

care of the Lord's followers, were thus cradled in romantic circumstances, which, indeed, have never been absent from any efforts made for their evangelization. This will be abundantly manifest from the account of modern missions with which it is proposed to follow the present article. W. T. GIDNEY.



ART. V.—MR. KIDD'S "PRINCIPLES OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION."¹

I HAVE no intention of entering upon a detailed examination or criticism of Mr. Kidd's remarkable and, in many ways, most helpful book. My object is rather, by giving a brief outline of its contents—of the writer's position and argument, and of the conclusions at which he arrives—to encourage those to read it who wish to gain a better "understanding of their times," so as to know more perfectly what those who are wrestling on behalf of righteousness "ought to do." The book is not easy reading, but I believe that it will amply repay anyone who will study it with care.

The title of the first chapter, "The Close of an Era," describes Mr. Kidd's position. He believes that we stand just within a period marked "by a great change in the opinions and modes of thinking of society." In the past sixty years every department of knowledge dealing with the position of man in society has witnessed an immense transformation. This transformation consists, not only in the enormously increased contents of our knowledge, but in the ways in which we can use our knowledge. There is seen to be a solidarity of knowledge as well as a solidarity of life. The various fragments of our knowledge are seen to be intimately co-related, and, acting upon the experiences of the immediate past, it is seen that much of the knowledge we possess *implies* far more than even the same amount of knowledge would have implied in the past.

This is due to our knowledge of the principle of evolution, which in one form or another is now seen to be applicable to all spheres of knowledge and of thought; indeed, "the extraordinary reaches of the changes which this doctrine is to all appearances destined to accomplish are not as yet fully perceived by any school of thought" (p. 3).

Mr. Kidd next proceeds to show that almost up to the present time "nearly all the systems of political and social

¹ "Principles of Western Civilization," by Benjamin Kidd. London: Macmillan and Co., 1902.

philosophy" which have controlled the mind of our civilization, as well as "the schemes of human conduct and interest based upon them, have considered simply the interests of the existing individuals, either separately as individuals or collectively as members of political society" (p. 3). In other words, in the lives of *nearly* all nations, societies, and peoples, the interests of the present have throughout the ages of the past been regarded as paramount.

"But suppose," says Mr. Kidd, "we accept the law of natural selection as a controlling principle in the process of social evolution, we must by inherent necessity also accept it as operating in the manner in which in the long-run it produces the largest and most effective results" (p. 3).

But what does this imply? It implies nothing less than that the interests of existing individuals are absolutely subordinate to "the interests of a developing system of social order the overwhelming proportion of whose members are still in the future" (p. 4).

The writer's idea is, I confess, at first somewhat difficult to grasp, and it is only when, by a long and careful historical retrospect, he surveys and interprets the various movements of the past in the light of his theory, that the full extent of its meaning and its value forces itself upon us.

But it will be admitted that, after this careful retrospect, we do seem inevitably led to the conclusion that "the peoples in the present who are already destined to inherit the future are not they whose institutions revolve round any ideal schemes of the interests of existing members of society; they are simply the peoples who already bear on their shoulders the burden of the principles with which the interests of the future are identified" (p. 6).

If anyone will consider this thought carefully, he will, I think, see that its translation into language with which we are familiar in the New Testament will neither be difficult nor far-fetched. Let anyone, for instance, consider the position of the Christians in the first two centuries of our era, as a "people" in the midst of the great world-power of the Roman Empire. Has not history, we ask, proved that those Christians may now be regarded as a people who did then "bear on their shoulders the burden of the principles with which the interests of the future" were very really "identified"?

If we identify "the city that hath the foundations" with the commonwealth whose foundation principles are identical with the absolute laws of God, and, at the same time, remember that when these words were written the meaning of many of these laws (and much more their interpretation) was still hidden in mystery, we can see how absolutely true to the

law of Nature (which is the law of God) was that principle of its Divine Founder, who, when upon earth, absolutely sacrificed the present, which other men saw, to the future, which then He, and He only, saw.

What have we, then, in Mr. Kidd's theory? Certainly no antagonism between the laws of Christ and the latest deductions from the most recent applications of evolutionary science to the social sphere; but, on the contrary, an actual proof by the methods of science and of history that the Christian principles have all along been right, and are destined to be triumphant in the future.

I cannot even attempt to follow Mr. Kidd through the closely-written details by which proof after proof of his theory is adduced. It must suffice for me to say that when we consider, one after another, the various civilizations and institutions of the past, we see how, more or less strongly, they were one and all inspired by the spirit of selfishness; how, in Mr. Kidd's own words, "there were no rights and no responsibilities in man, no meaning and no significance in life, no hopes and no desires in existence, save such as were related to present ends" (p. 199).

Proofs of this are found in the ancient privileges of each separate tribe against all outsiders; in the exclusive rights of citizenship in the old Greek cities, or in ancient Rome, as against the multitudes of slaves; in the terrible but quite common practice of infanticide; in the exclusive conditions and regulations of the trading towns or corporations of the Middle Ages. Every one of these institutions, whether tribal membership, State citizenship, or trade privilege, has for its end the interests of the existing members of the particular closed or privileged corporation or society. Drawing attention to these various manifestations of this selfishness, this centring of interest in the present and in the privileged few, Mr. Kidd works gradually downwards through period after period until he comes to the Manchester school of political economists, with their *laissez faire* principles, which mean nothing more nor less than a free fight on the world's area for the strongest, which, as Mr. Kidd says, in matters of trade too often means "the most unscrupulous." A most striking and very recent, and yet most revolting, example (or conclusion) of this last theory the author sees in the recent doings in China, where, in his own words, "the exploitation of Chinese resources proceeds in an environment of international intrigue, of social squalor, and of moral outrage and degradation almost without equal in history" (p. 452).

Had I space, it might have been well to have pointed out how this book strengthens the view that in the upward

development of moral principles towards the Christian standard it seems as if international relationships and questions of international policy were the last to be affected, and next to these economic relationships, especially when conducted, as some of our vast commercial "combines" and monopolies, "on a scale almost equal in vastness to the affairs of a State."

But to understand Mr. Kidd's hopes for the future we must retrace our steps. His contention, for the proof of which he brings many examples, is that in the civilized States of the old world we have the ruling principle that force must be exercised on behalf of the privileged few, and that this principle, which operated in the domains of religion and thought, as well as in those of politics and trade, was among the world powers (and by the Church when acting as, or in alliance with, one of those powers) hardly questioned until the days of the Great Rebellion in England in the middle of the seventeenth century, and then only to the most limited extent. It is only in quite modern times that the religious consciousness has advanced to the truth "that toleration is *per se* a religious act, and not a mere convention based on convenience—a course of action founded on the principle of reciprocity."

But from the birth of Christianity onwards the higher law—according to which a people "bear on their shoulders in the present the burden of the principles with which the meaning of a process infinite in the future is identified"—has been in existence. There have been men, and to some extent societies, whose lives and actions have been inspired, and ruled, and guided by it, though its meaning and its inevitable corollaries have not been discerned even by themselves.

Mr. Kidd actually goes back even beyond the birth of Christianity—namely, to the Jews, "an insignificant, non-military people in an eastern province of the Roman Empire." Reading the history of this people by the light of the best available knowledge of to-day, the evolutionist can see that "by their highest teachers, their law-givers and prophets, there was projected into the minds of men an ideal . . . involving the absolute negation of the ruling principle which had" up to that time "moved and shaped the development of the world in every leading detail" (p. 200).

If we study the writings of the great teachers of the Old Testament, we shall see in them "a growing definition . . . of the concepts by which the controlling consciousness of the race becomes destined to be projected at last beyond the contents of all interests in the present, and by which that consciousness becomes related at last, in a sense of personal, direct, and compelling responsibility, to principles which

transcend the meaning of the individual, the present, the State, and the whole visible world as it exists."

In the light of Mr. Kidd's theory, we see that the essential difference between Hellenism and Hebraism lay in the difference between "a full, vigorous, and intense expression of the ascendancy and efficiency of life . . . in the present," and that "vision of universal justice which haunts the consciousness of the Jewish people throughout its history."

This is only one out of many instances in which in the course of his book Mr. Kidd "lights up" subjects and questions which are of intense interest to the Christian thinker and teacher. Have we not in this particular instance a striking proof of the *permanent*, and so *present*, value of the highest teaching of the Old Testament—a proof, in short, of its Divine inspiration, of its essential difference from the noblest of other old-world writings,¹ and also of the efficacy and applicability of its teaching to the most urgent needs and the profoundest problems of to-day?

But to proceed. This conception of a universal justice, taught by the prophets of the Old Testament, and at last "associated with an ideal of self-subordination and self-abnegation which has burst all the bounds of the present and the material, while it has become touched with the profoundest quality of human emotion, goes forth in the first century of our era to subdue that world"—represented by the Roman Empire at the height of its power and glory—"in which the principle of the ascendancy of the present had reached its culminating form of expression."

This is the birth of Christianity described for us, and from this point onwards the principle—of the subjugation of the interests of the present to those of the future—is in the world, though it is only since the meaning (and the corollaries) of such doctrines as those of evolution and natural selection, when applied to the social sphere, are seen that the full significance of the principle, as well as its applications, can be discerned.

In the course of his review of the growth of the Christian principle, Mr. Kidd shows how some of the severest struggles of the early Church are illuminated when read in the light of his theory. Take, for instance, her struggles with the Gnostic, Arian, and Pelagian heresies. In each of these the Church was ultimately victorious, because she was persistently true to the great principle of her Founder. She resolutely sets her face against the denial (in different forms) of "the

¹ On pp. 181, 182, 188, Mr. Kidd adduces some striking examples drawn from Plato's "Republic."

insufficiency of the individual, and the resulting necessity of what is described as his redemption from evil." In the case of the Arian heresy, Mr. Kidd states that the Church "retained undiminished the uncompromising definition of the cosmic nature of the concept, . . . by which the individual could be brought into a sense of the closest personal responsibility to principles infinite and universal in their reach" (p. 222). In the Pelagian controversy the evidence is still more clear. In the part which the Church then took we have "the religious consciousness set unchangingly against the doctrine of the normalcy (*sic*) of the individual, and therefore against the conception of virtue as conformity to his own nature in the conditions of the world around him." The Church still maintained inflexibly the doctrine "of the entire insufficiency of the individual in respect of his own powers to rise to the standard required of him, or to fulfil, in virtue of his own nature, the conditions held to be necessary to his salvation" (p. 222).

Again, the influence of the new principle introduced by Christianity is seen in its extermination of the practice of infanticide and in its gradual abolition of slavery. Mr. Kidd's evidence with regard to the last is extremely interesting. "The feeling on the subject," he writes, "is to be distinguished in innumerable utterances and acts of the early Church Councils against slavery. The standpoint therein, beneath the circumlocution of ecclesiastical expression, is ever consistent and unmistakable. We are always in the presence of the same antithesis in which the controlling centre of human action is seen to have become related to ends no longer included within the horizon of merely political consciousness." "It was not simply the influence of humanitarian feeling, nor of any vague conception of the rights of the individual under some imaginary law of nature, such as we find traces of in the Stoic philosophy," which caused the manumission of the slaves, but it is *pro remedio animæ meæ*, or *pro peccatis minuendis*, that we find the testator freeing his slaves at his death. "It is not because of any relation of men to any interest in the existing social order, but because *Redemptor noster totius conditor naturæ humanum carnem voluerit assumere*, that we find Gregory the Great urging the restoration of slaves to liberty" (p. 229).

But undoubtedly to most readers the chief interest of the book will lie in the last two chapters, entitled "The Modern World Conflict" and "Towards the Future," the chapters in which Mr. Kidd, in the light of his theory, reads the present and endeavours to forecast the future. In the first of these chapters Mr. Kidd examines very carefully the conditions of

the present and the immediate past, especially in the case of the peoples of Great Britain and her colonies, the United States, and Germany. It is with these peoples that he thinks the future mainly lies, because in these peoples, and especially in those of England and the United States, he sees the clearest signs of a growing consciousness of a need of subordinating merely present and material interests to those of the future.

It has not been my object, as I at first stated, to follow Mr. Kidd over the whole ground of his work; had it been so, it would have been necessary to show at length why he believes these particular peoples have reached their present advantageous positions—why they have become the fields most suitable for the growth of the new and essentially Christian idea.

The following brief outline will, however, help to indicate the line of his argument, which is as follows: In the pre-Christian epoch of the world's history "the characteristic and ruling feature of social development is the supremacy of the causes which are contributing to social efficiency by subordinating the individual merely to the existing political organization" (p. 140). But social efficiency in the old world meant *military* efficiency, for it meant the power of being most efficient in such conditions as then existed. This explains the supremacy of the Romans, and eventually the supremacy of the barbarian nations, who became masters of North-Western Europe—*i.e.*, the Teutonic races. These, Mr. Kidd believes, are the people upon whom the new principle, which really governs the second period of the world's development, will act most powerfully; they will be to it as the meal, to which it will be the leaven.

And just as in the first epoch of the world's history we see that the States best organized for military efficiency are the States in which the individual is most perfectly subordinated to the existing political organization, so in the second epoch of the world's history it is in these same States that we see the principle arising to ascendancy which brings into prominence those causes "which contribute to a higher type of social efficiency by subordinating society itself with all its interests in the present to its own future" (p. 142).

These two conditions explain why, in Mr. Kidd's view, the Reformation was efficacious in the particular spheres in which history proves it to have been so, as well as why to the English and to the people of the United States, and in a less degree to the Germans, the future belongs. These peoples, by a process of natural selection (that of the subordination of the individual to the society) in the first epoch, have best prepared themselves as the most suitable *milieu* for a process

of natural selection on a higher plane (that of the subordination of the present to the future) in the second epoch. In both cases we may note that the principle of self-sacrifice—the essential principle of Christianity—is at work.

In the chapter upon "The Modern World Conflict" Mr. Kidd describes the conditions under which in the immediate past that conflict has proceeded, and under which, in the present, it is still proceeding. He surveys the enormous changes, in all the conditions of life, which, during the last hundred years, have taken place in Western Europe and America. He shows that, "in whatever direction we look . . . in inventions, in commerce, in the arts of civilized life, in most of the theoretical and applied sciences, and in nearly every department of investigation and research, the progress of Western knowledge and equipment . . . has been striking beyond comparison. In many directions it has been so great that it undoubtedly exceeds in this brief period the sum of all the previous advance made by the race. A significant feature is that the process of change and progress continues to grow in intensity . . . and yet never before has the expectancy with which the world waits on the future been so intense. . . . There is scarcely an important department of practical or of speculative knowledge which is not pregnant with possibilities greater than any which have already been achieved" (p. 338).

But below, and side by side with, these outward and material changes there have taken place (and still are taking place) changes even more momentous—changes to which it behoves those who have to deal with the characters (the souls) of men and societies to take special heed. "This rapid advance has been accompanied by conditions of the rapid disintegration of all absolutisms within which the human spirit had hitherto been confined. . . . It has been the age of the unfettering of discussion and competition; of the enfranchisement of the individual, of classes, of parties, of opinions, of commerce, of industry, and of thought. Into the resulting conditions of the social order all the forces, powers, and equipments of human nature have been unloosed. It has been the age of the development throughout our civilization of the conditions of such rivalry and strenuousness, of such conflict and stress, as has never prevailed in the world before" (p. 339).

The condition here described is one of which town clergymen and Church-workers are only too fully conscious. They know that the stress and strain of life at present are so great, that the efforts made to obtain the necessities or the material riches of the world are so intense, that, apparently, large sections of our town populations can, besides these efforts, think of nothing except some form or other of exciting

pleasure—betting, gambling, or the music-hall—and that these are, at least partially, pursued as an antidote to the strain of these efforts.

When we look closely into the actual conditions of life at present, what do we find? The most colossal wealth and the most hopeless, heart-breaking poverty side by side; the tremendous power of vast mercantile combinations and monopolists; the constant and wasteful struggle between capital and labour. These, so Mr. Kidd points out, are nothing more or less than the inevitable results of the *laissez faire* principle—the principle of the Manchester school of political economists—which asserts “the inherent tendency of all economic evils to cure themselves if only left alone.”

The present results and inevitable consequences of this free and unregulated competition Mr. Kidd examines in his final chapter, “Towards the Future.” The principle which governs it he believes to be that governing a past era of the evolutionary drama. In his own words: “We are simply in the presence of the principle of the ascendancy of the present represented in all its strength in the social progress. It is the ability to survive in a free and irresponsible struggle for gain, all the meaning of which is in the present, that is here the sole determining factor of development” (p. 407). The definition of this as “free competition” is really a fallacy, for the necessary result of such conditions is inevitably the extinction of the possibilities of free competition altogether. “It is only the largeness of the stage upon which the economic process is being enacted which prevents us for a time from perceiving . . . that here there is no principle at work which differentiates us from that phase of the evolutionary process beyond which it is the inherent and characteristic meaning of our civilization to carry the world. There is absolutely no cause present which can prevent that condition from ultimately arising which has been the peculiar and distinctive feature of all the barbarisms of the past—namely, that condition at which the strongest competitor’s forces in a free fight in the present tend to become absolute and to extinguish altogether the circumstances of free competition” (p. 408).

Mr. Kidd then points out that when we are dealing with trade competition—and he proves his assertion by some remarkable examples—the words “strongest competitor” may generally be translated by “most unscrupulous competitor.”

It would be interesting, had I the space, to follow him as he shows how the application of this principle of free competition, when applied to international trade, has been the prime cause of most of the international difficulties in the immediate past.

But, under the influence of the higher principle, that "which projects the controlling sense of human responsibility out of the present," we discern, in the present and immediate past, efforts being made to regulate these "conditions of uncontrolled competition"; we see "the State, *in response to the growing consciousness of the time*¹ interfering, and that in an increasing degree, in the relations between capital and labour" (p. 409).

It would be impossible even to mention the long series of Acts of Parliament, beginning with the Act regulating the hours of employment of pauper children in 1802, which have been passed in England (and in the United States) for the protection of the workers. These Acts are one and all the result of the gradual growth of the higher principle.

But I need not point only to Acts of Parliament. "No student of social conditions who looks beneath the surface of the business life of the present day in England can doubt for a moment the existence of a deepening consciousness in the general mind of a wide interval between what may be termed the business and the private conscience of the individual in the current phase of the economic process. It is equally notorious in the United States. The profoundly felt sense of moral self-stultification . . . as the daily experience of an increasing multitude, both in the ranks of capital and labour, is undoubtedly a significant social phenomenon of the time. . . . It is a problem which confronts the student of social ethics under innumerable forms, involving results which are rightly described as being often beyond the imagination of those who live protected lives under shelter of assured incomes" (pp. 427, 428).

The connection of all this with Socialism, and especially with Christian Socialism, would be a fruitful subject of investigation, and readers of Mr. Kidd's book will find much to help them therein.

But to conclude. "It is indeed," as Mr. Kidd says, "impossible to avoid receiving a deep impression of the significance of these results and tendencies of our time." It is equally impossible to deny that "social development among the winning peoples is, by a necessity inherent in the evolutionary process, tending more and more to represent a principle which is projecting its meaning beyond the content of all existing interests" (p. 434).

My object in giving this outline of Mr. Kidd's book is to encourage others to read it. For myself, I do not say that I agree with everything he has written, nor do I consider that

¹ The italics are mine.

all that he asserts have as yet been proved. But he has by a careful and remarkably extensive historical investigation opened up to us what seems to be the working of a law of Nature which seems to coincide in a very remarkable degree with the chief principles or doctrines of Christianity.

The book will, we believe, mark another step in the growing conviction that the teachings of Science and the teachings of Christianity are not opposed; but if each is studied in the right spirit, and if the test of experience is applied to both, they will be found, on the contrary, to be in close agreement.

A law of Nature must be a law of God. Thus, it must be the duty of all who wish to help their fellows to investigate such laws, and so to show how they may most perfectly be obeyed. And, especially considering Mr. Kidd's final chapters, does anyone believe that Christ would have been content to stand, as we stand, in the midst of the conditions there disclosed, without making every effort to overcome the evil, and to further by all possible means the movement for good?

If we know—and a book like this helps us to learn—we can then make known the conditions which exist; if we can discover how they have arisen, we can then try to stay the influences for evil and to further those influences which seem to make for good. The laws for the protection of the workers were, in the first instance, due to earnest Christians like the late Lord Shaftesbury and his colleagues; and if Mr. Kidd is right, it is to the enlargement of the scope of legislation of this nature that the needs of the present seem to point.

A policy of non-interference is a tempting one to many. Let such try it in their garden or upon their farm—there it means eventually a wilderness.

I firmly believe that Mr. Kidd's book will prove useful. For one thing, it cannot fail to cheer and to hearten, and this at a time when—at any rate, on the surface—there seems so much to discourage. As I read its pages, I felt that proof after proof of the following assertions came before us: (1) The future lies with Christianity, and with those nations whose Christianity is most true to the principles of our Master. (2) There is much unconscious and silent Christianity in the world. (3) Christian principles are below the surface of life, slowly but surely winning their way.

And lastly, as I followed Mr. Kidd through his account of the long, bitter, gigantic struggles of the past—struggles which have been taking place through unnumbered ages, and which are still going on round about us, I felt that we must, indeed, "through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

W. EDWARD CHADWICK.