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Current Events

The Late War [So we have hitherto designated the Civil War of 1861-65, but it must now yield that title to the war for the liberation of Cuba, just as the youngest child in a family ceases to be called "the baby" when there cometh a younger than he. "Short, sharp, and decisive," it was foretold that the war for our Union *should be*; short, sharp, and decisive the war for free Cuba has, indeed, been—four months instead of four years.

Free Cuba This was the aspiration of Cuban patriots through long years of patient and strenuous struggle. At length a strong and generous neighbor nation declared that the people of Cuba of right ought to be free and independent. All the world is amazed at the rapidity with which it was made so. It is the Lord's marvelous doing. To give that freed people a free and stable government, which shall conserve President McKinley says in his message: "It is our duty to assist them to form a government which shall be free and independent, thus realizing the best aspirations of the Cuban people." God grant to our statesmen wisdom as effective and sufficient as was the valor of our army and navy. Will not all Christendom make that a fervent petition in the coming week of prayer?

Other Islands The belligerent activity necessary to liberate Cuba from the tyranny of Spain most unexpectedly brought others of her islands under our nation's control. The people of Porto Rico not only made no resistance to our army and navy, but joyfully welcomed them as deliverers. Farther away, in the Pacific Ocean, a thousand or more islands containing seven or eight millions of people, have come under our nation's control, and our Government has

the responsibility of deciding what shall be done with them. We are not to discuss that question here, but we exhort our readers to consider prayerfully what the question involves. "What do we want of those islands?" is not the whole question. "What is the best we can do for the people of those islands?" appeals as properly to our conscience as does the other to our interest. What does God mean by laying these naked foundlings at our door? We attempt not to answer this question here. But we plead for prayerful as well as candid consideration of it. Neither the lust of conquest on the one hand, nor selfish neglect of feebler peoples needing our help, and asking for our protection on the other, can be pleasing to Him whom Dr. Cox once eloquently called "JEHOVAH STATOR" of our Republic. Let it not be assumed that we can not avoid one of those courses without taking the other. Whatever shall be made clear as the path of national duty must be the path of national safety and welfare.

Our Wider Responsibility When our country was passing through the awful struggles of our civil war, John Bright was our steadfast British friend and champion. During one of his remarkable speeches in the House of Commons he uttered this significant sentence: "Mr. Speaker, if our kinsfolk on the other side of the Atlantic settle their civil war satisfactorily and get back together in peace, in forty years there will not be a gun fired in the world without their consent." That prophecy then seemed presumptuous. But the last six months have made such changes among the nations that the realization of Mr. Bright's prediction seems almost accomplished. Our people have come together in peace. The men of the North and the men of the South have volunteered under the same flag and worn the same uniform, and fought shoulder to shoulder in Cuba and

within the district under his command. President Lincoln's more patient spirit and larger responsibility vetoed that action, but in the fullness of time the President found himself constrained to use the supreme military power for a wider emancipation. When great reforms are finally accomplished those who sacrificed themselves in "prematurely" (?) starting them are remembered with more honor than was given them in their lifetime.

Has not humbled Spain reached the bottom of her downfall? No other European kingdom was more powerful than Spain, a few centuries ago. The effective patron of the great discoverer of America, she early won dominion over the larger part of the continent which he discovered. Her misgovernment has lost it all, and now she sorrowfully surrenders the last of her island possessions to the power which represents and defends popular liberty. Is she ruined? Let us not believe it. Released from burdens which she was incompetent to carry, may she not find herself as truly liberated as are the islands which she vainly tried to govern. She struggled no hard-

er to retain control of them than did our Southern States to retain their "peculiar institution." They are now glad to have lost it, and count it not loss, but deliverance. So may it be with Spain.

No Enmity "No American worthy of the name has any ill will toward the heavily burdened Spanish people." So writes the judicious editor of the *American Monthly Review of Reviews*. Assuredly no American Christian can desire anything else for the people of Spain than a future more happy than her past.

The *Missionary Herald* (December, 1898) says: "The conclusion of the war with Spain is emphasizing, as never before, the importance of the International Institute for Girls in Spain. . . . Already offers of service are coming to the American Board from trained men and women in Spain who are ready and eager to go to Porto Rico for Christian or educational work. One of the young ladies offering is from the Institute at San Sebastian, and is fitted to occupy any position in this country or in Porto Rico which can be filled by an educated refined Christian woman."

Presbyterian Imperialism

By Wallace Radcliffe, D.D.

The word is not threatening. Imperialism is in the air; but it has new definitions and better intentions. It is republicanism "writ large." It is imperialism, not for domination, but for civilization; not for subjugation, but for development; not for absolutism, but for self-government. American imperialism is enthusiastic, optimistic, and beneficial republicanism.

Presbyterianism is imperial in its history and spirit, its traditions and ambitions—its opportunities and duties. We may learn something of ecclesiastical duty from the prevailing idea in national life.

Imperialism has its expression first in self-consciousness. The American is awakening to a sense of himself. Never before has he been so conscious of himself. Our Presbyterianism is more or less dormant, and fails to realize its own strength, and the beauty and promise of its own life. If Presbyterianism has a right for any existence, or any place, it has a right for every existence and for every place.

If it is suitable for any condition, or any age, it is suitable for all conditions and all ages. Its history challenges comparison. Its principles had birth in the tents of Abraham, and they have come down through peoples and nations and tongues with waving banners. It has something to live for. It has a distinct mission to the world. That mission is its authority of existence, and of its bold proclamation of its own word. This self-consciousness will express itself in individuality, which does its own thing by its own methods, in its own genius, and through its own institutions. This self-consciousness reveals itself in the expression of its own individuality. America has been true to itself. We have met our obligation in ways that may have been shocking to other people, but characteristic and inspiring to ourselves. The success of the Church is not in bigotry, but in self-respecting assertion and faithfulness to its own mission and genius. There are several characteristics of this individuality. We need reiterated emphasis of

(1st) The open door. America, in its largest beneficence, offers no such "open door" as distinctively as the Presbyterian Church itself in the realm of grace. The doors into other churches are, more or less, barred by educative demands, liturgical forms, and confessional limitations. The door of the Presbyterian Church is as wide as the gate of heaven. Any soul who has faith enough to enter the pearly gates has preparation for membership in this Church. We do not get the credit of this. Our own people quietly accept the reproach of narrowness. Our pulpits and literature should, more distinctly and constantly, reiterate this characteristic liberality of Presbyterianism.

(2) The family idea. As distinctive from some other churches with which we are really supposed to be intimately affiliated the unit of our Church is not the individual, but the family. Our definition of the Church is catholic and comprehensive, "together with their children." Our strength and hope must lie in the re-emphasis of this idea, which will revolutionize many of our methods, and restore forgotten or neglected activities. The children of the Church should be taught their membership by birth. The effort of the Church should consecrate itself to training more intelligently its own generations.

(3) The revival of the eldership. The constituent elements of our eldership give us great pride. They are serviceable in special responsibilities, noble in the large and comprehensive work of the Church. Our American Church is falling sadly away from the original idea of eldership. Discipline is almost unknown. By that I do not mean formal trial and offensive inquisition, but the distinctive and comprehensive significance of the office which would include personal relationship and oversight and effort. The Methodist class meeting is but an effort along the true line of the elders' oversight. The Presbyterian Church is not fully organized. In some way not arbitrarily but in consistence with the genius of the individual congregation, each elder should have his own class or district for which he is personally responsible, and through which will come intimate acquaintance, organized service, and pastoral care. A revived eldership would hold every church compactly and efficiently in aggressive work, and would save us from the whims and burdens and embarrassments of many a narrowing and irresponsible evangelist.

(4) Doctrinal preaching. Goodness must come from

doctrine. Doctrine is in order to goodness. If there is no backbone in the pulpit, pews will be filled with jellyfish. Above all things, our Church has stood for the full evangelical and systematic teaching of the doctrines of the Word. In that still abides our power and promise. The Church that preaches is the Church that conquers. No doctrine is worth preaching that can not be put into practice, and all truth can thus become reality. All truth coming from God can become Emanuel, God with us. Our distinctive life and mission abide as our pulpits re-echo with the certain and continuous sound of the doctrines of the Word.

This imperialism has expression in (5) unity. The recent war crystallized and proclaimed the unity of the American people. If Presbyterianism is to enter into its imperial inheritance, there must be expression of all its substantial reality. We must come together. Very little is to be hoped in the first place from those, who, looking at us, reach out their hands to the Pope and the Greek patriarch. We must first declare and realize the unity of our own household. Sectionalism is dead nationally; it should be buried ecclesiastically. The President waves the flag over a reunited country. Why can not the blue banner wave over a reunited Presbyterianism? That way lie hope and brotherhood and high attainment. The Pan-Presbyterian Alliance reaches after a grand and true ideal. The American Presbyterianism must be comprehensive. Here should be no arena for the transplanting of prejudices, worn-out theories, and personal divisions of other years and other climes.

Imperialism expresses itself by (6) expansion. I believe in imperialism because I believe in foreign missions. Our Foreign Board can teach Congress how to deal with remote dependencies. Let the President send a committee down to 156 Fifth avenue, and they will give him points on imperial republicanism. The peal of the trumpet rings out over the Pacific. The Church must go where America goes. The question is not, What are the Philippines worth to us, but what are we worth to the Filipinos? The mission of Presbyterianism is liberty, equality, fraternity. If the nation enlarges its army, we must enlarge our school-houses. If the nation multiplies its sails, we must write on every one of them glad tidings of great joy. We have come into the kingdom for such a time as this. The imperialism of the Gospel is the emancipation of humanity.