

Presbyterian HOME Missionary.

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CASTLE GARDEN, NEW YORK.

battlement for a free national home is to be found in certain imposing and impressive truths fastened on the conviction of men by the power of the Holy Ghost—man to live forever—man to move on in an orbit of conscious life, the diameter of which is infinite—man a sinner, under condemnation, living, breathing, thinking, acting under the eye of an all-holy God who will by no means clear the guilty—man passing at death into the presence of that God to hear the word “well done,” or “depart, thou cursed, into everlasting fire”—Christ dying for man, bearing sin in his own body on the tree, and offering to the penitent pardon, salvation, heaven—these truths rung and sung in the ears of men, kept before their minds, borne in upon their hearts and into their lives—these truths form the only battlements that can save the nation!

Especially, and most imperative, is the proclamation of these truths by living men among the rapidly upspringing communities of our frontier land, where every day witnesses the birth of a town. Every hillside echoes with the song:

“I hear the tread of the pioneer
Of nations yet to be;
The first low wash of the waves, where soon
Shall roll a human sea.”

Up to November in the year 1884, 17,000,000 acres of the public domain had been disposed of—170 acres to 100,000 families; 5,000,000 people settled where the year before was a wilderness!

Does any one ask what special need is there in those new settlements for the gospel? An answer is found in a letter to the writer from one of our Home Missionaries: “I have been for twenty years in the very front of the battle, in Illinois, Missouri, Colorado, and Kansas. I have been cursed, have had my gray beard pulled, have been threatened with starvation; like my Lord, I have been despised and rejected, but still I survive, and I do believe that through Jesus Christ I shall yet come off more than conqueror.”

Of two things the great Christian public have a very inadequate conception—first the toils and privations and the resolute heroisms of very many of these Home Missionary men and women, and second the greatness and value of the work they are doing! How many know that, as a mere incident of Home Mission work, the nation has come into possession of the great area including Oregon, Idaho, and Washington Territory? If the government at Washington were to-morrow to appropriate ten million dollars to Home Mission work it would not begin to compensate the Church for the service rendered in this single matter. But neither in value nor in magnitude is this result of Home Mission work to be for a moment compared with what the Church has done and is doing in producing order, preventing crime, creating the spirit of good citizenship, stimulating conscience, spreading intelligence by the erection of schools, Sabbath schools, and other schools, purifying the life-fountains of the nation. Our Home Missionaries have established health-centres, centres of moral, educational, and spiritual health, in Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Dakota, Idaho, Iowa, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Utah, and in many another place, centres from which life-giving influences flow out to the boundaries of a circle of very large diameter.

Build up the battlements, for your sons and daughters are falling off and perishing! The missionary before quoted writes: “One month ago I stood by the death-bed of a daughter of your city of Philadelphia. But for me, her burial would have been that of a brute. It was enough to touch the heart of a stone. Her bed had a single cover. Her poor children, five of them, slept on the floor with their mother’s shawl for their only covering.” Build the battlements! Kartoum has fallen—fallen not by assault from without but by treachery within, and it is certain that if our Republic fall it will not be by assaults of foes without. The ships of the world could not bring soldiers enough across the seas to make any serious impression upon the Nation. If this mansion is to sink into ruins it is to be through the cursed effects of Mormonism, atheism, socialism, nihilism, drunkenness, and wickedness. Build then the battlements! especially where they are most imperatively needed, among the nascent communities of the vast domain that swarms with incoming hosts from every kindred, people, tribe, and tongue! Build the battlements!

“Christianity feels herself equal to the task of conquering the world.”—*Bishop Simpson.*

SEMINARY STUDENTS—MISSIONARY WORK.

LANE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, CINCINNATI, OHIO.

REV. E. D. MORRIS, D. D.

The time of year has come when the question of vacation work by Seminary students begins to press itself upon the attention both of the young men themselves, and of those who are charged, in any way, with the care of our Home Missionary interests. I venture some suggestions on the subject, addressed not merely to the secretaries, but, if you deem it desirable, to submit them to the Board itself. I think that all ordained ministers who are willing to go into Home Mission work, and are fitted for it, should be employed *first*, even if it used up the last dollar of your funds. Of course, also, the members of the graduating classes in our seminaries, who are ready to enter permanently into the field, should have preference for like reasons. And if, as has been intimated, your treasury will be absolutely exhausted this summer by such appointments, I have nothing more to say, except it is to express my deep regret. My hope, however, is that, as in most previous years, you will still have a surplus which can be advantageously employed in giving missionary work to seminary students. And I take it for granted that, in making a selection among such students, you would give the preference to those who had been regularly licensed, and thus formally approved by the church for such service. This rule would include the bulk of those in the middle classes. These as a body are of course better prepared to do effective work than those who are not far enough advanced for formal licensure. Is it not a great pity that any such licentiate should fail to exercise his gifts, at the end of the middle year, because the church cannot furnish him a field? He loses a valuable privilege, and the Church loses needful and valuable service.

But I am strongly inclined to the further opinion that a considerable proportion of the young men who are not yet prepared for formal licensure might still do both good and get great good by being employed, under proper supervision, in preaching the word among our feeble churches. I would not encourage any one to undertake such work, unless his own Presbytery should approve, and should grant him some form of temporary permission thus to labor. As a rule, I would prefer that every such student should labor under the direction of the Presbytery in whose care he is placed, and certainly I would not have him go into another Presbytery for such service, without the approval of the Home Mission Committee of that body. Spontaneous and irresponsible preaching, without regard to Church rules, none of us would approve or desire.

As to the employment of the seminary students, under such conditions, let me say, in general, that I have known so much good done through labor of this sort that I am strongly disposed to urge such employment to the furthest extent possible. I have known churches greatly strengthened and encouraged, dead or dying churches revived, cold and careless Christians awakened, sinners converted, sometimes in large numbers, through such labors. The reports which come back to the seminary every fall amply confirm my statement. Indeed, it has seemed to me, after long experience in connection with Home Missions, that no money has been better expended than that annually laid out on this class of labors.

Let me say, also, that I prize very highly the discipline given to these young men by such service. They appreciate better what they study; their hearts are warmer; the ministry is a more practical reality. In doing good, they get great good both immediately and prospectively. Moreover, they are the more likely to go into the Home Mission work when they are through with study, and are certain to be the more valuable when they get into that work. My interest in behalf of the young men and the churches is my only apology for this letter.

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The American Bible Society has just sent out *gratis* nine pulpit Bibles to as many of our Home Missionary churches west of the Mississippi. There are more where these came from, and if other churches need them and will notify us we will see whether the resources of the Society are equal to any more such donations.

We hope no church so favored will fail to take up a generous collection for the American Bible Society.