

THE Union Seminary Magazine.

Vol. XI.

DECEMBER, 1899—JANUARY, 1900.

No. 2.

I. Literary.

PASTORAL VISITING.*

BY REV. E. M. GREEN, D. D.

WHILE preaching is the chief work, it is by no means the only work of the ministerial office. In order to perform the duties of his calling with any measure of fidelity, the pastor must come near to his people—nearer than he can get in the pulpit. It is the “house-to-house” part of his work that brings him and his message into closest contact with them. Not only does pulpit work need to be supplemented by personal work, but his intercourse with his people in their varied and often striking experiences develops to the pastor’s view innumerable applications of divine truth, sometimes new and surprising; the experimental knowledge thus acquired he carries back with him to his study and his closet, and subjecting it to the crucible of his own thoughts, he seems to get a new message from on high; then carries that message into the pulpit, prepared to preach with unwonted appropriateness to their real necessities. The best sermons are not manufactured in the study; they are born amid the throes of pastoral sympathy.

The pastor must know his people—know them all, old and young; and there is no way in which this can be done so well as seeing them in their homes. He must cultivate their affections, drawing them to himself, that thereby he may draw them to Christ. He should feel, and lead them to feel, that he is one with them in heart, and in those great interests of the soul which bind men closest together—one with them not only in church

* Part of an address to the students of Union Theological Seminary, May 28, 1899.

III. Missionary Department.

GOD'S ORDAINED MISSIONARY SOCIETY, AND THE WAY IN WHICH ALL VOLUNTARY MISSIONARY SOCIETIES SHOULD BE REGARDED.

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IN the treatment of this subject our first contention shall be that in ordaining the constitution of the church as Christian, God made it a missionary society; our second, that every member of the church, in virtue of his church-membership, is a member of a missionary society and stands pledged to do his utmost as such; and our third, that we should regard and teach all members of voluntary missionary societies that they are tolerable so long, but only so long, as the church at large remains insensate to its duty; that it is better for them to form these voluntary associations for work in missions than not to work in missions at all, but that there is something better—that God's way is better; that it is better for them and all the rest of the church to work as simple members of the church, laying aside on the first day of the week according as the Lord has prospered them.

We would not be understood as making anything novel in these positions. They are as old as the Bible itself, and, we are glad to say, they have been coming more and more fully into the consciousness of the choice spirit of the church in this century. Our purpose in the time allotted us is to marshall a small portion of the truth on which they rest that the Holy Spirit may, if it shall please his sovereign grace, use it to bring us into line with God's own wishes, and through us the church at large to which we belong. Accordingly, while we examine these contentions let us pray that only the truth may be presented, and that it may be used in our lives for the glory of God and the salvation of many, many souls.

Our *first contention* is, that in ordaining the church in its Christian form God made it a *missionary society*.

In support of this we argue: First, From the nature of the Abrahamic covenant.

The Abrahamic covenant, on the basis of which the church was established in the family of the patriarch, remains the fundamental church covenant in every subsequent time. It was not, Paul teaches, in the third chapter of Galatians, annulled on the introduction of the Mosaic dispensation. Nor was it annulled in the passing away of that dispensation. It remains to-day. Hence, Paul also taught that the church was the same under both dispensations. The old, good olive tree had been the same throughout the ages. In his day branches from the wild olive were being grafted in. The church of the New Testament was no new church. It was the old church with some new features. It was the old olive tree with some new limbs inserted. We repeat, then, that the Abrahamic covenant lies at the basis of the New Testament church, and the Abrahamic covenant had a *world-wide missionary import*.

In the original form of this covenant God said to the "Father of the faithful," "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 3.) In a subsequent form God said, "For a father of many nations have I made thee" (Gen. xvii. 5.) This promise, Paul teaches us, was made good to Abraham in his becoming the father of all them that believe, whether they be circumcised or not; that is, in his being made father to both Gentiles and Jews, so far as they should believe.

According, therefore, to the terms of this covenant, the church of God has always been missionary. It has always looked to Abraham's becoming "the father of many nations." It has always looked "to all the families of the earth's being blessed in him." This primal covenant on which the church was founded, and on which it has stood to this day, is of universal missionary outlook.

Hence, the church of the Christian dispensation, informed as it is by the principles of the Abrahamic covenant, must be regarded, as ordained, a missionary society of God, its great head. And it must be clear that he has never looked upon it as destined to carry the gospel to any single people or to any group of peoples. In this original covenant God shows that he intended his religion for all peoples and for every man of them who should accept it.

The church of our dispensation is, therefore, a missionary society by the ordination of God.

Second, This is made to appear probable again from the missionary feature of even the particularistic and separatist Mosaic dispensation.

The church, under the Mosaic dispensation, is often regarded and spoken of as non-missionary. And the peculiar work assigned Israel under that *regime* was perhaps incompatible with large missionary effort; but we may easily overrate the non-missionary aspect of the dispensation.

The following facts prove this to be true:

Fact one. The Mosaic legislation prepared for the work of proselyting and encouraged it. For instance, in Exodus xii. 48, "And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee and will keep the passover of the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land." Similarly in Num. ix. 14, "And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the Lord, according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: Ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land. One ordinance shall be both for you of the congregation, and also for the stranger that sojourneth with you, an ordinance forever in your generations: as ye are, so shall the stranger be before the Lord. One law, and one manner, shall be for you, and for the stranger that sojourneth with you."

In this manner did the Mosaic law prepare for and encourage proselyting—an enterprise of a missionary character.

Fact two. That the church of the Mosaic dispensation had a missionary aspect is indicated by the Episode of Jonah. The mission of Jonah to Nineveh differed little in its purpose from the missionary work of the church in other ages. The object of Jonah's mission was the glory of God in the salvation of men. Nor is there any reason for supposing that the salvation desired was only temporal. This story of Jonah is a true episode in the Mosaic economy. While more distinctly missionary than the history as a whole, it is not at all unnatural. On the contrary, it comes in naturally, and so points to the missionary character of the whole economy while standing in contrast with the rest as itself, especially missionary.

Fact three. The prophets of the old dispensation were ever wont to picture the future of the church in terms which implied a missionary conception of the church.

For example, Isaiah (ii. 2) says, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it." And Micah (iv. 2), "But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow into it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob: and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Zechariah (viii. 22-23), "Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you."

The prophets habitually speak in terms of the past when they are portraying the future. They speak, when setting forth in such scriptures the enlargement of the church, in the terms of the worship with which use has made them familiar. The scientific exegete may or may not find difficulty in interpreting and justifying the incidental details, the coloring touches which give tone to the pictures; but the great teaching content of the pictures is clear, even to the meanest intelligence. The prophets teach in these portrayals of the church's future, her growth, her sharing her truth with all the families of the earth. They make it plain that their religion is to become, in some sense, a universal religion. And in proclaiming the ultimate universality of the worship of Jehovah, the ultimate coming of the nations to his worship, they proclaimed the essentially missionary character of the church. For how shall the peoples hear without a preacher, and how shall they have a preacher, except one be sent?

Fact four. The synagogues of the dispensation previous to the coming of Christ were really so many missionary centres in effect. They had gathered about them many devout souls who

waited for the kingdom of God. They had preached and thrilled to their depths these nobler heathen with their lofty monotheistic doctrine of God; had taught them that God is one, all wise and powerful, the creator, the upholder and the governor of all things; an infinite spirit, just and loving, merciful and gracious. They had set forth the doctrine of rewards and punishment in a future state—the happiness of the true servants of God and the misery of those who should continue to walk in the ways of the wicked. They had inculcated the propriety and the obligation of being humble and penitent in heart, pure, true and faithful in life.

These Jews of the Diaspora seem to have been moved by great zeal to the species of missionary effort called proselyting. They used all forms of literary effort in this missionary endeavor. They translated their scriptures. They wrote commentaries on the scriptures. They produced philosophical works in which they tried to trace the great systems of philosophy to the teachings of Moses as their ultimate source. They exhibited and exulted in their history as showing the hand of God. They boasted of the venerable age of their nation and its faith.

While some of the methods of the missionaries of the Diaspora were wrong, the teaching proper to the synagogue had, and was intended to have, a vast influence on the heathen. It was God's way of bringing his truth to the knowledge of vast numbers of God's elect among the nations. The synagogue system among the Diaspora was, in practical effect, a great missionary system.

Nevertheless, the church of the Mosaic dispensation was in an immature stage of development. It was a chrysalis and in the pupa state. And it was assigned a peculiar task which in that age was incompatible with universal missionary enterprise. In an age of almost universal polytheism and pantheism, of heathenism rampant, it was a task of Israel to be monotheistic and to hold the doctrine of monotheism aloft—a task to which Israel was competent only after years of training in a land at once isolated from idolatrous peoples and a highway of the nations through whom God chastised his people when, in spite of their isolation, they fell into idolatry.

That Israel might receive, hold and teach monotheism, God kept her largely to herself, forbade her mingling freely with

other nations. In like manner that she might receive, hold and teach a true ethical ideal, such as is embodied in the Decalogue; and that she might set forth the need of redemption and the coming of the Redeemer, he kept her largely to herself. The church, like the individual missionary, must first be filled with and established in the truth before it can do much in the actual work of missions.

We do not claim that the church of the Mosaic dispensation was largely occupied with distinctively missionary labors. What we do claim is, that the one church of God of all the ages during that stage of its history was in training for missionary work, as you are now for the ministry, and put forth effort enough of a missionary sort to show a missionary heart at bottom.

But if we may argue that in the church we have a missionary society ordained of God with confidence from the unannulled charter of the Abrahamic church, which is identical with our New Testament church; if we can see that the church of the Mosaic dispensation, restrictive though it was, was at heart missionary and evidently looked to universal missionary work, once its trammels were removed, and actually did much mission work through its synagogues in preparation for the effort of the apostolic age, it becomes still more evident that the Abrahamic church of God, in its New Testament form, was a missionary society—made such by God. Hence, we argue:

Third, That the church of our dispensation is a missionary society ordained of God is a matter of plain New Testament teaching.

The gospel is distinctly declared in the New Testament to be for all the world. Listen, "For God so loved the *world* that he gave his only begotten Son that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "The Son of man must be lifted up, that *whosoever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the *world* to condemn the *world*; but that the *world* through him might be saved." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say, Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take of the water of life freely."

There is a wideness in the gospel like the wideness of the sea. In a sense, that the Mosaic church could not be. Christianity

is for the whole world. Christ contemplates and teaches of a church in the gospel coëxtensive with the world in geographical limits and coëxtensive with time in duration; and this is not only the prevalent, but the universal conception of the gospel and of the church amongst the New Testament writers.

But not only does the New Testament teach that the gospel is for all nations. Our Lord Jesus Christ delivered a great charge, perfecting the constitution of the church and, in the same breath, making it thenceforth the constitution of *an active and working* missionary society. This charge he repeated in substance more than once. As recorded in Matt. xxviii. 18-20, it reads, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the end of the world."

The charge may be considered a republication of the Abrahamic covenant with an improvement by a change in the form of the seal of the covenant, viz., the substitution of baptism for circumcision. But this by the way. It expressly enjoins the duty of being missionary on the body ecclesiastic. This is our present concern.

Let no one belonging to the church of that day or any day since to the present attempt to excuse the church from the burden of this command.

Christ may ask of men the morally impossible but not the physically impossible. And it was impossible either for the apostles alone, or for the little band of the disciples then on earth, to have made disciples of all nations in the manner here commanded. It was a physical impossibility. The commentator and historian Hanna well says, "When Jesus said, 'Go, make disciples of all nations,' he announced in the simplest and least ostentatious way the most original, the broadest, the sublimest enterprise that ever human beings were called upon to accomplish." He did not ask it of the Apostolic body; he did not ask it of the few feeble disciples then on the earth. He asked it of his church in which the apostles exercised their offices and of which the disciples were members.

This appears still more clearly when we remark that our Lord

regards in this charge the enterprise of missions as lasting to the end of time. He says, "And lo, I am with you always [as you engage in this effort], even unto the consummation of the age," or of this world period. The mission enterprise was to be only fairly begun when the apostles and their contemporaries had seen their last earthly service. Yet as they represent that church which is to endure throughout the ages, Christ speaks with propriety of his going to be with them; they were the representatives in this enterprise which was to endure to the end of this world age.

Demonstrably, also, this charge was not understood as spoken to the apostles alone, but as well to the whole church. For we are told (Acts viii. 1-4) that after the stoning of Stephen when the disciples were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles . . . "they that were scattered went everywhere preaching the word." Disciples taken in after the ascension felt the burden and the privilege of this command on the church of which they were a part.

But, my brethren, that the church of our dispensation is a missionary society ordained of God is not only made clear by New Testament representations of the universality of the gospel, and by the great commission given by our Lord to his church, the body in covenant with him, and to which he granted the seal of baptism, and by the understanding which the early disciples had of the great commission, but it is made clear also by the history recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. That history makes it clear that the Holy Spirit was careful to make and keep the apostolic church a missionary church. Christ told prophetically the history of this church in the memorable words announced to the disciples who witnessed the ascension, "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." He foretold in these pregnant words the heart and soul of Apostolic history. Such the history of that church was. The gospel was preached in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. The church was missionary; and it was *all* missionary in spirit. Some preached Christ in a formal way; some in an informal way only; some talked Christ and lived Christ merely. The Spirit moved the whole church to be missionary as every member could. He

moved some individuals in a special way to this work. He said, "Separate me, Barnabas and Saul to the work whereto I have called them." And even through them the church at large labored in missions. These great missionaries recognized this and made reports of their labors to the church whence they were sent out. But not only through such great instruments did the Holy Ghost move the church to missions, but under his blessed influence these men found the fields prepared by the work of obscure Christians for their reaping.

Church history in the apostolic age, under the inspiring impulses of the Holy Ghost, is largely a history of missions. What is the New Testament literature once you have passed the Gospels but the literature of apostolic missions? Three-fourths of the Books of Acts is history of the grand march of apostolic missions. Paul's Epistles are letters to missionary churches and missionary pastors; and so, perhaps, of most of the remaining books of the New Testament.

The New Testament church had to be missionary or die. It had to fight for life, live by missionary enterprise as the churches in our foreign mission fields to-day. And thus by environment as well as by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; by Providence as well as by teaching and inner dictation God made the apostolic church missionary.

Our present contention, then, that in ordaining the constitution of the church in its Christian form God made it a missionary society is proven beyond the shadow of a reasonable doubt by the import of the unrepealed Abrahamic covenant, made morally certain again by the nature of the Mosaic economy, and taught abundantly in the New Testament, so that a wayfaring man, though fool, ought to see it as he runs.

Under the head of Thomas Chalmers and Dr. Inglis and Alexander Duff, the Scotch church recognized this truth in the sending of Duff out as its missionary to India in the year 1829. It was the first church since the Reformation to come to the consciousness of itself as *ipso facto* of its being a church, a missionary society. All modern christendom should hang its head in shame that it was so slow in recognizing this aspect of the church, that God made the church a missionary society.

The great Scottish church was followed next by the Presbyterian church in the United States of America in the year 1831,

acting in its General Assembly under the lead of our own Dr. John Holt Rice. Under his lead the Assembly insisted that "one primary and principal object of the institution of the church by Jesus Christ was not so much the salvation of individual Christians (for he that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved), but the communicating of the blessings of the gospel to the destitute in efficient and united efforts; that the entire history of the Christian societies organized by the apostles affords abundant evidence that they so understood the design of their Master." The Assembly also adopted at his request the following resolutions: "First, That the Presbyterian church in the United States is a missionary society, the object of which is to aid in the conversion of the world; and that every member of the church is a member for life of said society, to do all in his power for the accomplishment of this object. Second, ministers of the gospel in connection with the Presbyterian church are most solemnly required to present this subject to the members of their respective congregations, using every effort to make them feel their obligations and to induce them to contribute according to their ability." To this position the great Presbyterian bodies have been coming more and more in theory.

But it is one thing for the church to hold this view of itself as it ought to be—to see what God designed it to be. It is quite another thing for it to put into practice this theory; to be as it ought to be; to be what God designed it to be. The church may hold in theory that it is God's ordained missionary society, and that every member of the church is *eo ipso facto* a member of God's missionary society. A very large proportion of the members of our churches of modern christendom have persistently refused to act as members of a missionary society.

Hence, our second contention that every member of the church, in virtue of his church membership, is a member of a missionary society and stands pledged to do his utmost as such.

That such is the case appears from the following simple considerations, viz.: First, In the constitution of the church as missionary no provision appears for a non-missionary class of adult members. Point to anything of the kind. It cannot be found between the lids of the Bible. Not all members are required to be missionaries in the technical sense, nor even a large part of them. But there is no provision for members non-mis-

sionary in spirit. Second, Christ, the head of the church, has fixed the terms of membership. They are supreme love to him—love greater than that a man bears his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also; and a readiness to bear the cross of Christ and follow him in a life to the glory of God for the good of man. Every member of the church professes this supreme love to Christ and allegiance to him as his leader. Only thus does he become a church member. But Christ, as we have seen, has laid the work of missions on his church. Hence, it is uncontrovertible. Every member of the church of Christ is a member of a God-ordained missionary society as he is a member of the church.

In securing the practical recognition of this fact the Free church of Scotland, under the influence of that son of thunder, Alexander Duff, has been leading the way, Dr. Duff's ideal, and it was the Bible ideal, "was," says Dr. Geo. Smith, "an association of all the communicants in every congregation for prayer and giving on behalf of foreign missions. . . . About three-fourths of the 1,024 congregations of the church have such quarterly associations, the other fourth still adheres to the annual collection at the church door. These associations are the sheet anchor of the church's missions, not only financially, but spiritually. Through them the whole church becomes missionary; without them there is a fear that the missions may be cared for by what will be virtually a society within the church." But even this leading church cannot count herself to have attained. Not one-half of the people actually give to the support of the cause of missions. And the other churches of christendom lag far behind. Our own beloved Zion has but a very few congregations in which every church member in a practical way counts himself a member of a missionary society in virtue of being a member of the church.

My brethren, it is a part of our duty to endeavor to awake every member of our church so to consider himself. The first General Assembly of our Southern Presbyterian Church sounded the true note on this subject. That noble body passed a number of resolutions touching missions, amongst which was the following: "The General Assembly desires distinctly and deliberately to inscribe on our church's banner, as she now first unfolds it to the world, in immediate connection with the leadership of our Lord, his last command, 'Go ye into all the world and preach

the gospel to every creature,' regarding this as the great end of her organization, and obedience to it as the indispensable condition of her Lord's promised presence, and as the one great comprehensive object, a proper conception of whose magnitude and grandeur is the only thing which, in connection with the love of Christ, can ever sufficiently arouse her energies and develop her resources so as to carry on, with the vigor and efficiency which true fidelity to her Lord demands, those other agencies necessary to her internal growth and home prosperity. The claims of this cause ought, therefore, to be kept constantly before the minds of the people and pressed upon their consciences. The ministers and ruling elders, and deacons and Sabbath-school teachers, and especially the parents, ought and are enjoined by the Assembly to give particular attention to all those for whose religious teaching they are responsible in training them to feel a deep interest in this work; to form habits of systematic benevolence, and to feel and respond to the claims of Jesus upon them for personal service in the field."

May God put it into the hearts of you, my brethren, to work for the realization of these noble resolutions! May he speed the day when every member of our Zion, and not ours only, shall see that in becoming a member of the church he became a member of a missionary organization and pledged himself to labor to the utmost in the cause; and when he shall be moved by a spirit of obedience to the command.

We are now ready for our third contention, viz.: That we should regard and teach all members of voluntary missionary societies that they are tolerable so long, but only so long, as the church at large remains insensate to its duty.

These voluntary societies are by no means ideal. If they be advocated instead of God's missionary society, which is the church, or as additions to it, this advocacy is beside the mark. It is advocacy of a species of calf worship, a species of will worship. It is advocacy of worshiping in another way than he has appointed.

We have seen that God made the church his missionary society; we have seen that every member of the church is a member of that society and bound to do his utmost as such. In our church the theory is that God has given us a sufficient faith, government and worship; and that men are both incompetent

to improve on the Bible teachings concerning the faith, the government, and the worship of the church, and interdicted of God from assuming to do so; that he does not permit us to act as his "confidential advisers." These man-made societies, then, in the churches are not to be put in place of God's own institution. They are not to be advocated as over against his.

But when the church is largely dead to her duty; when she is practically apostate in respect to one great function; when she will not take up and push the great enterprise which the Lord committed to her, shall consecrated souls here and there not be allowed to unite in societies and push as volunteers this cause? We dare not, my brethren, deny them this privilege. We must rather say God speed you in your way for the present. It is better that you express your love for Christ's cause and your regard for his great command in this poor way than not at all.

Before we criticise them too severely we must arouse the church to her duty. We must set it forth as *the* missionary society. We must teach every member that *he must be* missionary.

When the church has been aroused; when every member has been set to work praying for the coming of Christ's kingdom, and toiling for it, then there will be occasion for war on all societies that are substitutes for God's society. We may assume the role of destructive critic when we have truth with which to replace error. We may play the role of demolishing reformer when we can play the role also of constructive reformer.

But we have not to deal merely with bands of devoted spirits doing the best they can. In many of our churches the missionary effort is little above childish, if not profane play, at pushing the Lord's cause. The whole burden of missions seems to rest upon the frail shoulders of a few women—and some of them are hardly moved so much apparently by intelligent devotion to Christ's cause as by the social element in the life of their mission society. Sometimes not one of them is making any sustained effort to lay aside in proportion as the Lord has prospered her. They pay with irregularity their small pittance of dues, and, for the rest, resort to all sorts of means in order to raise money. The men leave the matter to the women, feeling that if they patronize their suppers, purchase an occasional trifle for twice

or thrice its commercial value, and contribute some loose pennies, they have acquitted themselves fully.

Our church must be stirred by the exposition and enforcement of the truth and by the lives of its ministers above such ridiculous and profane child's play. Let us strive to turn our congregations into workers such as all the church members have pledged themselves to be in becoming church members. Let us hold missionary meetings in the churches, and that regularly; let us inform our people by talking and by writing on the subject of the work imposed on the church; by writing and by talking of the electrifying blessings which have ever followed true missionary effort; by writing and by talking of the pathetic cry of the lost world, and of the glory to be done our Lord's name by taking him in this, as in all our life, to be our type and model.

There will be as much reason for our holding such missionary meetings with our congregations as there is for our holding these monthly missionary meetings in this seminary.

Resolve, then, my brethren, by the help of God I beseech you, that you will be at least true missionary pastors, and that you will do all that in you lies by holding such services, and otherwise to bring your people to a practical sense of this obligation to be missionary as members of the church of God—the one divinely ordained missionary society. *Amen and Amen.*