

DUTY OF THE CHURCH TO THE EMPIRE AND THE WORLD.

ESPECIALLY TO AFRICA.

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THE duty of the Church to Africa is so obviously that of evangelization that I do not propose to take up the time of the Congress in discussing it. What I presume is meant by the title of our subject is not so much the duty itself, as the way in which that duty is to be fulfilled. That, of course, involves certain broad principles of action in relation to the problems to be solved.

Now, it is clearly impossible in twenty minutes to discuss the great and differing problems which confront the Church in North, Central, West, and Southern Africa. They are so tremendous, so complex, so diverse that each one really needs separate treatment. I submit, therefore, that it will be better for me to confine my remarks this evening to general principles which while particularly applicable to the great animistic peoples of Central Africa, of whom I have some knowledge, are also I believe the principles on which all our missionary enterprise in Africa should be based—that is, if each of the peoples of that great continent is to preserve anything of its individuality in racial characteristic or national life and thus be in a position to bring its own special contribution to the ultimate perfection of the Church.

That there should be such a special contribution I cannot but believe is a part of the divine purpose and plan concerning humanity and the Church. In no other way can we account for that extraordinary and infinite variety of life with which we are face to face in Africa. Suffer me to illustrate the thought which is in my mind.

Some time ago I found myself in an Arab dhow on the Indian Ocean. We were running before the south-west monsoon along the east coast of Africa. It was a strange medley of sight and sound which struck both ear and eye. The swish of the waves, the creaking of the timbers, the rattling of the cordage, the hoarse cries of the sailormen combined with the babel of sounds of the different languages spoken by the motley crowd of passengers which filled the waist of the ship I shall never forget. The sound is ringing in my ears to-day. And then the sight. It was the strangest commingling of races it has ever been my lot to see—white, black, brown, and yellow. There was the Arab and the Swahili, the Muganda and the Musoga, the Indian and the Somali, the savage with his fetish, the Mahomedan with his prayer mat. And one could not but ask one's self the question, "What is the Divine purpose and plan concerning that great multitude of souls represented in this Arab dhow rushing through the surging waves of the Indian Ocean?"

Is there a design in the mind of Him who has said, "All souls are mine," and "who is Lord over all"? Can we doubt it? Irresistibly there rushed into one's mind the thought to which I am trying to give expression, namely, that each one of these races shall bring its own special contribution in mind, or heart, or life, call it what you will, in racial or national characteristic which will have its place in the glorious mosaic of the ultimate perfection of the Church.

That, I believe, is the answer to the question suggested by that scene in the Arab dhow—that is why life in Africa is so strangely, so infinitely varied, for, as a recent writer has said, it is out of such elements are these, multiplied through all generations, past, present, and to come, that the ultimate perfection will be wrought, when we shall all come, white, black, brown, and yellow, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

Now, there are three influences continually at work in the mission field affecting the development of churches on national or racial lines, either hastening or retarding it. *First*, the influence of the evangelist himself, and later that of the ministry. *Secondly*, that of government—Church government; and *thirdly*, the mighty influence of education. May I be permitted to say a few words with regard to each of these.

I. First, then, with regard to the evangelist. I would say let him as far as possible be the native himself. The value of the native evangelist is too little understood, entirely under-estimated, and far too often ignored. Let the Church in the homeland thrust forth her forces into the great continent of Africa as in duty she is bound to do, but not with the idea of carrying on the work of evangelization herself, at her own expense, at an awful cost of both men and means, but with the clear and definitely formed plan of using to the very utmost the native himself in the great task entrusted to her hands.

The missionary, in my opinion, should give himself up more and more to the work of training the evangelist. This should not be a by-product of our missionary enterprise, but its primary work. Train, train, train, is the one word in which I would sum up this great principle for which I am contending. The native going forth with simply his sleeping mat and his books—the weapons of his warfare—settling down among the people to whom he is sent as friend and companion as well as teacher, understanding as no European can ever do, manners and customs, mind and mode of thought, will hand on the truth which he himself has received, with his own illustrations, with his own methods, in the way best calculated to win the souls Christ has taught him to love.

This is the policy which from the very beginning we have consistently pursued in Uganda, with the result that whereas some two and twenty years ago there were but some two hundred baptized Christians in the country, to-day there is a living Church of eighty thousand baptized souls, and—this is the point—a point of tremendous importance, without, so far as I am aware, the denationalization of a single soul. These Christians live their life at Bagarda, with all their national and racial characteristics intact, but adorned and beautified, I would fain hope and believe, with Christian grace and graces.

And as the Church so planted grows and develops, the native ministry should grow and develop on the same lines. The threefold order of bishop, priests, and deacons, we regard, and no doubt rightly so, as necessary for the effectual building up of the Church. But how many of the accompaniments of the ministry as we find it in many parts of the mission field to-day are non-essential and purely Anglican. Dress, for instance—black clothes, the white tie, cap and gown, food, house accommodation—all of which are calculated to separate the pastor from his flock, and to hinder the development of the Church on national lines.

Then look at the great gap which oftentimes we find existing in the mission field between the rank and file of the Christians and the ordained ministry owing to our fossilized ideas as to the qualifications necessary for admission, say, to the order of deacon. How is it to be bridged? Is it not possible to be a little more primitive in our notions than we are? I would submit that character and spirituality of life are far more important qualifications for admission to the ministry than ability to pass certain literary tests. If the Church in the mission field is to be developed on national lines with the preservation of all that is good in national life there must be a great extension of the native ministry, a vastly larger number of men and women trained in accordance with native ideas, and with their hearts in fullest sympathy with their own national life, ideals, and aspirations.

II. The second great principle on which I would insist if the work of evangelization and the building up of the Church is to proceed on the lines which I have indicated, is that Church government should as far as possible be based on national or tribal methods of administration. We should adapt ourselves as far as possible to local circumstances. We should endeavour to discover the bent of the native mind. We should continually ask ourselves the question, "What is the genius of this people in the matter of government?" Anything that we can lay hold of in the native method of administration and use for the purposes of the Church will be a distinct gain and will help materially in the direction of development on native lines.

We have found it to be so in Uganda where the whole of our system of Church government is based upon the native system of civil administration. The result is that there is nothing foreign about our Church constitution. It is understood even by the humblest member of the Church, and is worked intelligently from the top to the bottom.

And here let me utter a word of warning. It is with regard to the bearing which the use of outside funds—foreign money, in fact—has on the question of the development of the Church on native lines. It must always be borne in mind that when outside funds are used there will, sooner or later, follow outside control, and outside control spells death to healthy development from within. The power of the purse in hindering the natural growth and development of native Churches is truly appalling. Nothing is so fruitful of disaster in my opinion as the misuse of outside funds.

The fact is the missionary does not realize oftentimes as fully as he ought, that in using outside funds for purposes for which the native Church should be responsible, he is inflicting an actual injury upon that

Church. He is depriving her of a privilege to which she has a right of enjoyment. He is retarding her realization of the great principle of self-support, and ultimately the prospect of her becoming a missionary Church. He is for the time being injuring, if not permanently marring, her development, and thus he is depriving the whole body of the Church of that special contribution which that particular Church is able to make towards its future completeness.

III. And then, thirdly, I would say that it is the duty of the Church to see that the mighty influence of education in Africa is directed towards the same great end.

I cannot but feel that much time has been lost and much energy wasted through education in many parts of the mission field not being in the vernacular. I cannot speak with any authority of India, but I am under the impression that it is being realized that the policy hitherto pursued there in educational matters has been to a large extent a mistaken one—that education in the vernacular has been far too much neglected, and that the Anglicizing of education has not tended to the moulding of the national character in the direction we had hoped for. I do not know how it has been in South Africa, but I am under the same impression with regard to education there—that it has tended to denationalize.

Now in Uganda, if there is one thing more than another which we have striven our utmost to guard against, it is that which I think is the greatest of all mistakes—the turning out of men and women out of sympathy with their own people, out of touch with their lives and estranged from their ideals. The whole of our primary education has been in the vernacular, with the result that whilst twenty years ago we had hardly any Christians in our schools, to-day we have between fifty and sixty thousand.

I believe with all my heart and soul that this question of education in the vernacular is intimately—nay, vitally, bound up with the preservation of those national and racial characteristics which, deepened, developed, and sanctified by the power of the Holy Ghost, will be enlisted in the service of the Church of the future in Africa, which is destined to play its part and have its share, and that no small one, in the fulfilment of the Divine purpose concerning humanity at large.

IV. In conclusion, then, I would humbly submit that these various considerations impose upon the Church the binding obligation in all her missionary enterprise of enlisting, of laying hold of, of utilizing as far as possible all that which is nationally characteristic, such as the methods employed in the administration of justice—as a guide to the efficient exercise of Church discipline, and remember that the African is most submissive to authority—the political organization of the country as helpful in Church organization—the use of the native himself as the evangelist, and the employment of the rank and file of the Church as an immensely enlarged native ministry of men and women, and in the education of the young, the continued use of the vernacular and the scrupulous avoidance of everything calculated to denationalize.

All that on the one hand, and on the other hand it seems to me that it is necessary that all engaged in missionary work, from the Bishop down to the humblest member of the mission staff, should enter into

a covenant with themselves that those national characteristics which, more or less, are found in every one of us, and which, whether we desire it or not, impress themselves on those with whom we come in contact, and especially upon those who have been called the child races of the world, like the animistic peoples of Central Africa, should, as far as possible, so far as we have any part or lot in the matter, be in abeyance, be kept out of sight.

The missionary's spiritual characteristics. Yes! Let them have full play—the fullest play. But that which is purely Anglican, and by Anglican I mean national, let that, if possible, be kept in the background.

I know that this is a hard saying. It is so difficult to pass sincerely and truly a self-denying ordinance of this kind. The Anglo-Saxon temperament is a masterful one, and no doubt in matters political it has played a great part in the making of the nations, and in days to come it is destined, I believe, to play even a greater part. But in the building up of the Church of our Divine Lord and Master, other forces must have play, other qualities must find place if she is to be complete in all her parts.

There must be the conservation of all that is good in racial characteristics—the African's intense belief in the reality of the unseen, his submission to discipline, his child-like faith, his patience, his gentleness, his capacity for teaching, all these must be enlisted in the service of the Church, that they may play their part and have their share in the final consummation when our Divine Lord and Master shall present it to Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish.

