

THE
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I.

THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

THERE are some special reasons which urge this subject upon our attention.

First. There is an attempt in some directions to lower the choice of the Ministry to the same level with that of any other profession or avocation in life. It is claimed that men are called to the Ministry in the same way in which they are called to be Farmers, Merchants, Lawyers, or Physicians. The question would then be one simply of expediency and aptitude. The conditions of the choice would be the tastes and preferences of each individual, together with his talents and qualifications and such outward indications of Providence as seemed more favorable to the Ministry than to any other occupation.

This theory overlooks the *Divine character* of the Ministerial office. The Minister is no longer a *Mediatorial gift* to the Church.

It ignores also the immediate Headship of Jesus Christ over his Church. He no longer can say to Ministers, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

It sets aside also the *Divine Call* of the Spirit. It is no longer "the Holy Ghost who" makes them overseers of the flock.

A *second* reason which urges this subject upon our attention is the fact that while some go to the extreme which I have just mentioned and deny the necessity of the Spirit's call, there are others who fly to the opposite extreme, and so emphasize the internal call of the Spirit as to render appointment to office or ordination or any authentication by the Church entirely unnecessary. Upon this theory any man who can persuade himself that he is called by the

VII.

HISTORICAL NOTE.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE SYNOD OF BRAZIL.

THE first effort to introduce the Protestant faith into Brazil was made in 1555, when a colony of Huguenots was sent by Admiral Coligny and supplied with ministers and teachers by Calvin. This was the first foreign mission of the Reformation. They established themselves on the island of Villegagnon, and afterward laid the foundations of the city of Rio de Janeiro. They were cruelly betrayed, persecuted, and scattered. In 1640 the Dutch did some mission work among the Indians on the northern coast, but with no lasting results. In 1836 the Methodist Episcopal Church South established a mission at Rio de Janeiro which continued six years.

Rev. J. Leighton Wilson, D.D., was the father of permanent Protestant missions in Brazil. While secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, he called the attention of the Church to this great empire. In 1859 he induced Rev. Ashbel Green Simonton to begin mission-work at Rio de Janeiro. In 1862 a church was there organized, and in 1865 the Presbytery of Rio de Janeiro was formed, which now (1888) has 20 ministers, 32 churches, and 2075 communicants. When the Southern Presbyterian Church was established, Dr. Wilson became the secretary of its Executive Committee for Foreign Missions, and selected Brazil as one of the three foreign fields to be sustained. In 1869 the first missionaries—Rev. Edward Lane and Rev. G. N. Morton—were sent out and began their work at Campinas. Several stations have been established in the Provinces of São Paulo and Minas Geraes, in the south, and of Pernambuco, Ceará, and Maranhão, in the north. These have now 12 ministers, 15 churches, and over 500 communicants, which until lately have been connected with home presbyteries.

A cordial feeling has always existed in Brazil between the missionaries of the Northern and Southern churches. For several years the conviction has been spreading that more intimate relations and organic union would greatly strengthen them. In March, 1885, a plan of union was adopted by the Presbytery of Rio de Janeiro. It proposed the organization of a Presbyterian Church in Brazil, ecclesiastically independent of the churches in the United States, that its symbols should be the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms of the Westminster Assembly, and the Book of Order (of the Southern Church), with certain modifications to be previously agreed upon, and that the mission relations with the churches in the United States and their Boards should continue.

This plan was sent to the various stations, and received hearty endorsement. According to its suggestion, the Presbytery of Campinas and Minas was formed in 1886, without ecclesiastical connection with any Synod in the United States. And in the same manner the Presbytery of Pernambuco was organized, August 17th of this year.

This movement received also the full approbation of both General Assemblies. That of the Southern Church, in 1887, passed a resolution approving of the missionaries and churches under its care in Brazil combining with those of our Church to form a Synod, and thus accomplish the unification of the Presbyterian Church in Brazil. In 1876 the Presbyterian Alliance in India asked the authorization of steps toward "the ultimately complete organization of a Presbyterian Church in India." After three years' consideration, our General Assembly declared its future policy "in regions occupied by the Board and by the missions of other Presbyterian denominations, missionary churches, Presbyteries, and Synods holding the same faith and order, should be encouraged to enter into organic relations with each other for joint work in the common field." This was reiterated in 1886. And the next year the Assembly declared "that in order to build up independent national churches holding to the Reformed doctrine and the Presbyterian polity on foreign fields, the more general and complete identification of our missionaries with the native ministers and churches and other foreign missionaries on these fields is of the most vital importance, and needs to be pushed forward as rapidly as is consistent with a due regard to the interests of all parties to these unions." It was, therefore, in accordance with this declared policy of our Church that the Presbytery of Rio de Janeiro acted in proposing the plan of union and preparing for the organization of an independent Presbyterian Church in Brazil. At the last General Assembly it was announced that "the native churches in that empire are passing to self-support and arranging, by a reconstruction of Presbyteries and union with churches in connection with the Southern Presbyterian Church, to form the Synod of Brazil, thus constituting one national church." It was resolved,

"That a committee of seven, four ministers and three elders, be appointed to attend the annual sessions of the Presbytery of Rio de Janeiro, to be convened in the city of Rio de Janeiro on the last Thursday of August of this year, to serve as the Advisory Council to our brethren at the organization of the Synod of Brazil—the future General Assembly of that great empire."

The committee was appointed, with power to fill vacancies. None of the original committee were able to go. Rev. J. Aspinwall Hodge, D.D., of Hartford, Conn., and Professor Charles E. Knox, D.D., of Bloomfield, N. J., were appointed, and they performed the mission. Rev. G. W. Chamberlain, of São Paulo, accompanied them.

The General Council of the Presbyterian Alliance, which met in July last in London, passed the following resolution :

"That the Council has listened with much interest to the statement of the Rev. E. Van Orden, with reference to the approaching union of the two branches of the Church in Brazil, and instructs their beloved brother to carry back with him to the field of his

love and labor a very cordial expression of the sympathy of the Alliance in the union so soon to be consummated, and its fervent prayer that it may issue in very blessed practical and permanent results."

The committee of the General Assembly had ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with the missionaries and native ministers of the Northern and Southern churches. At Pernambuco they were joined on the steamer by the new Presbytery of Pernambuco. At São Paulo they met the members of the Presbytery of Campinas and Minas, and journeyed with them to Rio de Janeiro, where was gathered the Presbytery of our Northern Church. At Maranhão, Pernambuco, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, they met the Sabbath or mid-week congregations, learned something of their methods of mission work, and at the latter place examined their important educational systems. It was found that these missionaries and native ministers were in perfect accord. They had no prejudices to be removed nor conflicting principles to be harmonized. They realized the importance of organic union, and were eager for its realization. The color question demanded no consideration. It is utterly ignored in every congregation. The only black member of the new Synod was a much-beloved Ruling Elder from a church connected with the one of the missions of the Southern Church. The other obstacles which hinder the union of our churches in this country did not present themselves in Brazil. The missionaries expressed great sorrow in breaking the ties which bound them to the home churches, but they had labored for this union from mutual love, and, as the moderator of the Synod afterward said in his address to the committee, "from a sense of duty, from a deep conviction that we could thus better promote the interests of the kingdom of God. One in doctrine, polity, and aim, there was nothing here that should keep us any longer apart. We believed that loyalty to our Redeemer and to His cause required us to make patent the unity which in reality existed." Nor was there any want of confidence between the missionaries and the native ministers, nor difference of opinion as to methods of labor, nor hesitation in seeking full identification.

The committee spent several days on the steamer with the Presbytery of Pernambuco and representatives of the other two Presbyteries, in making a careful examination of the plan of union, the symbols of faith, the Book of Order, and especially the changes to be proposed in the form of government. These changes did not involve any of the principles of our Presbyterian polity. They consisted in the recognition of the Synod as the highest judicatory until a General Assembly shall be formed, in determining the number and character of the agencies to be used in Church work and in authorizing lay helpers, male and female, under sessional and presbyterial control. This last provision, although strongly urged by some, was not introduced into the constitution, but was by the Synod approved as a provisional measure for a three years' trial. These consultations and the conferences of the Presbyteries at Rio de Janeiro were conducted with perfect harmony, painstaking care, and fidelity to the principles of doctrine and polity involved. Nothing was admitted in the constitution that did not receive a two-thirds vote of all the Presbyteries.

The Synod was organized on the evening of September 6th, in the First Presbyterian Church of Rio de Janeiro. After the sermon, by Rev. E. Lane, the plan of union was read, and the members of the Synod gave their assent and afterward subscribed their names. Rev. A. L. Blackford, D.D., was elected Moderator, Rev. E. Lane, Vice-Moderator, and native pastors stated and temporary clerks. The next evening the Synod received the salutations of our Assembly by the committee; of the Reformed (Dutch) Church by letter; of the Methodist Episcopal Church South by Bishop J. C. Grandberry; and the resolution of congratulations of the Council of the Presbyterian Alliance. The sessions continued until September 13th. The boundaries of four Presbyteries were determined—Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Minas, and Pernambuco. It was resolved to establish as soon as possible a Theological Seminary at Rio de Janeiro, and Rev. A. L. Blackford, D.D., and Rev. J. R. Smith were nominated as Professors. And three Boards, or Executive Committees, were formed—of Mission (Home and Foreign), of Education, and of Publication. The Synod then adjourned to meet on the first Thursday of September, 1891.

The rapid growth of these missions, the union so happily consummated, and the full development at this time of this Brazilian Church were not fortuitous circumstances. Nor were they merely the results of proper Christian spirit and the carrying out of an approved policy. Under God's providence no event is fortuitous or isolated. All events are parts of His plan. When He creates a man, there is a garden already planted for him to till. When Christ organizes an apostolic band the fields are white unto the harvest, and the twelve are necessitated to pray for more laborers. Simultaneously with the growth and development of the Presbyterian Church in Brazil other changes have been made with marvellous rapidity. These are religious, social, and political, all are intimately connected and have a close relation to missions. The Romish Church has had in Brazil a peculiar history. It was made by the Portuguese the State religion, and received full power to develop and exercise its energies. It was far removed from the modifying restraints of civilized nations and from the influence of the Reformed churches and communities. For more than two hundred years it was undisturbed by the presence of Protestant teachers. It had full scope to reveal its real character, develop its resources, and prove what it could do for the nation and for heathen Indian tribes. The results have not been satisfactory to itself nor to the people. Its churches, for the most part, are old and out of repair. Its services, which once rivalled in splendor even those in Rome, fail to attract. Its priests have lost political influence and even official and personal respect. The masses are uneducated. The facts and principles of Christianity are almost unknown. The people either practise the grossest forms of superstition and idolatry or declare themselves free from all religious restraints and beliefs. Immorality is very prevalent, and is unrebuked. This state of affairs naturally caused alarm and inquiry. The priests have been advised by the Emperor to regain their power by instructing the people. Men have been asking is there a revelation from

God, and what is His plan of salvation. The present crisis has been long foreseen. For political reasons, religious toleration has been secured by an article in the constitution, in the face of priestly opposition. The Government has granted protection to Protestants in their public and private worship. The remaining restrictions are fast being removed. The Liberals and the Republicans, the two growing political parties, for various reasons, are contending for the disestablishment of the Romish Church and the granting of full liberty to all denominations. This will be accomplished before long. Public and private schools have been established and are encouraged. The Portuguese Bibles, introduced by Rev. J. C. Fletcher, in 1851, although many have been burned, have penetrated into the far interior and are still accomplishing wonderful results, and those carried by Bible agents and our missionaries are eagerly received. Wherever any one will read or preach the Word of God an audience will gather to hear. The whole country is open to mission laborers, and these will be protected by the Government.

The social changes are as marked and culminating. The former seclusion of women of the highest rank, is no longer enforced. Class distinctions are disappearing. An amalgamation of the three races Portuguese, Indian, and negro, is rapidly progressing. Color and previous condition are not disqualifications to social, professional, military, or political positions. The manners and customs of other nations are being introduced. Immigration has been encouraged, and great numbers from all lands, civilized and uncivilized, are hastening to fill up the unoccupied land and to modify and develop the character of the nation. Politicians regard this immigration as a vital necessity to the prosperity of the empire, and are removing every hindrance. They are laboring, therefore, to secure liberty of worship, and last May enacted the immediate emancipation of the slaves. The necessary social effects of this act are already apparent, and greater changes will be accomplished in the near future. These transformations are radical, and are advancing with wonderful rapidity. They not only offer peculiar opportunities to our missionary operations, but demand of the Church increased labor in this crisis of moulding and determining social conditions, and among these various classes now brought within her influence.

The political changes are closely connected with the religious and social, and are keeping step in the rapid march toward a crisis not far off. The Romish Church has brought itself into contempt and excited a dread of its political and religious influence. The rise of the Liberal Party and the rapid growth of the Republican have, in a great measure, been effected by this anti-Catholic feeling. Their principles and plans are clearly expressed with increasing freedom of speech in publications, and even in the halls of legislation. Their measures are very significant, such as the Toleration act, the abolition of monastic institutions, the Rio Branco law, the emancipation of the slaves, the eligibility of non-Catholics to office, the Liberty-of Worship bill passed by the Senate, and called for in the Lower House, the amendment excusing deputies from the oath to support the Romish Church and the monarchy, the proposition to extend to the Senators like liberty, the avowed purpose to disestablish

the Church and prevent priestly influence over the heads of the Government, and the project of transforming the empire into a Republic. The whole political aspect is intensely interesting. Each new step is in the same direction. The three parties are eagerly watching and preparing for the crisis, which is delayed only by the precarious health of the respected and liberal-minded Emperor.

It is at this important epoch in the history of Brazil, when religious, social, and political changes are hastening to a common issue ; when each movement opens new fields and opportunities for mission-work ; when Protestant Christianity is the influence most needed by the nation and people, that our Presbyterian churches have united in that land and organized the Synod of Brazil. The magnitude of the work before them is appreciated. They are taxing all their energies. Their earnest call for help must not be disregarded.

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