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# Immigration and Protestant evangelism

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IMMIGRATION AND PROTESTANT EVANGELISM

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BOSTON

Our subject indicates somewhat the problem before us namely Immigration and its Relation to Protestant Evangelism. There is no doubt that Immigration is affecting our whole institutional structure. The problem of Immigration has thrust itself upon the attention of our people as a result of the increase in the number of immigrants and the change in the character of immigration. We see as never before that what effects one part of our people effects every other part. Religion, education, society, business, home-life are each so related to the other that if one is in any way lacking in high ethical content the others are effected. It takes all to make a high civilization. However, in a Democracy like ours certain fundamental principles must lie at the very foundation. Prof. Mayo-Smith says ~~that~~ the marks of a high civilization are that "the whole life of a nation is not covered by its politics and its economics..... The morality of a community, its observance of law and order, its freedom from vice, its intelligence, its rate of mortality and morbidity, its thrift, its cleanliness, and freedom from degrading pauperism, its observance of family ties and obligations, its humanitarian disposition and charity, and finally its social ideals and habits.... these are the flower and fruit of civilization." To this I would add a vital religion. In a

shorter statement we can say that the fundamental principles which underlie our Democracy are intelligence, morality and religion, and cooperation for the common good. Any condition that may effect the intelligence of our people or our morality and religion, that may lessen the desire to work for the common good, must be considered as a menace.

It used to be said with a great deal of force that London contained more Jews than Jerusalem, more Italians than Rome, more Russians than Moscow. But now in our own country New York has her own Rome, Jerusalem and Moscow, while nineteen other of our greatest cities have within their limits smaller Romes, Jerusalems and Moscows. We have a heterogeneous population within our country. Let us look at this mass, determine from whence it comes and the character of its elements. The sources of our immigration are characterized by the shifting from Western to Eastern and Southern Europe. If a line be drawn across Europe from northeast to southwest we divide the continent into two parts with the Scandanavian Peninsula, the British Islands, Germany and France on the one side and Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy and Turkey on the other. This line separates countries whose *races* are distinct, as well as their civilization. The former nations represent Protestant Europe, popular government, popular education, skilled labor and a thrifty peasantry. The latter stands for Catholic Europe, absolute

monarchies, limited education, unskilled labor and an ignorant peasantry.

We have said that the nature of our immigration has radically changed of late years. Taking Great Britian and Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweeden, and Switzerland as group I, and Italy, Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, Austria-Huangary, Russia, Greece, Roumania, Servia, Montenegro, Turkey in Europe and Turkey in Asia as group III we have these facts:

Group I- in 1902 there came from this group 136,620 or 22%, in 1905, there came 215,865 or 21.7%.

Group II- in 1902 there came 486,367 or 78% and in 1905 there came 808,856 or 78.9%.

This means that we have "A New Immigration" as has been termed by one writer. Our immigrants are now coming from group two at the rate of over 800,000 a year, whereas the number coming from group one only aggregates 215,000. It means that there is being poured into our land a heterogenous mass, "a congeries of races even more diverse than resources and climates from which they draw their substance," that is to say to-day our country has truly a representation of about every race of the human family white, black, red, yellow and brown.

The character of our immigration from colonial days down to within a comparatively recent period has been homogeneous. They

came largely because of religious conditions. In the year 1840 we see the cause of immigration changing from religious reasons to industrial and economic. It is economic conditions there in the old country that has stimulated immigration to our shores largely. This statement, however, must not be taken too literally. There are numerous peoples who are here because of religious persecution as the Russian Jews, race oppression, political revolution, militarism, taxation, famine, and poverty. So that these millions have come to us because of economic, religious and political conditions. Yet with the coming of the "New Immigration" there has also come new problems. We are face to face with new social, political, moral, and religious situations.

A social problem is before us. These masses of new comers are largely of the illiterate class. In 1900 those of group I over fourteen years of age showed an illiteracy of 4% while those of group two over fourteen years of age showed an illiteracy of 36.6%. And we know that within the last years illiteracy has increased, if anything. Then again our social life is being undermined. Our Puritanism is looked upon as a standard out of date, even its spirit is looked down upon. These peoples come from a countries where the Sabbath is more a holiday than a holy day. The high ethical standards of our Americanism are not familiar to them.

Look at our cities. One authority has said in 1790 three per

cent of our population lived in cities of 8000 population. Now one fifth our population lives in thirty eight cities <sup>of</sup> over 100,000 of whom two-fifths are foreign born, one-third native offspring of foreign parents, one-tenth people of native parantage. Again the foreign born in the great cities is four times as great as the native born. To put it in another way out of one hundred and sixty cities of 25,000 population one-half is foreign born. It is a fact that from 1890 to 1900 (within ten years) ~~that~~ the per cent who went to the states fell from 44 1/2 to 9 per cent. The foreign <sup>then</sup> element, is found in the cities largely. This is true of the immigrants of group two. I know from observation in Boston that the congested parts of the north, west and south ends is due to the immigrants-~~the~~ "New Immigration." The immigrants furnish the material for Boston's slums. And in New York city group two furnishes nineteen times as many of the slum inhabitants as group one even. Corruption in our large scities is due largely to bosses who buy up and controll these masses. The bosses look to the foreign population for the balance of power. Josiah Strong very timely says, "the city is the nerve center of our civilization. It is also the storm center. The city has a peculiar attraction for the immigrant. Here is heaped the social dynamite; here the dangerous elements are multiplied and centered". Robert D. Ward puts the situation this way "the vastness of the problem of the city slum, and

the impossibility, even with unlimited resources of men and money, of permanently raising the standards of living of many of our immigrants as long as they are crowded together, and as long as the stream of newer immigrants pours into these same slums, has naturally forced itself upon the minds of thinking persons." Vice, poverty, political corruption, disease, crime, are all found here. The saloon is so evident in these quarters. My testimony from what I have seen in Boston is that the city is a peril to our nation. General Booth has this to say about the city, "talk of Dante's Hell, and all the horrors and cruelties of the torture chamber of the lost! The man who walks with open eyes and bleeding heart through the shambles of our civilization needs no such fantastic images of the poet to teach him the horror".

This "New Immigration" has effected the condition of the native classes. These immigrants come largely from countries where there is a lower stratum of civilization, speaking foreign tongues, caring less about home comforts, and at the same time undermining our American laborer by working for cheaper wages. This vast army is advancing across the field of American industry. The history of the cotton mills of Massachusetts furnishes what we mean. Fifty years ago they were filled with the best people of the country. The names the same as some of those found among the fathers of the republic. but later the native born banished. Then

came a wave of Irish immigrants and they in turn were superceded by French-Canadians they in turn being rapidly superceded by Greeks and Arminians. And this is but a picture of what is taking place in the industrial field everywhere. They supply the cheap market. They maintain a standard of living like unto that which prevails in the poorest parts of Italy, Russia, and Austria-Hungary. Mr. P.F. Hall has this to say on the economic phase of the problem "In conclusion it may be said the the economic effects of immigration have been the settling of the new portions of the country, the exploiting its industries more speedily than would, <sup>otherwise</sup> have been possible, the development of the factory system, and stimulating the invention and use of machinery requiring no great skill for its operation." The sweat-shop is kept up through the immigrant. The sweating system is opposed to the factory system. One authority states, "practically all of the work in tenements is carried on by foreign born men and women, and more than that, by the latest arrivals and the lowest condition of the foreign-born."

We must not be deaf to the political effect of the new immigration. Many are not aware that there are fifteen states in the union in which aliens are allowed to vote after declaring their intention to become citizens----and in many of those states only one year's residence <sup>is required.</sup> The ballot then is given with great liberality. "It is to be regretted" says one "that citizenship of the

United States by naturalization has not, in every instance, been made a prerequisite to the right to vote in the States." This is too great a strain upon our suffrage. So many of these peoples do not understand our system and yet many an alien votes within six months after he arrives in some of our states. There is another danger that of certain races voting as units upon political questions, that is voting along racial lines. This means in the end a serious condition. Equally is the danger, "in the change of political ideals following the change in the racial composition of immigration." As a result of this: in our cities now there is a tendency to put more power into the hands of the executive. Prof. Commons says, "we have actually begun to despotize our institution in order to control these dissident elements, though still optimistically holding that we retain the original democracy."

Let us look at the religious situation. In 1900 there was 52% Roman Catholics admitted, 20% Protestants, and 10% Jews of all immigrants. That means that Roman Catholicism is gaining every year nearly 500,000 adherents. I believe with Mr. Grose "whatever would make this country less distinctively Protestant in religion tends to destroy all the other social and civil characteristics which, it is well said, we wish to preserve." And this brings me to one of the real menacing situations of our Republic namely the Roman Catholic Church and Education. The

parochial schools of the Catholics have grown enormously in recent years. Not long since there was dedicated the largest parochial school in America at Chicago by the Vice-President of our United States. Again let me quote from Mr. Grose, "In Illinois the foreign element outnumbers the native in voting power. In consequence compulsory education in the public schools of that state was voted down by a legislature pledged to obey the dictum of the foreign element. Where the priests wield the foreign element in favor of the parochial schools, it is not possible to pass a bill for compulsory education in the English language." This great mass of nominal Roman Catholics is out of sympathy with our American ideals. Many of them are not much removed beyond heathenism. And these millions of immigrants will not become Americanized with a parochial school system.

Thus far we have noted some of the effects immigration is having upon our national life. The facts we have given we hope are not over drawn yet withall there is another side. Protestantism has a wonderful opportunity right here. She has the opportunity of dealing with this immigrant problem in a way that no other agency for righteousness has. I fully realize that in the solution of this problem other agencies are to be considered. From a legislative standpoint it would be well for Congress to pass a law embracing such points as moral, educational, and property qualifications.

And the states could well afford to revise their alien laws. Other factors for righteousness have a work to do as well. That this ~~man~~<sup>mass</sup> needs all the benefits of our public schools, our culture, there is no question. But it does need evangelization. And right here is the field for Protestantism.

By way of introduction let me quote from E. E. Chevirs, D.D. "the Christian Churches of America stand face to face with a tremendous task. It is a challenge to their faith, their devotion, their zeal. The accomplishment of it will mean not only the ascendancy of Christianity in the home-land, but also for world-wide evangelization." Evangelical Christianity then has ~~but~~ one of the greatest "Home Missionary Opportunities" ever accorded her since the days of the Apostolic Church. As on the day of Pentecost all nations heard the Evangelical note from the mouth of Peter and other of the disciples so today there is needed like disciples who will herald that same note to the nations which are round about who have never even so much as heard such a type of gospel. Those masses of Immigrants know little of the Bible and of the gospel. They have no idea of "soul liberty". And to such we Christians must come. Of course I do not mean to infer that nothing whatever has been done for the Immigrant by Protestantism, far from it. Nor do I mean to infer that no evangelistic efforts have been put forth to reach these peolpes. In either case some-

thing has been done and is being done. Our own Methodism has not been asleep. In Boston we have a flourishing Italian church. In New York, Chicago and many of the cities we have good successful missions among these immigrants. But still it seems to me Protestantism has not waked up to her opportunity. Dr. W. F. Warren in his tract upon "Reinforcements for our Church from the Orient" says "for this high call of duty and line of privilege few of our pastors and flocks are as yet prepared. Not one in a hundred has sufficient breadth of view or scope of sympathy to be available for truly effective service." Protestantism today then is, not really prepared under existing conditions to deal with this mighty problem as it ought to be dealt with. If time would permit I should be very glad to give the various plans and methods that are being tried. But as I am limited I shall devote the remaining time more to some suggestions as to how to meet the problem as I have gathered from my investigations.

1. Need of Federation of our Protestant denominations for Evangelistic work among these peoples as has been done in Porto Rico. Let the city be divided up into districts and each Evangelical Denomination given contrroll of that district.

2. Then the placing in these districts trained missionaries who have (1) a knowledge of the peoples with whom they have to work (2) who will be willing to visit them (3) who can teach them

English (4) who will be willing to aid them in every way. This has been tried very successfully by Dr. A. F. Shauffler of Cleveland among the Bohemians.

3. More effective and federated work at the Immigrant stations. There ought to be at every port an Immigrant Bureau which could be at the service of the Immigrant so as to get him in touch at once with Protestantism.

(4) The different denominations ought to erect new churches right in the heart of the city centers that would be real churches. It must be borne in mind that these peoples come from lands where they are used to the most beautiful churches in the world. And then upon their arrival in our cities to see such mission quarters that our Protestant churches offer them is a reflection upon us not them.

5. In connection with these churches there ought to be a new type of Institutional Church. More educational in its work and less charitable. A little of this kind of work is being done by Morgan Memorial Church in Boston. They have a very large Children's Church.

6. Evangelistic Tent work could be effectively employed during the summer months in the different foreign quarters.

7. Each denomination ought to have a department of Immigrant work in charge of highly trained men.

8. Building of special schools for training workers.

9. In every Theological Seminary a course ought to be given upon this phase of the Church's work and the problem dealt with accordingly.

10. An educational campaign ought to be inaugurated to bring our American Protestant population in sympathy with those peoples. Nothing can be done as long as the Christian people are not in sympathy with these peoples.

11. Let pastors and churches make it a matter of prayer. And let them give toward this work. Let them, "live, personally, in such intimacy of communion with our Lord that he can keep" and use them for the bringing of these sons of earth to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The solution in a word is this to quote; "Christianity, as incarnated in American Protestantism can preserve America's free institutions, and combined forces educational, social and political." Our Protestantism must not and cannot shift her responsibility; it rests upon us. In the providence of God these millions are coming to us to be Evangelized. The morning light is breaking ~~because~~ our churches are considering the problem. And already there are movements on foot to put into active work some lines of work which will help at least to solve the problem.