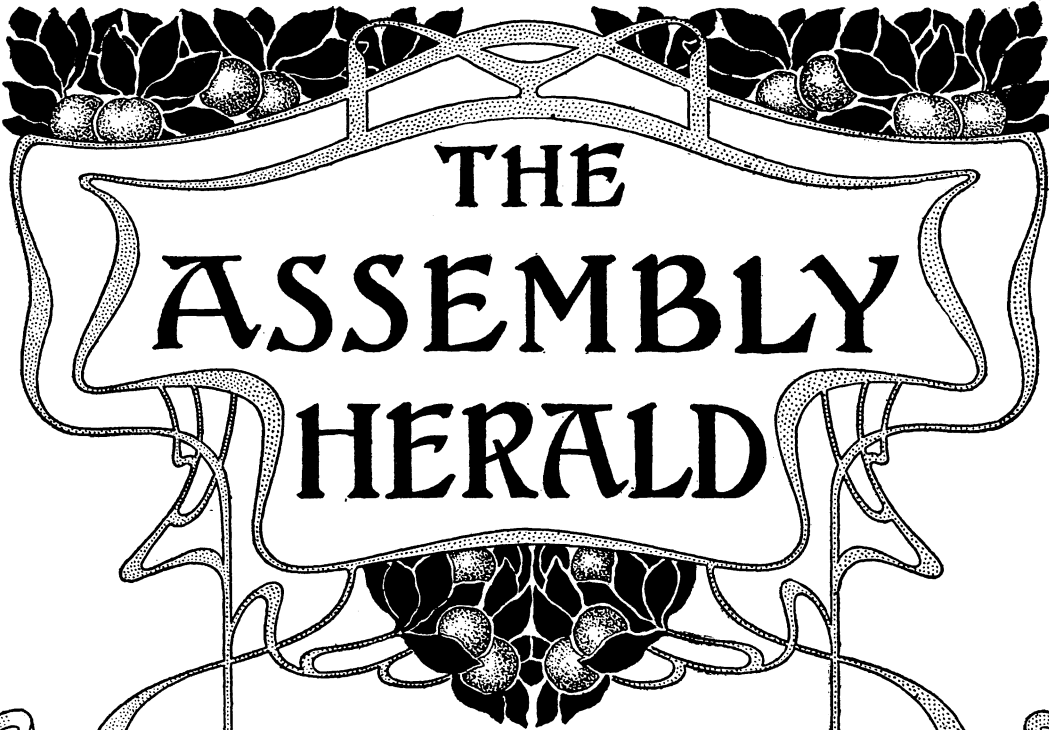


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*America's Position and Prestige**

By Charles L. Thompson, D.D.

There has been a change of front. We have a new position. Let us try to define it. It is not so very long since our only front was on the Atlantic coast, and it was pretty much all "front" then and one indeed which we were quite willing to conceal in primitive woods. We were a refuge and our immigrants were refugees and we wanted no European connection—the Atlantic could not be too broad for us. But as the seeds of civil and religious liberty flung on that coast were living seeds, they sprouted and grew. The result has been expansion—rather, expansions.

We need not quarrel with the word nor locate it in our recent history, for our history from the first has been one of repeated and ever-widening expansions,—every one of them under the push and power of moral or religious ideas.

EXPANSIONS.

Thus our first existence was religiously determined. Our expansion into the old Northwest was declared to be in the interest of liberty, education, morality, and religion. Our expansion across the Mississippi was the assertion of our Protestant Christianity as against the claims of French Catholicism. Our expansion into the far Northwest and our settlements there were under home missionary leadership. And our recent reach into the seas of the Atlantic and Pacific was under the power of the altruistic motive to help people who needed our help.

In all of our expansions we have been teachers of the nations. It has not been greed of gain. It has been the irresistible impulse and perseverance of Christian ideals.

Our Revolutionary War was at the behest of a nation's right to liberty. Its results were at once felt in Europe; first in France, culminating in her revolution, and afterward in other European countries where America's example and influence told always for popular rights and popular education.

Our Civil War was in the interest of freedom on our own shores. Though getting small sympathy from Europe at the time, it is now acknowledged there to have been a stimulus to liberty and progress throughout the world.

Our last war, resulting in increased territory, originated in no desire for it but purely in the purpose to succor the oppressed. The moral influence of it has gone to the Philippines and the West Indies, and is felt to-day in the republics of South America.

So our expansion has meant enlarged world frontage for the display of moral ideals which are to the uplifting of the nations.

This new position brings prestige. During the last ten years this republic has become the cynosure of all eyes. Prestige is defined as the moral influence of character or success. We have the prestige that comes from success. Our counsels are potent now among the counsels of the nations of the earth; our commerce is getting a hold on countries it had not touched before; and our political influence is reckoned with wherever there is political debate.

PRESTIGE OF CHARACTER.

But our prestige at last is based on national character. See the directions in which that national character appears:

* The general Home Mission topic for January is "Standard of Christianity in America."

First of all, in a certain high quality of manhood. Our prestige is that of a Christian nation. Doctrinaires may hedge and quibble about that phrase as they choose; their only ground of quibbling is that we are not a Christian nation by declaration of the Constitution or formal act of the Government. But in everything that is real in national life we are a Christian nation. By our inheritance, by the character of our early settlers, by the banners of truth and righteousness they flung out, by the institutions they established under which we have flourished, and by repeated governmental sanctions in laws and enactments, and even in our minted coin, we are a Christian people. The Puritan spirit was too virile to fade away from our history. It is still true that the high quality of manhood in our nation is of more account to us than things, and that in our foundations we are built for righteousness and that righteousness has supported our rising walls. This in spite of all that may be said to the contrary, of all that is emerging these days to gainsay it.

PRESTIGE OF POWER.

Again, our prestige is manifest in the unselfish use of our national power. We have never sought possessions from the lust of an increasing domain; there has ever been a reason back of it. No imperial purpose marks our advance. We refused to bow to a foreign oppressor. We let the oppressed in our midst go free. We have suffered in treasure and blood that the oppressed in other lands might be free. It is to be doubted whether history furnishes another illustration the equal of that in our treatment of the people of Cuba. We fought their fight sternly and to the finish for their sakes and not our own; and if as the result of that fight possessions have come to us, they have come rather by a divine ordination than by our national seeking.

PRESTIGE OF INFLUENCE.

Again, among the nations we have won prestige in striving for the world's peace. And the most signal illustration in very recent history,—our President's heroic and successful endeavor to stop the carnage in Manchuria and end the bloodiest war of recent times,—is signal enough to characterize us for all time as a peace-loving na-

tion. It is not, however, the only illustration. Ever since our counsels have been of moment in international affairs they have been given unhesitatingly in the interest of friendly relations among the nations of the earth.

PRESTIGE IN MISSIONS.

And yet again. Our national prestige is enhanced by the missionary activity of the various Christian bodies. We have gone forth to the nations that sit in darkness with a message for both time and eternity, and at the cost of much treasure and multitudes of precious lives we have rejoiced in our obligation and privilege to be teachers to other nations of the things that concern civic righteousness and progress and eternal hope. Senator Hoar said, a few years before he died,

"Whoever would make account of the progress of America must make account of the labors of home missionaries."

That sentiment can be extended. Whoever would take account of the rise of the nations towards better things must consider the army of missionaries who go east and west from our shores to be to the nations the heralds of a better day in this world, and a better life in that which is to come.

OBLIGATIONS.

It is enough to make one dizzy to recall the rapid whirl of the decade of events that have flung American affairs and American counsels into the very forefront of the world's affairs and counsels. Such an outlook implies corresponding obligations. We have not yet begun to measure the reach or significance of our responsibilities to the people who, sitting in darkness, are now getting glimpses of the light that shines from these shores.

This is true politically. We cannot sail away from the West Indies. We cannot abnegate our moral influence there. It is passing on from island to island. We cannot keep back from the struggling republics in South America. We must help them to their feet. The Panama Canal will give us a new chance.

But especially should we be concerned about our Christian responsibilities to the nations of the earth. The lighthouse lifted on a rock, high above the stormy seas,

must with ceaseless vigilance furbish its reflectors and keep its light burning. We are that lighthouse, and stormy are the waves of national life that break within our sight.

To fail now in the purity of the light we

send abroad, or in the vigor with which we reflect it from our own institutions, is to fail of the greatest opportunity ever committed in any age or any place to the children of men.

America—Her Strength and Her Weakness

Seen from Several Standpoints.

Her Manhood and Womanhood

America's *weakness* is the large number of men and women who put the highest value upon material things; who think that the things to be sought first and always are wealth, ease, luxury, culture; who regard our nation as rich and great and prosperous because of her phenomenal growth in material resources and increase in population. Her *strength* lies in her men and women who have high ideals for themselves and for their nation, who are loyal to their convictions of duty and their conceptions of truth, who take God into the account in all personal and civic affairs. In short, the weakness and strength of the nation is in the quality of her manhood and womanhood. Therefore, every agency that makes for nobility and godliness of character is full of promise for our land.

Geo. B. Stewart

President Auburn Theological Seminary.

The Unity of Her Churches

The evangelical Churches of America have just issued to each other a mutual and holy challenge to attempt greater things in the Name and for the sake of their divine Lord. It is a common work for the same end:—the extension of the one kingdom. It includes both our country and the world.

It is the most important enterprise on earth. It has reached a most critical period in its progress. The demands are the greatest yet known. The opportunities are the most extended, comprehensive and important. The ability of the Church is at the highest; its organizations and agencies are

most ample and can now be made most effective.

The times call for the widest vision, the wisest measures, the largest liberality, the most intense devotion, the truest courage and the utmost activity,—all combined and crowned with the most cordial and fraternal co-operation.

Doubtless one method to secure the largest results is for each factor to do its best along its own lines, building over against its own house. Zeal and energy at one place quicken enthusiasm elsewhere and create a generous emulation everywhere.

Unquestionably also care will be taken not to duplicate, minimize or obstruct the work of any sister organization. The field is boundless and much of it still untilled. The Church holds a commission to touch every department of life. Its voice is to be heard not merely in the strictly spiritual sphere, but wherever iniquity of any form stalks abroad or ignorance and degradation are found. Only the gospel can cure political and social corruption, intemperance, injustice, class-antagonisms, greed of wealth and every other evil.

Stuart Dodge

President of our Home Board.

Her Awakened Conscience

America's strength is in the conscience of her citizenship. In the stress of commercial life and the mad quest for gold the moral sense of her people is doubtless too often suppressed; but it is there, as recent and passing events in the political and business world abundantly