

THE
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THE ONENESS OF THE TABERNACLE.

IN the sixth verse of the twenty-sixth chapter of Exodus occurs the significant sentence, "And it shall be one tabernacle." Being a work, the tabernacle must, like every other work, have been designed as well as executed. Scripture presents to us this twofold view of it; shows it to us in plan and in progress. We are taken up with Moses into the Mount, and there we see unfolded before us the pattern as it existed in the Divine mind. This architectural plan is a grand whole. Notwithstanding the many separate parts of which it is composed, it exhibits the most complete structural harmony—the most perfect mutual consistency. It is to be *one* tabernacle—not in the sense of singleness and uniqueness, as if God had forbidden more than one tabernacle to be constructed for His service—but in the sense of a real and profound unity. By the golden taches or clasps binding together the curtains which covered it, the whole structure was made one tent or tabernacle, and all its parts and objects were united. Unity is the hall-mark which God stamps upon all His works. It is His autograph written in the stars of heaven and in the flowers of the field, attesting that they all proceed from the same Mind. The universe is a great kaleidoscope which He is perpetually turning round, in which a few simple elements are exhibited in endless diversity, in which the variety is not more wonderful than the unity.

I.

In unfolding this sublime lesson, let us look, in the first place, at the illustration of it which the tabernacle itself afforded. This remarkable structure was one in regard to its parts. It was divided into two rooms, the holy place and the most holy, by a veil that hung between them. Only one man was permitted to enter the inner compartment—viz., the high priest; and he only once a year, on the great day of atonement. The outer sanctuary was daily frequented by the priests, who, barefooted and clothed in their linen garments, there accomplished their ordinary ministrations. But although thus separated, the two divisions were essentially one. The same boards of shittim wood enclosed them;

LAY PREACHERS.

IN a former number of *The Catholic Presbyterian*, the present writer discussed the question whether the details of our presbyterial form of government did not require to be modified, in view of the peculiar needs of many of our mission fields. It was urged that in many instances it were probably better if we would begin with our feeble churches in a very simple and elementary way ; that since the institution of the pastorate in the form now common among us involved the devotion of the whole time of a man to pastoral work, and so, by necessary consequence, required that the whole cost of his support should be paid in some way or other by the Church, it was not apparently well adapted to such fields.

Undoubtedly, where a Church is strong, and able to pay a man for the whole of his time, such arrangement is not only excellent, but the best possible. And there is no doubt but that it is the best ideally for small and feeble Churches also. That a man should give up to pastoral work all his time and all other occupations, if the man be of the right kind, must indeed be a special blessing to Churches that, as weak, need special nurture ; and so long as the number of such destitute fields is not out of all reasonable proportion to the pecuniary and spiritual ability of the wealthy Churches to aid them in pastoral support, so long, we admit, such Churches may be properly assisted by the means of the stronger Churches. But because all this is true under certain conditions, it was argued that it does not follow that it will also be true under other conditions. The best thing ideally, is by no means always the best thing practically. When the number of weak Churches requiring aid from without is out of proportion to the means which are practically available from the abundance of richer Churches ; or where, as so often in heathen lands, the bestowment of pecuniary aid in any form sufficient to enable a given Church to claim the whole time of one man as pastor may tend rather to hinder than promote the healthy development of an independent life, then plainly the arrangement which is ideally so good, becomes, in many cases, practically unworkable or seriously hurtful. Under such conditions we must, then, look about for some other way of meeting the necessities of the case. And it was argued that in the precept and example of the apostles we have an excellent and practical model for our procedure in such cases. The apostolic plan, according to the New Testament, was to place over such new and feeble Churches a plurality of "elders," "bishops," or "overseers," and commit the Churches to their united care. This seems to have been in all cases the primitive arrangement. For even though, with some, we recognise in "the angel of the Church" of Rev. ii. 3, the officer whom now *par excellence* we style the pastor, still the date of the

apocalypse on no hypothesis is such as to compel us to believe that this was the earliest arrangement. There is no instance in the New Testament of the ordination or appointment, after our modern fashion, of an individual man as pastor. The apostles met the problem of the pastorate, in feeble Churches, by a plural pastorate and a division of labour. In our former article, this apostolic example was urged in its bearing on the problem of the pastorate, as presented in some of our foreign fields. It may not be amiss to remark here that the article in question has called out responses from the most diverse parts of the foreign field, and from some of the most trusted missionaries of the Church. From India, China, Africa, and Persia, not only Presbyterians but also Independents, and in one case an Episcopalian brother, personally unknown to the writer, have expressed their approval of the general line of policy suggested; and, what has been more satisfactory still, is the discovery of the fact that the plan which we had urged was, in at least a few places on the foreign field, in actual and successful operation.

We feel, therefore, the more encouraged to pursue the subject yet a little further, and on this occasion indicate what seems to us to be the needed application of the same principles to the exigencies of our home and colonial mission fields. As a conspicuous, and, to an American writer, a more familiar illustration of the problem presented, we shall take up the special case of the home-mission field in the United States. No doubt, however, the same questions which are raised in the United States, come up more or less prominently also in many parts of the colonial possessions of Great Britain.

One of the most impressive facts of the day is the rate at which the field of home missions in the United States is extending. That field lies to a great extent in the valley of the Mississippi and the region westward. Of the wonderful inflow of population into this extensive region, the last Annual Report of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions gives such illustrations as the following:—"During the last decade, Minnesota has increased its population 76 per cent.; Montana, 89 per cent.; Kansas, 267 per cent.; and Arizona, 330 per cent. . . . It is estimated by an intelligent and observing statistician that not less than 1,800,000 immigrants have made their homes west of the Mississippi during the past year. . . . In other words, Kansas has increased her population by 631,000; Texas, by 780,000; Dakota Territory, by 120,000—and the most of this within the last two years; Nebraska has nearly quadrupled her population; Oregon has doubled hers; Colorado has increased almost five-fold." Nor, except we misread the future, is the American immigration likely to be confined quite within the territory of the United States. Of late years we have come to learn that large tracts in the far interior of the British possessions in America—as, *e.g.*, the valley of the Saskatchewan—although far north, yet present, in soil and climate, attractions to the agriculturist and the herdsman, little, if at all, inferior to the contiguous regions of the United

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States. It is not necessary to enlarge upon the fact that the fields indicated must be for a long time to come dependent for the Gospel, to a great extent, upon what we call home-mission work. For, although the numbers mentioned in the aggregate be great, yet it must be remembered that, scattered over the vast plains of the west, they appear, not as great masses of population, but, for the most part, in small towns and comparatively isolated communities, as yet not strong enough to support the Gospel in their midst on present plans without liberal aid. The need is the greater that so large a part of this immigration contributes little or nothing to the spiritual strength of these communities. Many of the immigrants are young men, with or without their families, from the older States. Of these, too many come out with no settled religious convictions; others, again, who were once religiously disposed, or even members of Churches in their former homes, lose their religious interest in the absence of the accustomed means of grace, or in the eager haste to be rich. A much larger proportion of the immigrant population comes from the overflowing States of the Old World; and too often they bring with them that religious formalism, or the spirit of utter indifference or open unbelief in Christianity which is so sadly prevalent in continental Europe.

Now, the question arises—if the Gospel is to be preached in any adequate measure, and churches organised and cared for by individual pastors duly educated, ordained, and installed after current Presbyterian methods, must not the demand both for men and for money from our older and wealthier Churches be exceedingly heavy? Is the Church in the United States equal to this demand? Is there good reason to believe that she is likely to meet the demand, in any adequate manner, by methods now current in the Presbyterian Church? Such facts as the following point, we believe, to the answer which, however reluctantly, we are forced to give. Two years ago a representative of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions made an eloquent appeal to the students in the Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Pennsylvania, for labourers for this great home field. In response, no less than seventeen men, or about two-thirds of the whole graduating class, immediately signified their readiness to enter on this work. But what was the disappointment of these earnest young men—several of whom had declined what the world styles “good calls” near home for a chance at this rough and self-denying frontier work—when they found that, although the Board was ready to give them all a Commission—if that was of any value above their ordination—it was, from lack of funds, unable to help more than two or three to the far-distant West, where they were so greatly needed, or promise them that they should be supported when they should reach their fields? As a necessary consequence of this, the most of those men were compelled, from mere lack of the necessary means, to remain in the old and settled regions nearer home. During last year, however, we are told that there has been a marked improvement

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in the financial condition of the Home Board. The amount contributed has been \$15,000 (*i.e.*, about £3000) in excess of any previous year in the history of the Presbyterian Church. But now we hear that the men, in any sufficient number, are not to be had. The Home Mission secretaries tell us that they "could commission and support 150 more men than they can find," at once qualified and willing for the work. And even this 150, be it observed, is taken not as the measure of the need, but as the measure of the ability to send and support. What is the prospect of obtaining the required number in the immediate future? In forming an opinion on this question we have at once to face the fact that the total number of additions to the ministry of our Church, from all our theological institutions in the United States for the last year, was estimated at not more than 140, a number itself materially smaller than the number required this year for the home-mission field. But against this accession to the ministry, we have to place the fact that the deaths in the ministry, as reported to the last Assembly, were 108. In estimating, therefore, the probable supply for the existing need, we must deduct these losses, which leaves a remainder of only thirty-two. And this is about all the annual increment on which we can depend for all the work of the Church in the old and established Churches, and in the home and foreign mission fields. For the facts as to the number of students in preparation for the ministry, in our theological seminaries and colleges, give no reason for believing that the annual supply will be very materially modified for at least several years to come. The conclusion seems clear and inevitable. Leaving out of sight the yet more urgent demands of the vast field of foreign missions, the Presbyterian Church in the United States is *very far* from meeting the necessities of the home mission field for the preaching of the Gospel, nor is there any visible prospect that she will do so in the near future. What then, if it be proved that the Gospel cannot be preached to the unevangelised, and the hundreds of feeble Churches instructed and governed by a ministry duly passed through the seven years of the collegiate and theological curriculum,—is not this a clear providential indication that we ought to seek to supplement the need in some other way?

In the presence of such facts as the above, it is clear as light, or ought to be, that the methods of the Presbyterian Church need to be materially modified. We plead that wherever, in the United States, the British possessions, or elsewhere, any such facts as the above exist, an organised and efficient *lay* agency, auxiliary to the fully educated ordained ministry, is imperatively demanded. Granted that this is not the best way conceivable; is it not the best way that is practicable? Granted, that in the nature of the case we may not be able to expect preaching from such laymen of as high an order, judged by the homiletic standards, as from our educated ministry; is it not, after all, much better that the great need of the home-mission field in all Christian lands should be met in this way by a carefully selected

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lay agency, than that the need should go unmet altogether? This idea, it need not be said, is not offered as a novelty. We urge no untried theory. As we all know that our brethren of the Methodist Church, for example, have from the very first attached great importance to the work of an organised lay agency, as auxiliary to the work of the trained and more fully educated ordained ministry. In places where a pastor cannot yet be settled because of the small number or poverty of the people, they place, as we know, a lay-preacher or a "class-leader," who will, at stated times, gather together the scattered few, maintain, as he best can, the public worship of God, and in every way seek the enlargement of the Church, until it shall so grow in numbers and ability as to warrant the appointment to the post of an ordained minister. We regard the plan as admirable, and have no doubt that herein we have one of the chief secrets of the confessed success of the Methodist denomination as an aggressive body. In America, at least, we often hear comparisons drawn between the Methodists and the Presbyterians on this very point, and, to the disadvantage of the latter. It is complained that Presbyterianism is not as broadly and successfully aggressive as Methodism, and, in particular, that we do not reach the masses of men, especially the poor, as do the Methodists. We believe that there is too much of truth in this, and that at least one of the chief reasons for the fact is found in our too exclusive reliance for the great work of missions at home upon the labours of highly educated and ordained ministers. In all our churches we have, no less than the Methodists, a most valuable lay element, which, if properly organised by presbyteries and sessions for service, would be a mighty power for aggressive evangelistic work. No doubt much is done by our laymen even as it is, and the success of any minister turns very much upon his gift in selecting such co-labourers, and setting them to such work as they may be fit for. Still, for lack of formal official recognition and the support of presbyterial authority, our lay-service greatly lacks efficiency. As compared with the organised lay-service of the Methodist Church, the difference seems to us very much like that between a miscellaneous crowd and an organised army. Herein, we believe, lies the practical solution of the home-mission problem. Neither the actual nor the prospective force of the ordained ministry in the United States, or probably, in any Christian land, is equal to the great work to be done for those that are destitute of the Gospel at home. A certain part of the work must therefore be done by others than by ordained ministers, or it must go undone. Surely no one will be so in bondage to the letter or devoted to form as to argue that it were better not done at all than done by others than our ordained ministers. But if a large part of this home-mission work will have to be done by laymen, then the Church ought to recognise the fact in a practical way by formally selecting and organising her lay labourers, and defining their qualifications and duties even as for the ordained ministry. As on the foreign, so on the home

field, the work to be done is of a twofold character, namely, pastoral and evangelistic.

In the first place, let us look at the home-mission problem as regards the pastoral work. In every Christian land, especially in the States of America, are very many churches so weak in numbers that they cannot support a pastor, even when aided as far as practicable by the funds of the home-mission treasury. Will any one say that under such circumstances, with the vast fields of the world lying unreaped before him, it is the duty of any man to settle down among such a mere handful, and slowly starve himself on the miserable pittance which they can afford him? Is this the best way of using the scanty forces of our educated and ordained ministry? Why should not the plan which we have before urged for the pastoral care of feeble churches on the foreign field be also applied to similar cases at home? Why should not the work in many such churches, which now is imperfectly done by a half-supported minister, or else goes undone altogether, be done by the elders of the churches? So, in fact, as we know, it is sometimes done, and well done. We have all known excellent elders, who were full of faith and good works, mighty in the Scriptures, and more competent than many a young theologian fresh from the schools, not only to rule, but also to teach and lead the public worship of God's house. Such men, we shall be told, are few; perhaps they are; but we are persuaded that we should have many more of such elders if it were understood that the office carried with it such demands and responsibilities. We argue, then, that it is vain and futile to think of supplying all our churches with individual pastors who shall devote their whole time to the church or churches assigned them. If we had a suitable ordained man for every vacant church in the country, we are not sure, in view of the greater needs of the vast world outside, that this would be the best use to make of all of them. Let us in such cases fall back on the primitive method of a pastorate by a plural eldership, dividing all pastoral work among them. Let the eldership be made in fact what it is in theory—a *joint pastorate*; and, as it seems to us, the needs of the home field, if not perfectly met, will at least be satisfied far more effectually than at present. Let the Church, then, recognise all the powers which now are exercised by the individual minister as inhering potentially in every elder as such. Let the Church expressly authorise and direct the elders, in all cases where the Church may be unable to secure the regular pastoral service of an individual minister, themselves to exercise, in a judicious distribution of labour, all those functions which now, with very little Scriptural ground, and that, too, somewhat doubtful, we assign to the minister exclusively.

But pastoral work is not all. In the field of home, as in that of foreign missions, we have great masses of men in our great cities, and scattered through our states and colonies, who even in Christendom are living no less than the heathen without God. For them evangelistic

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work is needed no less than for the heathen. It is too much to expect of the pastor of a church, that in addition to the care of the flock who attend upon his stated ministry, he shall keep abreast alone of the work which is so imperatively demanded for these practical heathen who make up so much of the population in all Christian lands. Neither, as we have clearly seen, have we the ordained men sufficient to set apart for this work. Let us then, by all means, set our gifted laymen to the work, as helpers together with the ministry. That we have a multitude of men among the laity of our Presbyterian Churches, qualified alike by gifts and graces for the evangelistic work of preaching the Gospel to the perishing, no man can doubt. No denomination of Christians, probably, has a larger proportion of intelligent and highly gifted laymen than the Presbyterian. In a more or less irregular way, many of them are doing the work already. A much larger number hold back through a natural diffidence, fearing also lest they should seem to be intruding into an office which does not belong to them. Too often, when a man does break through the restrictions of custom, and takes up the work of preaching in a systematic manner, becoming what it is the fashion loosely to call an evangelist, he falls out of the Presbyterian Church. He thinks, perhaps, that it has no place for him; wherein, as regards our practice, he has some show of reason for his opinion, but as regards our fundamental principles, none at all. As it is, however, through the lack of any provision for his formal recognition and appointment by due ecclesiastical authority, he appears before the public, whether he will or no, as a man irregularly and unlawfully performing a work which by right belongs only to the ordained minister. This is demoralising both to him and to the Church at large, and that in two ways. Conservative men, because they regard such a man as being a self-called and irregular intruder into a work to which he has not been appointed, are thereby hindered from recognising as they should what may be a true call of God and a real work of the Spirit. On the other hand, the radicals in the Church, seeing that the man is plainly called and owned of God, while he is not owned by Church authorities, are apt hastily to conclude that Church authority and discipline is of very little consequence. Thus they come to fall in with that current of the time which tends ever more and more to depreciate Church authority and ordinances, and so drifts toward ecclesiastical anarchy. In any case the effect is bad. It is an unfortunate thing for a Church if she have no place, or it be believed, however mistakenly, that she has no place, according to her law and order, for the evangelistic gifts of, *e.g.*, such men as a Mr. Moody or a Major Whittle. We would meet the evil of this irregular evangelism of which some complain, not by opposing it, but by recognising as a Church the need of which it is the instinctive expression. To our mind the providence of God is calling loudly on the Presbyterian Church for the formal institution of an order of *lay-preachers* commissioned to carry the

Gospel to the masses of civilised heathen outside of our Churches. We would have this lay evangelism formally authorised and organised at once under Presbyterial authority and supervision. It should be done at once, for the home-mission work, in America at least, is so vast that there is no reason to believe that all the ordained ministry of all our Churches can overtake it in a generation. We would urge, then, that such an order should be formally appointed; that certain definite qualifications be required for admission thereto, especially thorough and sound indoctrination in the Word of God, and the visible glow of the grace of God in heart and life. Where such men are found, let them be formally set apart, not indeed to rule, and govern, and administer the sacraments, but, in due subjection to presbyterial and sessional authority, to preach the Gospel to the destitute. The need, we must all admit, exists; and no less plainly do we see a tendency on the part of many laymen to go and do the work whether presbytery will or no. Now and then this tendency, for various reasons, is deprecated and opposed. We do not share this feeling. Would that all God's people were prophets! Rather do we recognise in this tendency the work of the Spirit of God which we have been too slow to discern. Instead of discouraging, therefore, we would that the Church, by her highest authorities, should encourage this movement by every means in her power. Only by the organisation of the gifted men among our laity for an aggressive evangelism, do we see that the Presbyterian Church can hope to rise to the exigency of the time, and deal in any adequate and successful way with the great problem of home evangelism. What we urge is, after all, by no means an untried novelty in the Presbyterian Church. However little recognition the need for the lay-preacher may have had in America or Europe, it is fully recognised in many parts, if not all, of our foreign mission fields. In the India missions of the American Presbyterian Church a very extensive and valuable work is done by men who are called, according to the extent of their qualifications, "catechists" or "Scripture readers." From all such presbytery demands certain qualifications, both spiritual and intellectual. Like candidates for licensure, they must pass certain examinations, which being duly sustained, they are appointed to preach the Gospel. Beyond this they have no power or authority. They are not even in the position of the licentiate, who, as such, is regarded as a candidate for future ordination. As a matter of fact, the most of these catechists are never ordained. All experience has taught our missionaries the value of such an organised body of lay-helpers. The need for such a class of workers is so manifest that, if we mistake not, all denominations of Christians in India, whatever their Church polity, and by whatever name they may choose to style these lay-preachers, have them, and feel that they could not do without their aid. Is not a similar order of men as urgently needed in the home field for mission work as abroad for foreign mission work? And why might we not expect that the organisation of such a body of lay-

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preachers, properly adapted to the special circumstances of each Christian country, would prove of as valuable and efficient service at home as abroad ?

S. H. KELLOGG.

PRINCIPAL HARPER.*

EVERY one who was brought into contact with Dr. Harper in his later life must have been impressed by the dignity and winsomeness of his character. Such was certainly the effect on ourselves, when meeting him in 1863 as one of the conveners under whose presidency the Joint-Committee on Union held its ten years' deliberations in Edinburgh. The quickness and accuracy of his thinking, the obvious warmth of his piety, the mingled eagerness and tenderness of his spirit, the gracious ripeness of his counsels, made one feel that he was in his right place at the head of the picked men of his own Church. When the negotiations were arrested in 1873, Dr. Harper was seventy-eight years of age, and he enjoyed such clearness of intellect and physical vigour as permitted him to serve Christ actively for six years longer. Having been ordained early in 1819, his public life—blameless, fruitful, and full of honour—covered quite sixty years ; so that we looked forward with much interest to the appearance of this volume, that we might learn what the roots were that produced so admirable a character, and in what special atmosphere it had flourished. We find that the literary skill, the perfect taste, the genial sympathy, and often quaint felicity of Dr. Thomson's pen have given us a biography which is more than usually interesting and profitable.

James Harper was born in June, 1795, in the Burgher manse at Lanark, his father being a minister in one of those divisions of the Presbyterian Church which have now happily disappeared ; for the single life before us saw more than one union, and its maturest years were devoted to laying the foundations of another which may not be very distant. Going back rather more than one hundred years, we find among his ancestors a Sir John Harper, who was Sheriff of Lanarkshire in the evil days of Charles II., a companion of the good Archbishop Leighton, and one who had the honour of suffering imprisonment for his wife's sympathy with the godly men whom Charles's minions were persecuting. His boyhood seems to have been a sunny one, spent among the fair surroundings of the upper waters of the Clyde, and in a home where piety and love reigned. The great transition from a state of nature to one of grace, the reality of which was so abundantly proved in a long life, and by his latest breath, took place at some very early

* Life of Principal Harper, D.D. By the Rev. Andrew Thomson, D.D., F.R.S.E. Edinburgh : Andrew Elliot, 1881.