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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND THE PEACE OF THE WORLD.

BY THE REV. R. F. WRIGHT, M.A., LL.B., Vicar of Spring Grove, Middlesex.

ONE day when looking for books in a library which specializes in Missionary literature, I asked the librarian whether anything had been published on the contribution of Christian Missions to International Peace. My question seemed to cause some little surprise, and when I added that Missions had surely helped to stop war and so bring peace, I was met with the rejoinder, "But why?" Why, indeed! This is not the time or place here to discuss the theological or international implications of the Gospel, but if the "Good News" were not intended by God to make men love one another and so turn their swords into ploughshares; if the Lord Jesus were not to be the Prince of Peace in the fullest meaning of those words, then my reading of the New Testament is entirely wrong.

In the present study it will be our purpose to trace the influence of Christian Missions in establishing peace among the nations of the non-Christian world. It may be well, however, to meet at the beginning, an objection which will surely be raised. "Has not the preaching of Christianity often brought the sword?" Our answer will be a definite denial. That men, devoid of the Spirit of Christ, have used the occasion as an opportunity of strife, cannot be disputed, but the two factors remain separate, and should not be confused.

Now all peace efforts, if their fruits are to be permanent, must begin with the individual, for peace, like growth, comes from within: it cannot be imposed from without. The success or failure of the League of Nations will depend upon the will to peace among individuals. Herein lies the greatest contribution of Missionaries, for we believe that it is the Gospel which not only gives and demands the ideal of World Brotherhood but alone can supply the spiritual force to bring it into an accomplished fact. That our Missionaries have been ambassadors of peace cannot be denied; but from the very nature of the case, neither can their influence be easily tabulated. It may be that the best evidence is that which comes from soldiers and government officials.

Lord Roberts has been credited with the remark that one Dr. Pennell of Banu was worth more than a battalion of soldiers. But written evidence is not lacking.

Some few years before the Great War a letter was circulated privately among the officers of His Majesty's Forces, signed by three of the Field-Marschals, urging soldiers to remember when abroad among non-Christian people, that they were representatives

of a Christian country and that they should do all they could to help the Christian Missionaries because

"already the results of Christian Missions in many places are very striking. For instance, in the Uganda Protectorate there is now a prosperous and *peaceful* community of nearly 90,000 Christians where not one existed thirty years ago and where unutterable atrocities were of daily occurrence; whilst on the North-West Frontier of India the *pacific influence* of Missions among the fierce Pathan tribes has been of incalculable value to our Government."

After the experience of those devastating years 1914-18, the following note was added to the above and signed by Field-Marshal Haig, Plumer and Robertson, and Generals Horne and Rawlinson.

"We heartily endorse this letter. It was written before the great world war. . . . The experience of those intervening years of strife gives added emphasis to the truth of the statement which the letter contains. The passions from which war springs are not dead. There is only one hope of peace on earth and goodwill among men, and that lies in nations framing their ideals and their policy . . . on the teaching of Jesus Christ, the world's only social hope and the *sole promise of world peace.*"

From the soldier we turn to the diplomat.

Viscount Bryce, a great authority on legal and scientific subjects and British Ambassador at Washington from 1907-12, has asserted that

"the one sure hope for a permanent foundation of world peace lies in the extension of the principles of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth."

Viscount Gladstone, Governor-General of South Africa 1909-14, in writing about the Missionaries, said:

"the value of their work and influence is beyond words. . . . They not only spread the light of Christianity, but among the natives they are the great *humanizing factor.*"

Dr. Cheng Ting Wang, one of the Chinese Plenipotentiaries of the Versailles Peace Conference, has asserted that "we believe in Christianity we find mutual confidence, mutual service and mutual love."

These and a great many more lay testimonies to the humanizing efforts of Christian Missionaries may be found in a little book published in 1927 by the National Laymen's Missionary Movement. Let us not be tempted to think lightly of the work of the simple evangelist, for without it world peace will never come.

From that part of Missionary effort which has created a purer and more peaceful atmosphere and a will to peace among the less civilized inhabitants of the world, we will pass on to consider "tribal arbitration."

With the growth in civilization and education among the more backward races of the world, greater unity and national consciousness will naturally assert themselves and the tribe will be merged in the nation, the community will give place to the country: and so that part of the Missionary's opportunity for tribal arbitration will pass to the League of Nations. But the contribution of

Missions in this respect, although limited, has not been unimportant in the past.

In the midst of barbarous tribes whose only law was that of murder and plunder, the Christian Missionary was often called upon to make peaceful arbitration between warrior tribes. To make this point clear and more interesting it may be well to quote from the biography of a remarkable woman—Mary Slessor of Calabar—the Dundee factory girl who became the most outstanding woman Missionary of the last century. For the fascinating story of her life and work, the reader must consult Mr. W. P. Livingstone's biography. It is only one phase of her work which concerns us here.

In the year 1888 she was the only white woman among the savage tribes of Okoyong. Here she started her brave work and laboured among them till the day of her death. Her profound knowledge of the native life and language, her self-denying labour of love and wisdom qualified her in a unique way to act as their arbitrator. On one occasion news was spread abroad that two tribes were about to fight. She proceeded immediately to the scene of action and although her heart was beating wildly, she stood between the opposing forces until each side had piled up their arms on the ground some five feet high. She was constantly present at tribal palavers. On one occasion she sat for ten hours arbitrating between two sections of the Okoyong people, amidst war-like chiefs, well armed and well attended with warriors ready to fight to a conclusion. But at the end of the day, this simple woman summed up the case, gave her judgment, a freeman from both sides came forward and she administered the native oath. The atmosphere then cleared and the whole company, abandoning their suspicions, gave themselves up to merriment and fun, and Mary returned home, a four-miles' journey, tired but happy. Space does not permit of a detailed account of the peace mission which Mary Slessor conducted; how she insisted that the savage chiefs of Okoyong should accompany her to king Ego of Calabar, unarmed, and with expressions of goodwill make terms of peace and trade.

So remarkable was her genius for settling native disputes that her peace efforts were recognized by the British Government.

“At a great gathering in the Goldie Memorial Hall (Duke Town) a little wrinkled woman in straw hat, old cotton dress and list shoes sat on the platform with her face buried in her hands, too overcome at first to reply to those who had spoken only in just appreciation of her great work. ‘Who am I that I should have this?’ she asked. ‘If I have done anything in my life it has been easy because the Master has gone before.’”

She received the royal decoration of the Silver Cross of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England.

Let it not be assumed that this is an isolated instance in the history of Missions. Tribal arbitration by Missionaries has not infrequently played an important if unrecorded part. From Africa of the last century turn to China of the present. Sir John

Jordan (Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Peking from 1906-20), writing in 1917, said :

“ It is simply marvellous the influence that Missionaries have had during the recent troublous times of the last five years. There have been cases in which Missionaries have been called in to mediate frequently between opposing armies, and averted considerable bloodshed. . . . Apart from their medical, educational and evangelistic work, they render services of untold benefit to the Chinese people in all the great natural crises through which China passes.”

This may sound less romantic than the story of Okoyong, but it is none the less important. However, tribal or internecine warfare must eventually disappear and give place to central government even among the most backward nations of the world. But as the child races grow into adolescence to take their places amongst the great powers, will they regard their neighbours as brothers or enemies? Everything will depend upon the attitude of the greater powers during these intervening years. One thing is certain. The future peace of the world will be greatly influenced by the fact that in the historical background of the nations will be seen against the horrors of warfare and the lust of conquest and mutual suspicion, the light of a loving and self-sacrificing service of men and women, who, without force of arms or hope of worldly gain, came to preach peace, heal the sick and teach the child. This has already been recognized by both governments and natives. It has been officially stated that

“ to the Missionaries, indirectly, Uganda owed its discovery. To them . . . it owed its first industrial work, carpentry, brick-making, printing, and also the cultivation of coffee and other products. By them the language was first reduced to writing and almost all available literature in Luganda is the result of Missionary labours.”

The official *Handbook of Uganda* for 1920 proceeds by paying a high tribute to the Medical and Educational Missions and the influence of Bishop Tucker and his successful efforts with the Christian chiefs in abolishing slavery. “ Many barbarous and superstitious practices have been abandoned and the social life of the native has been appreciably raised.”

At the annual meeting of the U.M.C.A. in London this year, a native clerk in Rhodesian Government Service addressed the audience in these words :

“ My fathers, my mothers, my sisters and my brothers, I ask leave to address you in this way, for I and my native brothers and sisters, my parents and their people owe everything under God, to you. Your Missionaries taught us to read and to write, gave us education and the love of Jesus Christ.”

Until recently, practically all education in Africa was in the hands of the Missionaries. In India, the value and extent of the educational work is on a different scale but equally important. Lord Reading, who was Viceroy and Governor-General of India

1921-6 and who is not a member of the Christian Church, has written :

“ Every administrator in India must acknowledge that the educational system of India was created and developed by the Missionaries . . . that the human contacts of one race and colour with another race and colour, which are creating a new India, were the direct result of the preaching and the practising of the brotherhood of man by the Missionaries.”

Of the female population, 21 per 1,000 are literate ; but of the Christian females, the percentage is ten times as great. There are more educational Missionaries in India than evangelistic.

What has been said of educational work is equally true of Medical Missions. Few things more effectively make for true brotherhood than practical sympathy, and it must be readily admitted that the tendency to suspicion, antagonism and warfare has been greatly reduced by the establishment of Christian doctors, Mission Hospitals and dispensaries in the poorest and most remote parts of the non-Christian world. Education and Medical Science must, like the Gospel, be International.

We believe, we are sure, that in the future Peace Conferences of the whole family of nations, in which the younger nationalities will take an increasingly important part, the contribution of Christian Missions will not be forgotten.

Africa, China and India have been quoted and doubtless they are among the most important of the non-Christian races, but an interesting illustration, hitherto unpublished, may be taken from South America. In the early years of the South American Missionary Society's work among the Chaco Indians of Paraguay, Mr. W. Barbrooke Grubb, one of the most intrepid and far-seeing Missionaries of the last century, initiated the “ Indian Co-operative Society.” It came about in this way. The question of food both for the native Christian and the Missionary was becoming acute as food had to be brought up from the river at great cost and difficulty. When home on furlough Mr. Grubb suggested to the Home Committee that if the Society could provide fifty head of cattle, these would increase and the proceeds would help to buy land for the Indians. The committee in effect said that it would involve “ Missionary Trading ” and to this they could not assent. However, in the end Barbrooke Grubb got his cattle and with the increasing profits a considerable amount of land has been bought for the Indians, for whom it is held in trust by legally appointed Trustees under the Indian Co-operative Society, which is really a branch of the South American Missionary Society, until such time as the natives can take it over for themselves. The rules allow any Indian to settle on the land and he is not obliged to become a Christian, though he usually ends in that condition ; but he has to behave properly. Thus the natives have carefully selected land, not granted as a gift to a dying race as in some other parts of the world, but held with title-deeds as the possession of a virile and intelligent and self-supporting people under the Trusteeship of a Christian organization. When we remember that a considerable

part of the wars of the world have been caused by the question of the possession of land, it will be seen that even this small contribution of the Missionary is not without its value in the peace of the world. But it is significant in foreshadowing Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant of 1919 regarding Mandated territories. In that article of the Covenant it is laid down that

“to those territories which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilization.”

Accordingly, the League has entrusted these peoples to the more advanced nations as Mandatories, and this sacred trust forms part of the Versailles Treaty of 1919; but a generation before, a humble Missionary had put into practice something very similar if not identical.

In the past, Christian Missions have contributed much to the peace of the world among the backward races in preaching peace and the need of a new birth; in tribal arbitration; in dissipating suspicion and hatred, by means of such good works as Education and Medical Missions; in setting an example of the sacred trust of mandated territory.

The challenge before the Church of Christ to-day is: Are we ready, with the same devotion and the same self-sacrifice, to bring to bear upon the nations of the world, the Mind of Christ, for “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee”?

SOME MASTERPIECES OF THE THEATRE. By W. J. Walkerdine.
Mitre Press. 5s.

It is encouraging to find that there are audiences willing to listen to lectures on Tragedy, ancient and modern, and assuredly there will be many readers who will appreciate their presentation in book form.

The author defines Tragedy as the history of a moral crisis, revealing and developing character. This he illustrates from Sophocles and Shakespeare, giving an analysis of the action and characters (1) in the *Electra*, showing “the glory of decision”; (2) in the *Antigone*, “the importance of right thinking; in *Hamlet*, “the danger of hesitation”—though we are still left much in the dark as to exact character which the poet intended to portray in the Prince of Denmark.

We cannot but agree with the author that such ancient literature is much more wholesome and ennobling than most of modern fiction and drama.