

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE IX.

## AMERICA AND THE FAR EAST.

BY THE REV. WILLIAM BYRON FORBUSH.

A GREAT historic incident is never solitary. As the lightning flash is the illuminant of the approaching electric storm, so an historic incident is the flash which throws light upon the great historic movement behind it. It has been remarked that the entrance of two American naval commanders into two Oriental ports forty-five years apart successively opened to America the Far East. This statement exaggerates the importance of those courageous and noteworthy deeds. The entrance of Commodore Perry into the harbor of Yedo, while it may have precipitated, did not cause the inevitable appearance of Japan in the arena of the world's affairs. And so the sailing of Commodore Dewey into Manila Bay did not create, but only made manifest, the problem of the Far East which, sooner or later, America was bound to face. And each year that elapsed between the thunder of Perry's guns and the flash of Dewey's cannon saw the steady growth of the clouds and heard the increasing murmur of the storm which we now see to be upon us. This statement is fundamental to a correct understanding of the position of our country in the affairs of Asia to-day. If we believe that George Dewey unwittingly created a problem which never existed before, and that this problem consists in nothing more than the dilemma as to what we are to do with the Philippines, we are far from seeing more than a small portion of the facts that are coming into sight. Unless we remember that there is a great Far Eastern problem in which all the

world is interested, and that no nation can do business or exert influence in the western Pacific without becoming involved in it, we shall fail to understand that the Philippine problem is the least of those which we are set to answer.

Let me name certain underlying facts that emphasize the largeness of our Far Eastern problem.

1. The first fact which I name is that of the *Conflict of Races*. The last millennium of the world's history has been the story of a duel between the Teutonic and the Latin races. This is a large statement, and I have space only barely to indicate its proof. When, at about the same time, the great Western Roman Empire fell before the savage Visigoths, and England was beginning to emerge as a nation from its scattered tribes, there was seen but the first dim prophecy of what was to come. Then Europe plunged into the Dark Ages. When she emerged, the battle lines were distinct. Upon one side were Spain and Portugal, the two mightiest naval and colonial powers in the world, and the Papacy, with its great temporal power; upon the other were England, now a strong nation, and the coalescing states of the Germans. To-day the battle has been won. The Pope has lost his temporal power forever, Portugal long ago and Spain recently have been shorn of their colonies. France, Spain, and Italy are no longer great world powers. The clock of time has struck at Waterloo, Sedan, and Santiago de Cuba: each stroke has been the knell of a Latin power; each stroke has been a peal of triumph to a Teutonic power. To-day England, America, and Germany, Teutonic nations, outweigh the southern nations of Europe.

But now another duel is to be fought. Less than two centuries ago another race entered the battle of the world. With the rise of Russia dawns a new day in history. Now against the great Anglo-Saxon-Teutonic

race, rich, cultured, and restless, rises the huge, barbaric, stubborn Slav. It is Orion with his sword of light against the pitiless Great Bear. The history of the world in the next few centuries will be the story of the victory of one or the other of the twain. The conflict will be fought out on the shores of the Pacific. Ancient history centered about the eastern Mediterranean. Mediæval history and modern history have faced the Atlantic. The next act will take place beside the world's greatest ocean. Russia is reaching eastward as fast as she can build her railways across Siberia and Manchuria, and southeastward as fast as she can feel her way into India. England is strengthening herself at Calcutta, Bangkok, and Hongkong. America suddenly finds herself at anchor off the China coast. All the unexplored and undeveloped portions of the world to-day border on the Pacific. All the new and growing nations—Australia, Mexico, Canada, America, and Japan—face thither. The dominant nations upon the borders of that great ocean are all either Anglo-Saxon or Slavic. The development of our own country steadily westward leaves us peering over the edge of that sea with eagerness and ambition. The contest may or may not be bloody, but it will be real. The greatest military or commercial war of history is yet to be fought, and here is the battle-field.

2. The second fact is the growing *Solidarity of the World*. Along with, and in spite of the wars of history, human brotherhood has been growing. Once there was no fraternity except among kinsmen; then there was none except among tribesmen; then none except among allied provinces. To-day we are familiar with the brotherhood of friendly nations, and this very year we are beholding at the Hague the first intimations of a confederation of the world. We are not isolate here in America, and we never have been. We have fought England twice and France

once. We have battled with Spain before now. We have fought Mexico. We bombarded Tripoli, Japan, China, and Corea. Every one of these experiences has demonstrated our necessary nearness to the rest of the world. Our Monroe Doctrine has strengthened to a virtual protectorate of the Western Continent which must sometime involve us in many delicate relations with European powers. We are already umpires of South America to a greater degree than Russia can ever hope to be of Asia. Our millions of immigrants have made us a confederacy of aliens, and have multiplied the ties which bind us to the countries from which they came. When America asks, "Who is my neighbor?" the cable and the steamboat answer by bringing the antipodes nearer than Richmond once was to Boston. The fortunes of war have laid down our indemnity in the very doorway of Asia.

But the solidarity of the world has not come through war and conquest, but through peace. The reason we are interested in the affairs of Asia, and the reason we are becoming sharers in the responsibilities of the world, are not the sudden ones of unexpected circumstance, but are those which have been slowly arising from our growth in manufactures and trade. We may remove our army and navy from the Far East, but in their place will go a greater army of peaceful traders and a mightier navy of merchant marine, who will reawaken in peace questions which war first caused us to hear.

Spain conquered to plunder. America lives by the peaceable conquest of trade. Already we hear the cry of overproduction. The stupendous trusts, thriving upon protective tariffs, are combining to curtail production to the limits of national needs and home markets, but they cannot succeed so long as the markets of the world are calling for American products. In these new markets is the American workingman's salvation.

Thither capital and labor can go, not as enemies but as friends, side by side. No new markets are so promising as those which lie along the Pacific. There two-thirds of the population of the world are awakening to a demand for the productions of modern invention and labor. One-half of this population is in China alone. Here in the most ancient empire on earth, by a strange foresight, we gained years ago most valuable trade privileges by treaty, constituting the solemn pledge of a perpetual open door to American exports. Trade may not follow the flag, but wherever trade goes the flag must go to protect it. National commerce must be guarded by national diplomacy. Our duties and responsibilities in this great Pacific area have lately been greatly increased by the annexation of Hawaii, the stepping-stone to Asia, by the revival of Alaska, by the increase of our merchant marine, by the renewal of the project for the Nicaragua Canal, and by our recent accession of the Philippine Islands, the southeastern gateway of the Orient.

In addition we are brought into close sympathy with some of the actors in the great drama of the Pacific, by the late intimations of racial and national friendship on the part of our English brethren, and by the growing respect and admiration of the Japanese, who have absorbed from us, more than from all others, the ideals of their newly created national life. By no means the least powerful tie which binds us to an active interest in Asia is the fact that for nearly a century we have shown a personal interest in the welfare of all these people by the presence of a devoted class who have gone from us, not to carry our national flag, but to carry the purest and best of American and Christian ideals. I refer to our missionaries. In Japan, in India, and in China the missionaries from America have been the most forceful and the most trusted of all foreign influences.

We are then already in the Far East by our soldiers, our traders, and our missionaries. If we were warranted in opening Japan by the guns of Perry to American trade and a Christian civilization, is it not the plain providence of the present if the guns of Dewey shall speak the word of America not only to the Philippines, but to the whole Pacific coast?

3. Another fact to which I can but briefly refer is the history of the *Development of Inferior Races*. History for these races in the sense of actual progress and world-events did not antedate Columbus. With that explorer the Latin system of colonization began to have trial. This theory was manifested in Mexico, Peru, and all of South America and in North America, as long as the Spanish rule lasted. It consisted simply in the enrichment of the home governments by robbery and oppression. That system failed. It resulted in the successful revolt of the whole Western Continent and in the gradual alienation of all the other colonies of Spain. With the possession of India by England began the Anglo-Saxon system of colonization. This consisted in the insistence on peace, followed immediately and at every step by the progressive development of the natives unto self-respect and industry. This policing of the unruly savage by his peace-loving brother and his subsequent uplifting are what we see now in India, in Africa, in Australia, and wherever the English flag waves. That it is the true and ultimate policy is proven by the success of the English and Dutch colonies, which have tried this method, and by the failure of the colonies of France and of Italy, which have not.

Two other great regions now come into view to be cared for by stronger nations,—the Philippines and China, the last of the unguarded peoples. They must be policed and educated. If left to themselves they will continue in anarchy and lethargy. That they will not be left to them-

selves is shown by the eager interest of Russia in China and of Germany in the Philippines. The inheritance of the earth is growing very precious, and the meek will have to keep their eyes open if they are to enter into its blessedness. Shall these childlike peoples be dominated by a ruthless despotism, or exploited by a selfish autocracy, or shall they be peacefully developed into a self-governing condition? The Latin has failed, and the Slav will undo. The Teuton is able, but his flesh is weak. Unto the Anglo-Saxon is the mission and the opportunity. This is "The White Man's Burden," not a self-glorifying task:

"No iron rule of kings,  
But toil of serf and sweeper,  
The tale of common things."

An ungracious but a necessary and an immediate duty.

These facts—that of race conflict, in which we are already involved; that of world solidarity, from which we cannot be the only nation to stand aloof; and that of our responsibility to such dependent and undeveloped peoples as come under our influence—suggest the immediate tasks of America in the Far East. These, in a word, are: to spread in the Philippines the area of peace and order, and to develop the people within that realm in self-government and civilization, according to the best Anglo-Saxon traditions; to work for the integrity of China, and to insist upon the perpetuity of our treaty rights there, by assisting the self-governing and conserving powers of that empire; and to accomplish this by working at home for a firm, strong leadership in our own government, the maintenance of a trained diplomatic and an adequate naval force, and the impressing of our American manhood with the sense of our enlarged and stupendous responsibilities.

These facts bring with them their own arguments for this suggested national policy.

1. There is first the argument of *Responsibility*. We



need not even open the question of the right and wrong of our present position in the Philippines. All arguments for action based upon the theory of our going there are rendered out of date by the fact that we are there and we cannot get away. The islands are now ours or nobody's. They are ours or the property of the first power that may grasp them. Even the question as to whether these islands are under our protectorate or are an integral part of our territory is secondary. Those who oppose expansion of our domain and suggest that we can just as well keep other nations from seizing them by leaving them to self-government and notifying others to keep their hands off, forget that the other nations will demand from us such a measure of control as shall insure open ports, peaceful opportunities for trade, and safety of life and property. This is what we are actually trying to secure. For this we are responsible. Has there been an hour since the victory of Dewey, or has a moment yet come, when our deserting the Philippines would have been safe to humanity?

There are those who believe that a patient and generous dealing with Aguinaldo would have secured the building up under his leadership of a well-governed native state. His followers have been compared to the God-fearing Pilgrim Fathers, of whom Longfellow said, that "God sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat for this planting, then sifted the wheat as the living seed of a nation," and the dark-skinned leader himself to our own great Washington. Granting the preposterous claim, may we not question whether even Washington could have welded in one the thousand islands, tongues, and tribes of the Philippines? And can we credit the nations of Europe with forbearance to wait while he toils through anarchy and bloodshed to his distant goal? Put a boy in a lonely field with a big purse in his pocket and a heavy hoe in his hand and surround him with giant robbers—and what is his guardian's

duty? Will it be kinder to leave him alone, or to stay by and help him? What the boy wants, or what the giants want, or what casual spectators want, has nothing to do with the duty of the guardian of that field and that purse and that boy. This is the situation in the Philippines.

We cannot unboil the egg. We may have made mistakes in the conduct of affairs. We may have done our duty with little tact and much lack of purpose. This only makes more necessary vigor, force, and straightness of aim in fulfilling our ungrateful but increased responsibilities. Having done this, we have by no means done all. These islands have come to us by the fortunes of war. They are rightly spoken of as a gateway. A gateway to what? To the commerce of Asia. Manila is, next to Hongkong, the most important port in the Orient. Our guardianship of, and commerce in, the Philippines will bring us continually into the affairs of China. Possessing a gateway, we shall want to enter. Indeed we find we have already entered. Our acquisition of Manila becomes a flash to reveal to us that we have already great and growing interests in the peace and prosperity of China. No one has more interest than we in the future of the Far East. We remember that we have the rights of a favored nation forever by solemn treaty. But upon the dismemberment of China, where will those rights be found? They are already subject to immediate attack. Each slice of territory granted, each sphere of influence set up, decreases our future in the Far East. The completion of the Siberian railway will bring the Russian paw down upon the northern provinces of China. Germany, Italy, and France are already gnawing, like mice, at her fringes; even England hesitates between the policy of "the open door" and taking her lion's share along the fertile valleys of the southern waterways. It is safe to say that her hesitancy is largely due to doubt as to what America will do and say. If we speak, and

speak now, we shall not be too late. England and Japan will stand by us, and old China will arouse to new life. Not to conquer or to annex, but to save, should be our motto, and the salvation of China will solve the problem of the Far East.

2. The second argument is that of *Peace*. This is the great watchword of the hour. No one can prophesy just what in every case will bring war or what will bring peace. But there is not much doubt here. The unconditional withdrawal of America from the Philippines would bring on a great European war. Any letting go of the reins there foreshadows anarchy, with general war lurking in the background. The consistent carrying out of our firm and humane policy will probably bring peace within a very short time. To this end the object-lesson of our institutions in active operation in and about Manila will probably contribute even more than will the sword. So in China. To allow things to take their course there is to precipitate the greatest war of history, a war in which we may be even the aggressors. To insist firmly and constantly upon our rights and the rights of others will tend to keep the stability of the East and the peace of nations. Betrayal of sacred trusts and relinquishment of purchased and chartered rights do not point toward peace—or honor. We have surprised the diplomatic world lately somewhat by our American fashion of “the diplomacy of truth.” It has always been our way of doing things, and it has amply justified itself as a peace-making policy. It will bear further trial.

3. I have not space to enlarge upon the argument of *National Interest*. It is impossible to exaggerate the wealth, the fertility, the resources, the productive and receptive ability of the people of the Philippines and of China. Their value is now in its lowest terms, and it will be a thing not of a few years but of unmeasured time.

They are the unentered treasure-house of the world. If we care for labor and trade and prosperity and the manhood which these encourage, we must take a firm and consistent and unmistakable position upon the Eastern Question. And in so doing we are not selfish. For what we do in keeping the door open for ourselves we do for the world, as we throw wide open the portals of adventure and opportunity.

4. There is also the argument of *Privilege*. The preparations of our history have been for this very hour. By a strange providence our New England was the scene of England's solitary effort to govern a colony by Latin methods. Our Revolution taught England the lesson which she has practiced in Canada, India, and Australia. Our Louisiana Purchase, Florida, California, and the Mexican Cession had all been under a Latin yoke. Our whole country has been through this tutelage. Our Indian problem and our Negro problem have given us colonial experience within our very midst. Our history has been the story of the conquering of undeveloped lands for agriculture and commerce. We are a nation full of men of ambition and adventure. Our great corporations and institutions have developed able promoters of industry and leaders of men. Our explorers and business men are equally at home in the Klondike and in Cuba. We have had here at home instruction in most of the things which we have to practice in the Far East. We have not learned all our lessons well. But there are no people under heaven who are better fitted for hard tasks, stubborn obstacles, and ultimate triumph. Do we not want a part in making this world freer and better? Do we expect to remain always at home while others do the world's work? Have we not some of us a fine enthusiasm to send with the emissaries of commerce the messengers of American ideas and ideals, and to save these islands and this ancient empire, not for

an imperialism of conquest and annexation, but for the imperialism of the kingdom of God?

There are arguments against this position, and I will try to state them. We have plenty of home problems to engage our attention, we are told, and we are not oversuccessful in governing ourselves. We are told that we have not the ability nor the virtue to do this work; that the cost will be more than the results, as the present war already shows; and that recent history has plainly taught us that our national leaders are insufficient for the honorable and successful carrying out of this suggested policy. My reply must be a general one. We have the ability to do whatever we ought to do. The counting of costs and of values can never be accurately done beforehand; but this one thing is sure, it will always cost more, and pay less, in the long run to do wrong than to do right. If our national leaders are incompetent, we the people must provide ourselves with better ones. The fact that we are not doing our work well at present will not be an excuse for not doing what more we have to do. We learned all this thirty-five years ago. The nation that cried, out of the dilemma of slavery, that it was not able to do right and that it would cost too much, did succeed in doing right in the end, and paid for every day of its delay in the awful cost of men and means. That nation looked in despair from its vacillating presidents and weak-kneed statesmen and dress-parade soldiers unto God, and God gave us Abraham Lincoln and Secretary Stanton and Ulysses Grant. We were doing a great many things none too well, but we had to stop and do this first.

And so now. I believe that God still rules even the War Department at Washington, and that God still keeps his eye on the President's chair, and that when his people cry out in their need he will give them a Man. I believe he sees the end from the beginning, and that

when he leads our nation up into a doorway and shuts the way behind it, he means that it shall enter. The way before may be neither clear nor sunny. Senator Hoar, in a recent able article on the character of Daniel Webster, has given his explanation of the later acts of that statesman's life by saying, that Webster was unwilling to believe that it was the duty of this country to leave the course of apparently safe compromise for that of danger and struggle. It may be that the remark is true of the venerable writer himself. There were many sunken torpedoes supposed to be lying in Manila harbor when Dewey sailed daringly in over them to victory before breakfast. The "Dewey dangers" of our national future are by no means imaginary or small, but it may be that a swift and stern grappling with them will bring the most speedy victory.

The trouble with the so-called anti-imperialist position is, that it paints all these possible dangers in darkest colors, and then proposes to deal with the whole matter in a way which was only possible in the past, and which, if tried in the present, will bring up still more certain and appalling dangers in the farther future.

But the strongest objection to our proposed forward movement in the Far East is one that appeals, not to the trader or the fighter, but to the moralist. Is it right to fight the Filipinos and to try to govern them? To the great bar of Justice the American nation is summoned; and, unless the decision be an acquittal, we know that the Judge of all the earth will become an Avenger. We have already approached this aspect of the case by showing the inevitableness of our present position and the impossibility of withdrawal, by showing that the Far Eastern question is not a matter of sudden appearance, but one of ancient and steady growth, which must be faced sometime, and which can be disposed of now better than later; we have said that

it was necessary to protect our merchants and missionaries and our commercial interests; we have intimated that in the work of policing the world our turn and time had come; we have made it plain that the interests of permanent peace seem to be met by the action proposed; and we have laid emphasis upon the responsibility which we, and we only, bear for the future of these islanders. Upon this latter point alone we may rest our case. While the anti-imperialist has many means of approach, perhaps his most effective question is in some such form as this: "What right have we to risk the health, morals, and lives of the youth of our country in shooting down the brave patriots of a cause which the citizens of a free nation ought to applaud and bless?" This large question, with its implications of tyranny to ourselves and of patriotism to our rebel antagonist, is rather startling—until examined. Its implications are both false. We are not tyrants. Free speech is an inalienable right, and I do not share in the indignation expressed by some because the words of those who are opposed to active measures have encouraged the revolutionists near Manila, but I do insist that this wholesale accusation of honest thinkers, sober public men, and brave soldiers as tyrants, thieves, and agents of corporations and business enterprises, is somewhat tiresome. Are the honest men all on one side in this matter? So of the other statement. If the Filipinos were a civilized people, if they possessed a government entitled to declare war and protect foreigners, if they had any experience in self-government, or had ever shown any evidences of humanity and self-control, these comparisons of them to the American patriarchs of liberty would mean something. If they were in the situation of our fathers in 1776, isolated and distant from the complications of world-politics, and out of the track of empire, in a time when the world had not all been divided up into spheres of influence, and when each nation was not strain-

ing every nerve for new trade opportunities, then they would have opportunity and leisure to work out their experiments in government; and their well-meaning ebullience would have some chance of some time reaching a knowledge, sanity, and maturity which would dignify it as patriotism. But their efforts at the end of the nineteenth century are a hundred years too late. Their unaided endeavors are as out of place as those of a child who sits down with his playthings in the midst of Broadway. They are in the roadway, they are in the very midst of the rush of westward-moving international competition, and they must be overwhelmed. Now, which is kinder, to leave them thus, or to remove them, even if they struggle a little, to a place of safety? In the eyes of international law this land is ours, and to us, and to no one else, the nations look for its peace and their protection. We wish these people to be free, and we intend to make them so. But they are not free now; they do not know what freedom is, nor how to attain it. If their leader does not understand our purposes and know our history as a free people, then he is not fit to free his own people, and it is cruel not to restrain him. If he does know us, then he proves himself a selfish dictator, whose suppression is necessary to true liberty. It will cost something in that which is the most precious capital of the country—its young manhood—to do this, but it will cost less to do this than to try to do anything else, and it **MUST BE DONE.**

In conclusion, I wish to say soberly that, with the aid of one condition, we shall succeed. I expect there will be corruption and injustice and crime. But as I believe the negro is better off in America to-day than he would have been if he had remained in Africa or had gone anywhere else, and as I believe the Indian has been uplifted since he has lived with the white man, and as I look upon Hampton and Tuskegee as being better types of the ultimate fu-



ture than the slave block and lynching; so I believe that, in the slow progression of time, the Philippine Islanders will learn to thank the white man for what he brings him. It will not all come at once. It did not so come when Augustine preached to the Britons, and Ansgar to the Danes.

The condition which I name is the sufficiency of American manhood. It has slowly arisen to each emergency in the past. Will it in the future? Here friend of action and of inaction abroad should forget their differences, for here they can agree. Whatever our foreign policy, we need MEN. We need them in the army and navy; we need them in diplomacy; we need them even more in legislation and in the seats of the mighty; and we need them most of all, where all ultimate power resides and all national policies gain their sanction, in the voting constituency, the common citizenship, of our great republic. We must turn for them, where we have gone before, to the great conserving and fructifying institutions of our land—the public school, the public library, the people's caucus, the free platform, the free press, and the church of God.