity. It would also be easy to prove that our foreign officials are generally quite the equals of foreign diplomats in natural ability, and, when properly supported by our State Department, soon overcome their lack of strictly diplomatic training, in which alone the foreign diplomat sometimes has his American colleagues at a disadvantage.

But the purpose of this article is not to discuss the question of the general need for a foreign service or the capacity of our appointees to that service, but rather to show its especial bearings in connection with Christian missions. Some, who look strictly to the letter of the Constitution, might say that the distinct separation of Church and State in our government would act as a bar to prevent missions from coming under the official cognizance of our government. If any special sect were indicated as particularly entitled to such protection, undoubtedly the government would have to decline interfering. But Congress appears to have considered it no infringement of the Constitution to make special provision for the protection of missionaries, as such, in some cases, besides furnishing them with protection for life and property on all occasions. It has probably been argued that missionary work could be regarded not as a

matter of religion, but as any other profession or vocation which a citizen might rightfully pursue, and in so doing is entitled to the protection of his life and property like any other citizen.

This, of course, must be the explanation of the special provision made in the treaty with China for the specific liberty to be allowed to missionaries to teach in that country, and for the still more remarkable provision that converts to Christianity shall not be molested. It is not likely that so long as American missionaries represent some Christian sect, any objection will be raised by Americans to such treaty clauses as the one just referred to regarding converts. But were any one inclined to raise constitutional objections, they might be sustained.

The treaties between the United States and most of the Spanish-American republics, including Brazil, contain provision for religious liberty and worship. While the treaty between our country and Persia, negotiated in 1854 by Hon. Carroll Spence, when Minister to Turkey, contains no allusion to either missionaries or religious freedom, being on the face of it simply a commercial treaty; yet under the general head of citizens, and under the "most favored nation" clause, it has been tacitly admitted by the Shah that they come under the provisions of the treaty and are entitled to protection of property as well as of life but merely as citizens.

The treaty with Siam provides in terms that American citizens may have exercise of their religion, and enjoy liberty to build houses of worship. The treaty negotiated with Japan in 1858 allows churches in that country, and provides that the natives shall in no way do anything qualified to excite religious animosity.

Here, then, at the very outset, we find that our government has so far assumed a paternal and quasi-religious aspect by pro-

all around, is the deep desire of every man who has the mind of Christ. But sympathy with labor must not be construed to mean sympathy with the opinions and crotchets of the laborer. Some laborers are intelligent and perfectly sane on the subject, and some are quite the reverse. The number of persons who have taken up the cause of the laborer in recent years is very large. It is drawing it mild to say that many of them are unfit to be the instructors and advisers of the wage-earners. They draw their theories out of the roomy abyss of their ignorance of economic science. Unfortunately, these are the instructors most in favor with the labor-organizations and labor-leaders. No small part of the mischief from which they, and the public in common with them, suffer, may be traced directly to these teachers. They fill the minds of workmen with expectations which can never be realized, and when the baseless fabric they have reared collapses, carrying overthrow and hardship with it, and entailing a dangerous deposit of bitterness in the workingman's heart, they charge it all on the tyranny of capital; and the effusive but not too clear-sighted philanthropists who look on from afar, translate the accusation into the obscurer charge, "It is the inevitable result of a vicious industrial system." Let me go on the record as having only a moderate supply of sympathy for this delusion.

It must not be overlooked in considering the church and the labor question, that two causes operate to alienate the laborer from the institution of public worship.

1. He is much taken up with his guild, or order, or association. It becomes a sort of church to him. It absorbs his leisure, his love of society, his "surplus." The rule is, not with workingmen only but with all sorts and conditions of men, that when they become greatly interested in any other social organization and make much account of it in their scheme of life, they neglect the church. So far as the race is concerned all such diversions are temporary. In the long run the church wins its own. But so far as the individual or a class is concerned the estrangement may outlast a lifetime.

2. The same cause which keeps many others, not workingmen, away from the church, withholds many laborers. The church antagonizes their plan of life. They are trying to get the good out of life by remaining on a low plane. To be vulgar, coarse, profane; to indulge in drink and not be too nice about personal and family decencies; to go on a lark now and again, and to spend Sunday as a pleasuring day,

enter into the idea of life of a great many men. Some of them, in the aggregate many of them, are workmen. The church is against all this, and its very existence and its atmosphere are a rebuke to that style of living. The tremendous force of this evil dissuasion must be frankly reckoned with. It is not peculiar to any class. It affects men and women in every rank. It is the one great cause of absences from churches and indifference to religion. He who does not know it is a superficial observer, and he who does not try to grapple with it in his religious administration has no title to church statesmanship.

In my judgment the best service which the church can do for the American laborer is to train up a body of ministers who, having carefully studied both the science of religion and the science of political economy, shall deal plainly and faithfully with him, telling him the simple but essential truth, at the same time that they preach it with equal fidelity and boldness to his employer. The advantage that the minister will have over other teachers will consist in the fact, that he must speak the most unpalatable truth in love. As it is now, he more than half the time speaks a half-truth, which is none the better for the hearer because it is spoken in kindness. This has been stigmatized as the "age of sham." I believe it is the age of reality. Nevertheless, our social sorrows and our industrial disturbances spring largely from lingering delusions. Well will it be for the Christian church if it allies itself with science in correcting the aberrations of ignorance and in directing the course of the always costly human experiment.

#### THE DIFFICULT VIA MEDIA.

BY PROFESSOR E. D. MORRIS, D.D.

From *The New York Evangelist* (Pres.), November 17, 1892.

ECCLESIASTICAL controversies generally develop three distinct parties. Of these, the first is a party of progressive extremists, who are advocates of some new dogma or policy, more or less decisively at variance with the current practice or belief, and tending, it may be, toward some positive and more or less revolutionary result—a party generally small in numbers, but earnest and resolute in purpose, and therefore likely, in some degree at least, to secure the change which it ardently advocates. Over against this party stands another, ordinarily not much larger in number, but no less positive

in its convictions and purposes—a party which stands by the old order of things without change; is ardent in its resistance to what is proposed, and often blind to real possibilities of improvement; generally too ready to question the motives as well as the propositions of its opponents, and quick to array against them, even by doubtful processes, the whole force of Church authority and Church discipline.

It is a noticeable fact that each of these parties gradually draws after itself a considerable body of persons who are not themselves extremists in either form, but who are moved in the one direction or the other by their general temperament and sympathies, or, perchance, incited by some incidental issues, doctrinal or ecclesiastical, that may have sprung up around the original point of controversy. Some of these are friends of liberty, opponents of whatever seems like arbitrary exercise of authority, believers in the essentials of church unity, but lenient toward all admissible diversities, and therefore arrayed for the time with the party of change or of revolution, even while at heart they deprecate the extremes to which that party is going, and are greatly pained by the struggle into which they find themselves swept.

Others are arrayed for the time with the party of conservative domination, and act with it in its antagonisms, though at heart they have no real sympathy with its narrowness or its imperiousness, and are often uncertain whether they really desire its success or its failure in the warfare it is waging. In ordinary cases, these two classes of contingents—if they may be so described—are much larger in numbers than the parties with which they are for the time affiliated, though while the conflict is at its hottest, they are less influential, less able either to direct the course of the battle or secure the good and expel the evil that may exist as possibilities in the controversy.

Between these two contending ranks of extremists, with their respective allies, stands what may be described as the third party—a party generally larger in numbers than both the others, constituting, perhaps, the majority of the Church, yet comparatively unorganized, and therefore, especially at the outset, relatively helpless in the presence of a warfare with which it has no vital sympathy in either aspect, but which it seems, for the time, powerless to arrest. It sees both the good and the evil in what the radical progressives propose, and would be willing to accept the good, if the accompanying evil could be excluded.

So it sees the evil and the good in what the conservatives are urging, but while it sympathizes with their main purpose, is positively averse to the spirit they manifest and to the kind and measure of result which they are seeking to secure. At heart it is opposed both to revolutionary radicalism and to restrictive conservatism. It believes that a great Church, aspiring to be continental in magnitude, ought also to be broad and catholic in its teaching, genial in temper, tolerant toward all permissible varieties within the common domain of belief. It is ever ready to appreciate the new while cherishing the old; distrustful of all mere novelty, and void of sympathy with mischievous error, yet considerate in the exercise of well-defined authority with respect to new opinions, and ever hostile to whatever seems to savor of ecclesiastical domination.

This central party believes in Christian investigation and Christian progress, but it would have all the investigations of scholarship and all progressive movements moderated and tempered with that spirit of "sweet reasonableness," without which neither investigation nor movement can do any permanent good. It cherishes as supreme the sentiment of spiritual liberty as something cardinal in Protestantism, and is lenient even toward the aberrations of liberty so long as these do not lead on to dangerous license. Yet it does not ignore the claims of just denominationalism, and is firm to rebuke the advocate of liberty when in his ardor he crosses legitimate boundaries or unsettles faith. This party is also averse to all controversy as such, and most of all where the matters in issue are not vital enough to warrant strife, or valuable enough to furnish compensation for the mischiefs which such strife is sure to induce.

It seems to the writer that the time is now at hand when this great central party, constituting—as he believes—the large majority of our communion, and possessing all the resources necessary to decisive action, should assert itself as against extremists on either side, and by the utterance of its just, firm, temperate judgment, should put an end, if possible, to the unhappy controversy which has recently been precipitated upon our beloved Church. *Is this an impossible hope?* If it be, then this central party, large and really dominant as it now is, must gradually melt away into one extreme faction or the other and the whole Church fall into two hostile camps, pledged to inter-necine conflict, with the imperiling of all our grand common interests, and even the

shattering of the denomination into warring fragments as the possible, the final issue. Such dire results are certainly not necessary, not inevitable. There is assuredly a better way, a *Via Media*, which can be found, and in which the great body of our Church, without any compromise of either authority or liberty, of past belief or new truth, can pass with composure through the present turmoil into harmony and rest.

*Where is that golden middle way?*

Certainly it does not lie in any surrender of the substance of our accepted denominational belief. Our Church will continue to be, in a broad and generous, yet positive and uncompromising sense, Calvinistic, and this for the simple reason that it knows of no type of theology, no mode of stating systematically the essential truths of Christianity, equal to that which bears the name of the sage of Geneva. For example, it will not swerve in the least from the clear and strong statement of its Confession that certain named books, constituting the canonical Scriptures, "are given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life." It will accept and hold to the fuller declaration of the Revised Confession, that in these Scriptures the Holy Ghost "hath fully and authoritatively made known the mind and will of God in all things pertaining to life and salvation," and that these Scriptures are inspired in such sense and degree that they should be received by all as "the infallible Word of God, the supreme rule of faith and duty." But it will continue to regard these statements as full and sufficient, or at least will require that any proposed additions to them shall be introduced into its creed, not by ecclesiastical deliverances, however emphatic, but in the sole and only way prescribed in its venerated constitution.\* In respect to this, as to all other truths that are cardinal in its doctrinal system, it will demand, on one side, that there shall be no juggling with words, or "paltering in a double sense," or disloyalty to the accepted truth; and on the other side, that there shall be no imposition of partisan interpretations, no enforcement of rigid rules of subscription, no captious assault upon permissible varieties of belief.

At this point a special remark seems need-

\* It seems to be a question whether a certain sentence in a certain resolution of the last General Assembly is an actual addition to our Confession, as it seems to many to be, or only an ecclesiastical interpretation, as others claim, of what is in the Confession already. If it be an addition, it clearly is void of authority for the simple reason that it was not introduced into the Confession in the way prescribed in our Constitution. If it be a legitimate interpretation, then it contains no truth which was not already in the Confession which it professes to interpret: it cannot be imposed as in any sense a superadded article of belief.

ful. For two centuries the Presbyterian Church has been characterized by intelligent and generous appreciation of true scholarship in whatever sphere, and especially within the broad fields of systematic theology and Biblical exegesis. Principal Caven, in his admirable discourse before the Toronto Council, has described this historic attitude in terms which it would be difficult to improve. The grand fact is, that Presbyterianism in the old world and the new has always befriended the Christian scholar so long as his researches were conducted in a reverent spirit and in loving loyalty to the accepted Revelation. It has never invited him to leave its communion and conduct his inquiries outside of its fold; in its sober moments it never could take a step so much at variance with all its historic precedents. It has always borne long with troublesome scholastic speculations, and even with mischievous aberrations, so long as the foundations of its faith were not shaken. It has been ready to exhaust all the resources alike of wiser scholarship and of holy charity, rather than to bid those who trouble it by their doubtful teaching betake themselves elsewhere. This is the real attitude of our beloved Church at this critical hour, and no violence of party ought to be suffered to move it in the least from this strong position.

Nor will the Presbyterian Church at this juncture countenance any breaking down of her recognized form of government, or any revolutionary departure from those sound and just principles of administration which for the most part have commended her judicial procedures in times past. He who plays fast and loose with her polity, in the interest of either radicalism or a conservative tyranny, does so at his peril. Her discipline must be administered, with all its multiplied guards and checks, in the modes and manner prescribed by her organic law, and in no other way. But she well understands that such discipline is by no means her only or her highest agency for the correction of error; she realizes well that there are many grave questions which discipline, however exactly or rigidly conducted, is powerless to solve. The Presbyterian Church is, therefore, strongly averse to judicial processes, except in cases of the extremest necessity, and where other measures have been faithfully tried, and tried in vain. Least of all is she willing to see her polity perverted into an instrument either of partisan domination or of reckless trifling with constitutional law.

It may safely be said that the great mid-

dle party in our Church has no sympathy with the litigious spirit whenever and however exhibited. That party believes that ours is a system of distributed and limited powers, of careful and just balances, and of adequate safeguards against both tyranny and lawlessness. And while it will not sustain lawlessness under the name of liberty, neither will it submit to tyranny, even in the interest of orthodoxy. That party will not allow even General Assemblies to cross the well defined boundaries of their authority, or uphold them in any arbitrary assumption of jurisdiction. With exhortations to the indiscriminate prosecution of any class of supposed offenders within the pale of the Church; with encouragements to promiscuous litigations, even those emanating from the highest courts; that party has no sympathy. It holds, and will hold, that the humblest Presbytery has rights and prerogatives under the Constitution with which it is not legitimate even for Assemblies to interfere. It holds, and will hold, that under our Constitution, the humblest minister or member in our communion has rights and prerogatives with which the most powerful Presbytery may not intermeddle. And it believes, and will maintain, that there is no interest of even so sacred a doctrine as that of the full and adequate inspiration of Holy Scripture in all that pertains to belief and duty, which may be allowed even for a moment to work wrong to any man or any judicatory or organization within the Church. Here stands the great Middle Party, and here it will stand, and sooner or later its voice will be heard in solemn rebuke of whatever in any quarter savors of disregard to our organic law.

What is true in regard to doctrine and polity, is no less true in regard to the denominational spirit. There have been times in the history of American Presbyterianism when partisan heats have started great and destructive conflagrations; when the bad tempers of faction have aroused prejudices, encouraged strifes, destroyed friendships, ruptured churches, and wrought ruin in a hundred forms. And none know better than Presbyterians that such causes will always produce similar results, and that the only safeguard against them lies in the maintenance of a calm, deliberative, dispassionate spirit, whenever occasions of difference arise. Notwithstanding the popular notion to the contrary, it is not natural to a Presbyterian to be partisan. It is the habit of his mind to look on all sides of a matter, and after weighing all considerations, to reach, so far as possible, a calm and balanced judgment. Much and often as the

Presbyterian Church has broken into divisions, sometimes over slight issues, this better temper is one of its primal characteristics. A genuine Presbyterian is generally a wise and safe juror, and a Presbyterian court may, at least where strong personal antagonisms have not been developed, be expected to give a righteous and substantial verdict.

Just now the Middle Way lies in the preservation of this moderate, conciliatory temper, even in the presence of extraordinary provocations. To let partisanship rule at this juncture, would be ruinous; to listen to the counsels of noisy zealots, would be a sin. There are times when it is dangerous to give way even to a righteous indignation or a righteous disgust. Bishop Butler teaches that resentment is a feeling divinely implanted in man for his protection against moral injury inflicted by others; and in this aspect, even the Imprecatory Psalms may subserve a useful purpose. But he also points out the perils that spring up in the indulgence of such resentment, and in a great Church these perils may be incalculable. What is needed is a temper incapable of being carried away by passion, which can say to these waves of partisanship, "Peace, be still!" And when, without resentment, the Church in her dignity utters that command, the day of controversy will come speedily to an end.

Just now, when ecclesiastical trials are in progress in two prominent Presbyteries, and others are threatened, and when the whole Church is disturbed by present and prospective agitations, the writer ventures to send out from his quiet retreat this simple plea for the difficult, yet safe and happy, *Via Media*. He believes that it is not yet too late for the great Middle Party, for whom he presumes to speak, to utter an authoritative voice, that shall be heard and heeded above all partisan clamors; a voice that shall speak in tones of mediation as well as command, and shall restore to unity and peace the present tendencies toward strife and toward disastrous rupture. That party represents, as he believes, a large majority of the ministers and members of our Church, and has power enough to make its judgment and wishes felt, in the face of all extremists of whatsoever type. Upon that party rests a serious responsibility, and it will be a pitiable and shameful thing if it should not, at this juncture, let its conciliatory, yet commanding voice be heard. The Middle Way is the only way of righteousness or of safety, and the Middle Party is the only power that can harmonize and save the Church.