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I.

RECENT DOGMATIC THOUGHT IN THE NETHERLANDS.*

THE Dutch theology of the nineteenth century has been discussed more than once by both foreign and native writers. The following is a list of the more important treatises on the subject: CHR. SEPP, *Proeve eener pragmatische geschiedenis der Theologie in Nederland van 1787 tot 1858*, 3d ed., Leiden, 1859; D. CHANTEPIE DE LA SAUSSAYE, *La crise religieuse en Hollande*, Leyde, 1860; Dr. G. J. VOS, *Groen van Prinsterer en zijn tijd 1800–1857*, Dordrecht, 1886; *Idem.*, *Groen van Prinsterer en zijn tijd, 1857–1876*, Dordrecht, 1891; Dr. J. H. GUNNING, J.Hz., *Het Protestantsche Nederland onzer dagen*, Groningen, 1889; Dr. J. A. GERTH VAN WYCK, art. "Holland," in Herzog und Plitt, *Realenc. für Prot. Theol. u. Kirche*, vi, s. 254–266; JOHANNES GLOËL, *Hollands Kirchliches Leben*, Würtemberg (1885); Dr. ADOLPH ZAHN, *Abriss einer Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirche auf dem Europ. Festlande im 19ten Jahrhundert*, 2te Aufl., Stuttgart, 1888, etc. As secondary sources of information all these and other works may render excellent service, but the works of the representative theologians themselves will alone give an insight into the principles and nature of the successive tendencies.

Dutch theology during the present century has been subject to various influences. Its character has been molded in turn not only by Calvinism, which has always continued to live among the

* [Our readers are indebted for the translation of Dr. Bavinck's paper to Prof. G. Vos, Ph.D., of Grand Rapids, Mich.—EDITORS.]

IV.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.

I.

COLUMBUS is one of the few men who have profoundly changed the course of history. He occupies a unique and commanding position, seeming to stand out of contemporary history, and to be a force separate and apart. He is the gateway to the New World. His career made a new civilization possible. His achievement conditions the expansion and development of human liberty. His position is simple but certain. His figure is as constant and as inexorable as the ice floes which girdle and guard the pole are to us, or as the sea of darkness which he spanned was to his predecessors. He inserted a known quantity into the hitherto unsolvable problem of geography, and not only rendered it solvable, but afforded a key to a vast number of problems dependent upon it, problems not merely geographical, but economical, sociological and governmental as well.

Yet in all this there mingles an element of error. Great events do not come unanticipated and unheralded.

“Wass Gott thut, das ist wohl gethan,”

sang Luther, knowing well that God hath foreordained from the foundation of the world whatsoever cometh to pass. “In the fullness of time” God does all things in His benign philosophy. In the fullness of time man was set in the midst of his creation; in the fullness of time Christ came; in the fullness of time God opened the portals of the west.

If the Welsh were driven on our shores under Madoc, if the Norsemen came and sought to found here “Vinland, the good,” they did not light upon the fullness of time. God had no splendid purpose for the Welsh; the Northland force was needed to make bold the hearts of England, France and Italy, to unify the world with fellow-service in the Orient, to break the bonds of feudalism, and to wing the sandals of liberty. As Isaac Newton sat watching the apple fall in his garden, he was but resting from the labor of gathering into his mind the labors of men who had in this or that

anticipated his discovery of the law of gravitation. In all scientific advance many gather facts. One comes at length and in a far-reaching synthesis arranges the facts of many predecessors around some central truth and rises to some great principle. So generalizations follow generalizations, and the field of truth expands in ever-widening circles from the central fact of God's establishment. Columbus is not like Melchisedec. He had antecedents—antecedents many and obvious. The highest tribute we can pay him is to say that he fixed upon one of the world's great problems, studied it in all its relations, embraced clear and definite views upon it, and staked his all upon the issue; and that not in a spirit of mere adventure, but of dedication to a noble purpose. He gave to a speculative question reality, and thereby gave a hemisphere to Christendom.

But like the girl who admitted the Gauls to the Capitol at Rome in return for "what they wore on their left arms," Columbus was overwhelmed by the reward which he demanded for his services. Without natural ability to command, and without experience, he demanded and obtained a fatal authority.

II.

The career of Columbus lies in the middle tract of that period which we call the Renaissance—the Renaissance, rather than the "revival of learning," for the movement was far wider in its scope than the mere revival of learning, embracing that revival and including revival in many other departments as well. It is almost impossible upon any canvas, however large, to give an account of this great movement which shall at once be accurate and adequate. As Mr. Symonds insists, the Renaissance was an intellectual movement, but the intellectual stimulus was applied to every department of human life, and every domain of thought and of action was revolutionized by it. Unless we appreciate this fact, unless we grasp it in its entirety, the career of every conspicuous character in European history between 1300 and 1600 contains an element which is practically unaccountable. So subtle is the influence, so subjective its activity, that it seems to be of a chemic nature. It does not act upon men according to the principles of dynamics, as do modern social influences, but seems to enter into the composition of their nature and, by some indescribable reaction, to change their nature and to modify their powers and capacities. Beginning as a political force, it changed the whole political organization of Europe; it substituted natural for inherited nobility, and national life for feudalism; it revived the principles of republican government even while it restored the conception of kingship; it reëstab-

lished the long-lapsed powers of judicial and parliamentary bodies ; it brought to life again a true conception of law and restored the body of Roman jurisprudence. But in its essential spirit of paradox it achieved many of these splendid reforms by the most brutal instruments. Beginning with the career of Ezzelino da Romano and running through the careers of the Sforzi, Malatesti, Estensi, Borgias and their kind, all black with the most debased debauchery, crimson with the most horrid murders, but brilliant with the most splendid capacities of mind and body, there is the same capacity for government, the same marvelous achievement, and the same mark of depraved mortality. Following upon these revolutions in governmental affairs came that splendid quickened life in literary fields, which we call the revival of learning. If it touched Dante at all, it was but as a prophetic instinct. Petrarch is its great proponent. Flowing from the recovered knowledge of antiquity, not only new learning, but new literatures came into being. Humanism was crowned with the tiara in the person of Nicholas V in 1447 (possibly the very year of Columbus' birth), and gathered around the unique personality of the magnificent Lorenzo in Florence during the next half century. Literature and letters, with that differentiation which biologists insist upon as an important characteristic of evolution, divided into many branches. In philosophy it forsook the barren and casuistical discussions of the Middle Ages and brought forth as its crowning work the Reformation. In science it was the foster mother of the new anatomy of Vesalius, the new theory of the circulation of the blood of Harvey, the new chemistry of Paracelsus, and the physical systems of Copernicus and Galileo. While in the domain of art, with singular skill in synthesis, it produced such men as Leonardo da Vinci, over whom, like the seven islands of Greece in their competition for the honor of Homer's birthplace, Geometry, Engineering, Architecture and Painting competed for the right to call him its child ; and Michael Angelo, whom Poetry, Painting, Sculpture and Architecture have crowned with fourfold honors ; and Benvenuto Celini, whose matchless autobiography will keep alive the memory of his goldsmith work should the cupidity of man leave no memorial of his workmanship ; and the faultless Andrea, and the more perfect Raphael, in whom intensity takes the place of breadth. All of these are children of the Renaissance, and not less, were the creators of modern geography. It is remarkable that once more, after her once splendid empire of the arm had fallen into ruin, Italy should rear her head and again become, by the potency of her brain, the mistress of the world. Her influence spread slowly outward till it embraced every country in Christendom, so that even Shakespeare, on the threshold of the

seventeenth century, may fairly be claimed as one of the direct results of this Italian impulse. As it had produced a revival in every other department of science, art and philosophy, it also produced a revolution in the art of navigation and the science of geography. As it had put the printing press at the disposal of the revival of letters, and the telescope at the command of the new astronomy, and gunpowder within the reach of the new art of war, it supplied the mariner's compass and many improved instruments for nautical observation to the art of navigation. The impatience of restraint, the desire for a larger freedom, and the consciousness of power which had moved in the breasts of the devotees in every other department, began to stir within the bosoms of them who go down to the sea in ships. Prince Henry the navigator, of Portugal, grandson of old John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, perhaps deserves the highest credit, at least as the patron, in the new department of geographical discovery. What Lorenzo was to letters, or Leo was to art, that Prince Henry was to geography. Venice, with her spirit of commercial adventure, found her interest too limited to be the Italian representative of the geographical renaissance, so that Italy here was forced to give her hitherto unbroken precedence to others. But a too fond fate, unwilling to see any other land crowned with the laurel which her favored nation did not wear, divided the patronage between the houses of Portugal and of Spain, and made the chief instruments of their glory Columbus of Genoa, Vespuccius of Florence, and Cabot of Venice—all Italians.

The problem of geographical extension was, comparatively speaking, a simple one. Europe inherited from antiquity two theories of geographical discovery, both of which were correct and either of which would have led and did eventually lead to success. Both were right in what they asserted; both were wrong in what they denied. The first of these theories, known as the Ptolemaic theory, may be briefly summarized as maintaining that the continent of Africa extended to the pole and that the great equatorial belt was a permanent barrier to discovery and exploration. The other, known as the hypothesis of Pomponius Mela, rested on the supposition that there was an equatorial ocean girdling the earth and led to the view that Asia could be reached by this ocean. Practically, it will be observed, the Spanish adopted the Ptolemaic idea, while the Portuguese adopted that of Mela.

Now there can be no greater misconception than to suppose that the theory of discovery adopted by Columbus and the underlying theory of the sphericity of the earth, were original. In the main they were a part of that inheritance from antiquity which had

been opened up afresh to the world by the revival of learning. Thus, from the earliest times of which we have account, there were theories of the sphericity of the earth. It was taught by the Italian Pythagoreans of the sixth century before Christ, and was probably a part of the original system of Pythagoras, and undoubtedly a part of the natural philosophy of Parmenides the Eleatic. Whether this spherical idea was originally a mere philosophical form or a practical belief, its constant assertion provoked incessant inquiry, and from the earliest times it conditioned geographical speculation. In the time of Plato and Aristotle, attempts were made to determine the circumference of the earth, attempts which were perpetuated by Eratosthenes of Alexandria, Hipparchus, Strabo, Pliny and many other students of geography and the kindred sciences. A great many calculations have come down to us from antiquity, varying from 400,000 stadia in the time of Aristotle, down to 180,000 stadia—the number favored by Strabo. Considerable as this variation is, it is not much greater than that between the estimate of Columbus and the real circumference of the earth; and, moreover, there is reason, owing to the uncertainty of the distance indicated by the word “stadium,” to believe that the stadia used as the standard are not the same. It is important to observe that the later estimates of antiquity approximate those adopted by Columbus and are about one-fifth too small. It is important also to observe that Strabo and Crates anticipated the views of Mela, and while the latter was fortunate, in that his work was widely read during the Renaissance, the earlier theory of an equatorial ocean offering a passage way from the Atlantic to India at no great distance to the south really afforded the basis of the attraction which Mela's hypothesis held out to the Portuguese.

These questions began to attract a great deal of attention some time before the birth of Columbus, and interest in them gradually increased with the expansion of knowledge, due to the bolder seaman-ship begotten by the mariner's compass and justified by the extension of Portuguese discovery along the coast of Africa. These discoveries, which had begun before the end of the fourteenth century (1399), had been extended before the birth of Columbus as far as to Cape Verde. The Cape de Verde Islands, however, were not discovered until some years later, showing how very closely even these adventurous voyagers hugged the shore of the mainland. Immediately after the beginning of the second half of the fifteenth century we find increased interest both in the theory of discovery and the necessary instruments for accomplishing distant voyages. Inventions and improvements in the instruments used for determining speed and direction of sailing and for ascertaining latitude and

longitude were now being made. The seaman's log and the astrolabe, especially the improvement of Regiomontanus, are particularly notable, as are the attempts to improve cartography illustrated in the maps and hemispheres of Fra Mauro and of Behaim. But the important fact in this connection is that Behaim and others were now beginning to combine their maps with the theory of the sphericity of the earth in the practical form of globes.

Among those who were particularly distinguished at once for their knowledge of all matters pertaining to geographical facts and theories and for the adoption of the idea that land would probably be found by a western voyage, Paolo Toscanelli was conspicuous. This great Italian, who was already far advanced in life, summed up in a letter to Fernando Martinez, in the employ of Alphonso V of Portugal, his views on the subject of a western voyage. To him Columbus made application in 1474 for a like expression of opinion, and received from him a copy of the Martinez letter, prefaced by a brief introduction, in which Toscanelli says that the same letter had been sent "some days before" to Portugal. "This letter outlined the plan of western discovery," but it seems highly probable that it came to Columbus simply as a confirmation of a preëxisting opinion, and that, in itself, it was merely a full and authoritative statement from one of the most learned and accomplished men of the day upon a subject of general discussion, presenting a view of by no means unusual acceptance.

To a man in Columbus' position so bold a statement of even a well-considered theory on the part of a man of such high repute for learning and already under the spell of the conservatism of age, must have had great weight; and while it doubtless was of importance in stimulating his imagination and strengthening his convictions, it doubtless was of more importance in lending support to the arguments which from time to time he presented to the learned men and dignitaries of Portugal and Spain, proving that his proposition was something more than the product of the fevered mind of a crack-brained enthusiast. The letter of Toscanelli is extravagant. It appears to us better calculated to stimulate an enthusiast than to convince a skeptic. But its extravagances were a part of the natural results of the Renaissance. Men saw things through the medium of magnifying glasses. There were indeed giants in those days. The world itself was putting on a new garment. The learning of Toscanelli's letter, on the other hand, was sound, and summed up the best researches of the ablest minds of his generation, and of travelers who were trusted and approved more worthy of belief than the critical spirit of modern times deems possible, such as Marco Polo, who had related stories of the East as facts, beside

which the dreams of Toscanelli become sober realities. And, after all, Pizarro and Cortez in Peru and Mexico, sufficiently realized the imaginings of this letter to give it, if not a prophetic character, at least the credit of justifiable calculation. When we add to these scientific calculations and deductions the observed facts of the mariners of the day, the flotsam and jetsam of two generations of maritime enthusiasts, the half-credited stories of adventures of shipwrecked sailors, and the mirages and other deceptive phenomena of vision, we have before our minds the various influences which were brought to bear upon the mind of Columbus and gradually took possession of it.

He was a child of the Renaissance. The world was to him a fairyland. Nothing was impossible of realization. Everything lay at the feet of the quickened imagination and facile hand of him who aimed high and adventured all. With characteristic breadth of mind he mastered the conditions of his problem from every point of view. He was the master of the geography of the ancients; of the dreams of the Italians; of the bearing of Scripture upon the existence of other lands and peoples; the form of the earth, and all other questions involved. He was familiar with navigation and all its kindred arts. He had prepared himself by a life of adventure by sea and land. He had unified all of these and reduced them to a homogeneous system by the fires of an unquenchable enthusiasm. As a motive power, directing, controlling and energizing, he added a religious fervor and a conviction that he was a divinely appointed instrument for the accomplishment of this great work.

III.

Columbus was born in the city of Genoa, probably between March, 1446, and March, 1447, that is in the year 1446 O. S. His family belonged to the guild of wool-combers, an honorable guild, of which the more prominent members enjoyed a good social position in the aristocratic Republic of Genoa. It is even probable that his family were of old and honorable descent from the neighborhood of Savona. They seem to have been remarkable neither for extreme poverty nor for any distinguishing possession. The education of the youthful Columbus received neither more nor less attention than that of any other boy of his class, and if, as seems more than probable, he for a brief period attended lectures at the University of Pavia, it was only what any other ambitious lad would be likely to enjoy. The record of his attendance at the University enumerates the subjects of astrology, geometry and kindred branches as those to which he devoted his time, naturally indicating the studies most attractive to a youth from an important seaport and presaging

his career as a navigator. It is extremely doubtful whether Columbus went to sea, as was so long believed, during his boyhood. It is far more probable that he never embarked until he reached maturity, and probably in his twenty-sixth year, in accordance with the narrative contained in the celebrated note to the nineteenth psalm (the prophecy of which Columbus claimed that he was chosen to fulfill), in the psalter of Justinian, Bishop of Nebbio. The whole period of his life between 1460, when he is said to have been at the University of Pavia, and 1473 is involved in uncertainty and, it is probable, contained no events of any importance to his subsequent career. We know, from certain facts testified to by entries in the books of the notaries in Italy, that he was in his native country on the 7th of August, 1473. It is not impossible that he had been to Portugal prior to this time, and leading a wandering life, had returned to Italy on this occasion. It is quite impossible, however, to reach any absolute certainty upon this point. It is almost certain that about the year 1474 Columbus was married in Portugal to Felipa Moniz, the daughter of one Bartolomeo Perestrelo, "a gentleman of Italian origin," who had had considerable employment in the Portuguese service, especially at Porto Santo.

This marriage has been looked upon as an epoch-making event, and justly so. Whatever had been Columbus' adventures hitherto, whether he had really had any connection with the family of Colombo, or Casaneuve, the pirate, whether any of the adventures more probably now to be connected with a cadet of that family, which may have been of kindred stock, are to be attributed to him or not, he seems never to have been brought into touch with any of those concerned with the great work of geographical expansion. If, as seems most probable to the critical scholars of to-day, the maritime life of Columbus and his connection with the Perestrellos are coincident, it is easy to trace the important influence exercised over his imagination and his fortunes by this alliance. Like everything else connected with this period of his life, the exact position and the facts connected with the career of his father-in-law, are by no means certain. *The Historie* (the authorship of which is now since 1871 in doubt, though up to that time unquestioningly attributed to the younger son of the discoverer, Ferdinand Columbus) leaves a very strong impression that Columbus found documents and maps among the papers of his dead father-in-law which directed his attention to Western exploration. Whatever may be the exact facts, at least two members of the family were Governors of the important island of Porto Santo, and were undoubtedly interested in a greater or less degree in the all-absorbing question of maritime adventure.

For a period of about fourteen years following the notarial attestation at Savona, in Italy, on August 7, 1473, there is no such thing as a fixed and certain date in the life of Columbus. The birth of his son Diego occurred sometime between 1475-79. No greater accuracy is possible in fixing any other occurrence of these years. In general, he supported himself by the making of maps and kindred employments. There is no question that he was more or less engaged in a seafaring life. But when, how or where he sailed we do not know. It is to this period (1477?) that we must refer that hypothetical voyage of which the exploiters of the Norse claims to American discovery have made so much. It is impossible either to prove it or to disprove it. In summing up his case before the court of Spain in 1492 he himself declared, among his qualifications for leading such an expedition as that he proposed, that he had sailed from England to the coast of Guinea. Such a statement would seem to exclude by implication a voyage far beyond England, involving far greater peril, although by no means an unusual venture. An Icelandic voyage would have been a notable event, notable both in the memory of the man who had made it and in the imaginations of the Spanish grandees who heard it mentioned. It seems quite impossible, therefore, that Columbus, if he had made such a voyage, should have omitted to make mention of it. In another place Columbus has declared that on one of his voyages he went beyond "Thule." But where was Thule? Was it Iceland, or was it some other island? Certainly Thule, or "Thyle," and Iceland are made different islands in the edition of Ptolemy published in 1486, and it is impossible to believe that there was ever any perfect identification of Thule with any actual body of land. Like the lost Atlantis it floated in a dim beyond, always receding before the advance of the discoverer, always alluring to some fresh adventure, always remaining *ultima Thule*—last not only of the things that are, but of the things that may be.

The Icelandic voyage has had a posthumous importance growing out of the fact that the advocates of the Norse influence upon the mind of Columbus have gradually evolved wonderful results from this unimportant incident. They have sought to convince us that in Iceland Columbus had heard the wonderful story of the adventures of Bjarni, Thorfin and Leif, and that it was these which led to his voyage. Not merely have they pictured to us the general influence of the common possession of western traditions in Iceland, but he is supposed to have heard of the written narratives, and probably to have consulted them; while one writer goes so far as to have almost declared that there was an actual meeting between Bishop Magnus and Columbus in the spring of 1477, when

that celebrated Norwegian bishop is known to have visited Iceland. There is a fine fancy playing with all the uncertain brightness of the northern lights upon these stories, and even if there be an element of reality running through them, it is too slight to give them even the semblance of reality. Moreover, if our view that Columbus deserves the greater credit for having gathered all the information which could possibly justify his belief in the practicability of a western voyage be correct, the information which he gained in Iceland would have a very different force from that intended by those who magnify it, enlarging rather than contracting the merit of his exploit, showing that it was based upon the widest possible examination of the phenomena, and that chance had been eliminated so far as possible. At best, the only value which can be attached to an Icelandic voyage is in tracing the *Origines*, giving to it some such place as a literary man would give to an antique precursor of some story which Shakespeare had borrowed from Boccaccio.

During these fourteen years Columbus undoubtedly sought assistance from the Portuguese for a voyage to be made to Asia by the westerly route. The story that assistance was refused him while a Portuguese sailor was sent upon a voyage to test the probability of Columbus' representations, is probably true. Nor does it seem to contain that element of moral obliquity in it which has usually been attributed to it; since Columbus was not stating a new idea and he had no patent right upon it. The only element which Columbus now began to interject into the old idea of a western voyage was his personal enthusiasm and the noble confidence of his constant character. Not even does there seem to be any just ground for supposing that among the well informed of his day there was a fear that having once sailed "down the western declivity of the world" they should never be able to sail back again. If the law of gravitation had not yet been formulated its principle was understood, and voyage after voyage was made in which the phenomenon of disappearing below the horizon was observed. Among the vulgar, no doubt, this was used as a bugbear and with many who might easily be supposed to rise above its influence, just as the unknown regions of land as well as sea were peopled with dragons and monsters. The trouble in Portugal, as it was so long in Spain, was the large demands Columbus made in case he should succeed. He had already begun his fatal demands of rewards in anticipation of earning them. This flaw in his character, "the little rift within the lute," was eventually to destroy his career and mar his fame. Even contemplating his adventure in all the reflected glory of its successes it is obvious that his achievement and its demanded reward

were incommensurate. That a poor adventurer should be made vice-gerent of all the lands which he should discover, and admiral in the navies of the nation under whose flag he sailed, if not too great, was at least an improper reward, and the weakness of Columbus' character was a want of executive ability.

Being rejected by Portugal, Columbus set out for Spain, and the next certain event to which we can give a date is fixed for us by an entry in the books of the treasurer of their Catholic majesties. On May 5, 1487, his first gratuity was issued: "To Christobal Colomo, a stranger." It consisted of three thousand maravedis, equivalent, perhaps, in purchasing power to two hundred and fifty dollars to-day. From this day forth Columbus is tied to Spain, first by a slender thread, oftentimes stretched to the very verge of breaking, until at length, at the end of five years, in May, 1492, the first engagements for his voyage were made in the little town of Palos, when he became wholly committed to Spain and Spanish citizenship.

Points of view must forever change. Sentimentalists have dwelt upon the hardships of these five years; have painted the endurance and fortitude of Columbus in the most glowing terms; have dwelt upon the folly and fatuity of the Spanish lords and learned men; and have wondered that the monarchs should have been so long blind to the magnificent offers which this great man laid at their feet in vain. But, clearly, Columbus had very little to recommend him. Enthusiasts are not satisfactory persons to deal with, and rarely are able to give a satisfactory reason for the faith that is in them. Moreover, enthusiasts are and were somewhat more numerous in the world than is ordinarily supposed. Those in high places are constantly brought into contact with men who know the road to El Dorado and who can point out its glittering towers and gleaming pinnacles as if they were already revealed to the eye of sight, as well as the eye of faith. The revival of learning had dissipated many of the mists of poets and dreamers, of astrologers and alchemists, of crusaders and adventurers; for every one of these men who had a secret worth communicating, there were a thousand who were little more than madmen. In Portugal, Columbus fell in with the absorbing purpose of the people—the geographical extension of the realm by means of exploration. Practically the only thing which he had to recommend him at the Court of Spain was its rivalry with Portugal and its envy of Portuguese successes. Spain had her hands full extending her realm by conquest. No longer was the Moorish war a petty partisan strife waged with intermittent vigor. But in these last years the whole strength of the united realms had been summoned to accomplish the glorious work of the final expulsion of the crescent from Spain. The divided kingdoms

of Granada gave an occasion which so good a soldier as Ferdinand could not be expected to let slip. The castles of Castile daily advanced from town to town and from outpost to outpost, and the lions of Aragon vied in proud emulation in the last death struggle of Goth and Moor. When every energy was thus bent upon one of the great problems of a thousand years, when victory was but a hand's breadth beyond, when every resource of men and money was already at the point of exhaustion, it was not to be expected that there should be any other adventure undertaken until this was accomplished. As the army lay in its last encampment before the walls of Granada Columbus was summoned to attend. While he was there it is recorded that two emissaries appeared inviting the Catholic monarchs to leave their absorbing conflict in the cause of Christendom, and adventure upon a new crusade for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. Is there any wonder that these men were looked upon with amused contempt by the hardened soldiery of Spain? Can it be doubted that Columbus was classed with them as a mild and amusing lunatic? As if to give additional proof of his unpractical mind, Columbus ardently embraced the cause of these promoters of a Palestinian crusade, giving an apparently conclusive proof that his mind was fanatical rather than practical. This prompt embracing of the cause of the rescue of the sepulchre, and the promise that he would devote his energies after the accomplishment of his American adventures to a crusade, have been praised without stint as showing the lofty religious cast of his mind. Yet it may be permitted us to doubt if it was zeal for the kingdom of God which so moved him, or a distorted judgment, the natural product of long meditation upon an ideal scheme. To Columbus it seemed a hard lot to be postponed until the completion of the rapidly closing conflict with the Moors. What must the Spanish soldiery have thought of the probability of his engaging in a crusade after he had discovered a western route to Asia and established the Spanish monarchs in possession of the newly discovered lands?

But the real ability which Columbus brought to bear upon the exposition of his problem had gradually won him efficient support. He had made converts right and left. The celebrated Council of Salamanca, if by no means so great or so important an assembly as it has long been made to appear, afforded him a splendid opportunity of convincing a few influential men, and he had gradually gathered to himself a little circle of almost unbounded influence. Of these, De Marchena, the prior of the convent of *La Rabida*, where he was sheltered for a time, gave him the first means of exerting the undoubted spell of his personality. Among the others of impor-

tance who befriended him were Alonzo de Quintanilla and Cardinal de Mendoza, Archbishop of Toledo, whose enormous influence gave him the title of "Third King of Spain." It seems probable that these men would have secured for him an earlier opportunity to make his voyage had it not been that he made such preposterous claims as to render concession impossible. The same spirit of sentimental glorification which has pervaded the common accounts of his career have made these ridiculous conditions of Columbus to appear as the just demands of a wise and confident spirit for the proper reward of his services. To this generation they can appear to be little better than parvenu greed of power. They do not indicate the noblest of all noble traits—the capacity to deserve rather than to enjoy reward—or the confidence of a bold spirit in winning a reward after he has deserved it. It shows also what was to appear in a later period in a more striking way—his inability to learn by experience. Upon this rock he had wrecked his hopes in Portugal; upon this rock again his ship was about to go to pieces.

The thing which saved Columbus was the fall of Granada. The first days of January, 1492, found Spain in the full enjoyment of a triumph which had been the aim of its policy for full seven hundred years. Castile, Aragon and Leon were united under the joint rule of their sovereigns, and the Moor was expelled from Spanish ground. In the moment of triumph the monarchs looked about for a new world to conquer. There was no longer any absorbing aim of foreign policy. The restless baronage and the independent burgher class needed to be occupied with some definite political program. The irrepressible soldiery needed to be occupied and employed. The field which Naples was to afford for the most superb triumphs ever achieved by Spanish soldiery was not yet opened up. Columbus' time had come. The only drawback was the want of money. Contrary to the traditional story that the money was obtained from the treasury of Aragon, although as a loan to Castile, it appears more probable that the treasurer of the ecclesiastical revenues in Aragon, Santangel, made the loan from his private revenues and in the interest of Castile alone. It should be remarked that Castile alone participated in the voyage of discovery and that the benefits which eventually accrued, accrued to Castilians only, the Aragonese being excluded from all share in them.

With the beginning of the year 1492 the scene changed. Columbus was made admiral in anticipation. The agreement between him and the monarchs was drawn up and signed on April 17. Further honors and agreements followed on April 30, and again on May 8; and on the 12th he left Granada for Palos. Delays from various causes took place and it was not till the 3d of August, 1492, that the little fleet set sail from the harbor of Palos.

IV.

On the 3d of August the little fleet set sail from the port of Palos. But whither? This question is a crucial one and in its answer is to be found the justification of those who doubted the whole plan of Columbus. Columbus set sail, not for America, not for unexplored islands of the great sea, but for the western coast of Asia; and his voyage and its partial success afforded the justification and set the example for all the voyagers in search of a westerly passage to Asia for the next three hundred years. The discovery of America was a great blunder. It is true that Columbus constantly qualified his declarations that he would reach Asia, by the statement: If the way is not barred by other land lying between. This other land did lie between. But not between Europe and the point at which he expected to find at least Cipangu (Japan), but far to the west even of the line which he had established for the easterly extremity of Asia. In other words, Columbus' calculations were totally unreliable and it was only by pursuing a course entirely contrary to his own calculations that he finally met with what success actually attended his voyage.

Sailing southward to the islands off the coast of Africa he sailed, except with a single unimportant variation, by dead reckoning a due west course from the island of Gomera of the Canary group, whence he sailed on the 6th of September, until the 7th of October, when at the instance of Pinzon and in accordance with the indications afforded by such natural phenomena as the flight of birds and sea-drift, he changed his course to a more southerly one. Upon the morning of the 12th of October he discovered the first island in the Bahama group. It is impossible to determine with absolute certainty which of the many islands in this group was the first landfall. There are four claimants, Watlings Island apparently having the greater weight of modern critical authority; St. Salvador, Acklins Island and Grand Turk Island are the others which have respectable support. The same uncertainty attends the minor details of the whole voyage. The important facts, however, are that land was sighted on the 12th of October; that during his cruising among the islands he touched upon the important members of the group, Cuba and Hispaniola, or Hayti; an apparent act of mutiny in the form of desertion by Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the commander of the *Pinta*, on two occasions during the voyage; and the return to Palos on the 15th of March, 1493.

Several incidents of the voyage are of the first importance in estimating the character of Columbus. In the first place, he determined upon an act of deception. He had estimated the probable distance which he had to sail in order to reach the coast of Cipangu

at 700 leagues, but in order to have a margin for mistakes in calculation he determined to falsify the ship's log. He, therefore, gave out each day a false estimate of the distance sailed. Thus, on Monday, September 10, he computed the distance as sixty leagues, but he entered it at forty-eight. The result justified his lack of confidence in his calculation, as his landfall, instead of being 700 leagues, lacked but a few of 1200, a difference of 1358 nautical miles. This exhibited at the very outset Columbus' want of confidence in his own authority and his capacity for leadership. It shows, too, how much less was his moral courage than that dogged physical courage which enabled him to hold to his course long after he had passed the point where he expected to find land. The same is true of his difficulty upon reaching, on the 13th of September, the line of no variation of the magnetic needle. Again he undertook by deception to quiet the uneasiness of his sailors, and by the records which he has left us it is shown that he himself was seriously affected, and incorrectly explained the cause and consequences of this variation. Again there seems to be but little doubt that the first land was not discovered by Columbus himself, though he claimed the reward offered by the sovereigns to the individual who first sighted land, and that land was actually discovered by one of his sailors. Eager to be not merely the leader of this momentous voyage, but the person who should enjoy the fame of having first sighted land, he deliberately used his power to defraud a poor follower of his just fame and gain. But these are insignificant in comparison with the thoughts which first entered his mind in connection with the natives of the islands which he discovered. Again and again he records that they appeared to be well suited to work the islands and to serve the Spaniards who should come thither, showing that even at the outset his mind gave place to the horrible thought which ripened into American slavery. And, again, as he sailed here and there among the islands every other thought gradually gave place to the one controlling and dominating desire for the discovery of gold. In the first glow of his discovery, which was to have such an important bearing upon the history of the globe, the one thought in his mind was *gold*; not the glory of God, which occurs so often in his set speeches, but gold. So much so that on one occasion it is recorded that after an exhortation to give up their idolatry and worship the only true God, the untutored but intelligent savages brought him gold, saying that this was the Christians' God. Indeed, *The Historie* records that it was Columbus' purpose to designate the country which he should discover, whatever it might be, by the name of India, as that name was the synonym of riches, and would rouse the imagination of the Spanish sovereigns.

There are few scenes so striking as the reception of Columbus at

the court of Spain upon his return. He was in the first flush of triumph. The court was arrayed in all its splendor, and united the pomp of royalty with the dignity of the high services of the Romish Church. But there is a contrast, if not an antithesis, between the speech of Columbus—illustrated as it was by the captive Indians, the bright-colored birds, and the gold which he had brought from the islands of the sea—and that slowly chanted, glorious service of praise and thanksgiving which swelled within the royal chapel. For what did they praise and thank the Lord? It is written in history that if men's actions are to be taken as an index of their thoughts it was for the slaves, gaudy ornaments and gold that Columbus claimed and the sovereigns returned thanks. But even if this incident were half as splendid and the thanksgivings were half as sincere as they are said to have been, the true significance of the discovery was only half appreciated. Columbus received the rewards which he claimed in accordance with the previous agreement, and in the following year (1494) returned to extend his discoveries and enjoy his privileges. He returned from this voyage in June, 1496. The only important discovery was the island of Jamaica. Even thus early he began to display that want of ability to command which wrecked his career. After two years' delay he sailed again in 1498 and discovered the island of Trinidad, the neighboring mainland at the mouth of the great Orinoco river, and the islands of the "Pearl coast." It was during this absence, which extended to October, 1500, that Columbus underwent that crucial test which brought upon him so many proofs of his incompetency, so many indignities, and so many misfortunes. Landing at Cadiz a degraded prisoner, loaded with chains, he awoke the pity and aroused the sympathy of the public, and so secured an opportunity to make one more effort and one more ignominious failure. He sailed upon his fourth voyage on May 8, 1502, and returned November 7, 1504. From that time till the end of his life, at once so fortunate and so unfortunate, he spent his energies in vain appeals to be restored to his authority and avenged upon his enemies. On May 20, 1506, he died. It was hard for him to die in the bitterness of defeat, deprived of all the honors which he had so splendidly won—almost alone, without friends, without influence, without reputation, without anything to assure him that his fame would be safe with posterity. His death fell almost unnoticed upon the ear of an absorbed world. Even in Spain there seems to have been no account taken of it. The world was hurrying on in the path which he made. But the great pathfinder was forgotten. Even the New World which he discovered was about to receive the name of a rival voyager. It was a hard fate. The world is cruel even in its justice. Columbus, the discoverer of America, was to

remain one of the greatest figures of history; Columbus, the man—vain, grasping, cruel, was to receive the returns which were his due; Columbus, the incapable ruler, was to suffer the results of his own failure. The country which he honored with his services and those which he discovered have vied with each other in doing honor to his memory. But nothing can wipe out the pitiful spectacle of his degradation and his bitter, lonely death. The picture is wholly dark. No ray of greatness of heart or of the dignity of a noble nature relieves it. Only the complaint of a man robbed of his reward, only the longing of an avaricious nature come to us from that unhappy retirement to which he had been relegated by his own misdeeds.

V.

When we come to sum up the influence of Columbus upon history it becomes important for us to distinguish between three separate influences which may be, not very happily, designated as the influence of his theory, the influence of his discovery, and the influence of his life.

The influence of his theory survived for nearly three hundred years—that is to say, men followed Columbus in seeking to reach Asia by a westerly voyage. At first, for at least a generation, no one grasped the idea that a great continent barred the way to Asia. When this gradually came to be understood another generation yet clung to the idea that America and Asia were united, and fully two hundred years elapsed before it was certainly known that there was no such connection, and during all this period there was more or less seeking for a practical western way to Asia. The voyages round the Horn, in the eighteenth century, exhibited the possibility of a westerly voyage to Asia, but the problem of a northwest passage remained unsolved until 1850. Its solution may be regarded as closing the influence of the theory which Columbus had demonstrated to be essentially false, but which was eventually proved to be incidentally correct.

The influence of his discovery stands forth as the greatest of the many great achievements of the fifteenth century. Its influence is told not merely in the name of America, but it lives in all the possibilities which were suggested by that name, including the discovery and development of Australasia.

The influence of his life is naturally akin to the character of the man. Although deeply religious in his nature, his private life was immoral. Many excuses have been made for this immorality, and, when judged by the standards of his time, his offenses may be regarded as comparatively slight. But his public morals also partook of the weakness of his times, and when we have excused them under the same plea we have simply deprived him personally of

that greatness which was his as a discoverer, the greatness of being before his times, of being the leader who combining all that was best in his own time led the way to the future. In the life of Benvenuto Cellini we read the story of another man singularly typical of the same times—deeply religious in thought, depraved in his private morals, degraded in his views of public virtue, but accomplishing the very highest excellence in his chosen department of art. It may be regarded as almost sacrilege to compare the two men, and yet the revelations of himself which Columbus makes are scarcely less debasing when regarded from the point of view of abstract ethics; and when regarded from their influence in history are infinitely more terrible. Columbus is self-convicted of lying, of public deception, of perjury, of enslaving innocent natives, and of using high office as a means of public violence. It was the spirit of the Renaissance, but it is not therefore any the less worthy of condemnation when viewed from the standpoint of universal history. He is but another paradox with all the capacity and all the weakness of his times—an ignoble instrument used for the performance of a splendid work. Perhaps this judgment sounds severe. It is very different from that which sentimentalists have attempted to fasten upon the world, and it refers the whole connection of the first period of American discovery to its proper place in the story of Spanish incompetence, thirst for gold, and public and private sacrificing of truth, justice, and humanity for the gratification of private ends. Columbus was not only a mere man, but he was a man of most intense selfishness. He may be excused for lack of patriotism, since, as a homeless adventurer, he owed no allegiance; but he cannot be excused for selfishness which preferred self-glorification to the success of the cause which had become embodied in him, and still less for preferring self to the glory of that God whom he so ostentatiously affected to serve.

It was, perhaps, too much to hope that the first steps in the discovery and development of our continent should be laid in that self-restraint and that fear of God which marked the laying of the first stone in our political fabric upon the shores of New England. Columbus was fortunate in that he was sent in the fullness of time, and that God for his own good pleasure granted the blessing for which he had prayed, on landing upon the first island which revealed a new world to Europe. Man would indeed be unfortunate if God gave him the just reward of his deeds. He gave to Columbus the glory of opening America to civilization. If that is all that posterity willingly accords to him, it is, at least, a splendid monument and his full desert.