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I.—LITERARY.

MISSIONARY PASTORS.

[The annual address before the Society of Missionary Inquiry of Union Theological Seminary, by Rev. R. C. Reed, D. D.]

When I was invited to deliver the address on this occasion, I asked myself the question what, just now, in view of the present condition of our missionary work, and in view of the attitude of the church toward that work, most needs to be said? How can I use this one auspicious hour to the very best advantage? It did not take me long to answer the question. It is my deliberate conviction that the most urgent need of the church just now in prosecuting its mission work is missionary pastors. The urgent need is for men to stand in our pulpits who are saturated through and through with the missionary spirit, and who are glowing with missionary fervor. We need foreign missionaries to remain at home, to direct the religious thought and mould the religious life of God's people.

Such being my conviction, I am not here to plead for men to go abroad; I am not here to give information about foreign fields; I am here to make a plea in behalf of our Divine Master by laying on the hearts and consciences of those who are to be the pastors of our home churches the urgent and abiding duty of training Christ's disciples into sympathy with Him in the matter of evangelizing the world. Evidently the church will never occupy the right attitude towards this work until the pastors who minister to its spiritual life and who develop and direct its spiritual energies shall themselves occupy the

right attitude. "The stream can never rise higher than the fountain." The church will only recognize the claims of this world-wide enterprise when taught to do so.

My one aim this evening is to suggest a few great principles which should pervade your preaching if you are to discharge your duty to the Divine Head of the church in training his people for the service to which He calls them. I may classify these principles under the three heads: *one field; one work; one motive*. Here are three great unities which the church should be taught to recognize; and under the influence of these its spiritual life should be developed and its spiritual activities directed.

I. The church has one field, and that field is the world. Before the coming of Christ, God was training His church to this conception of her mission through the visions of His prophets. Jews though they were, steeped in Jewish prejudices and encrusted in Jewish narrowness of sympathy and sentiment, they could not restrict their views of the church to the contracted limits of Judaism. God never gave them visions of the latter day glory that He did not sweep away the middle wall of partition and broaden their horizon until it embraced the nations and isles of the Gentile world. He did not suffer His inspired teachers to imprison His promises within the meagre bounds of Palestine, but He made them speak in terms which stretch "from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth." Joel, for example, one of the earliest, if not the very earliest of the prophets whose sayings have come down to us, was God's mouthpiece to utter words that waited till Pentecost for their explanation, and then found it in that wonderful miracle by which God symbolized the world-wide character of His message of grace. It was when the mixed multitude "of devout men from every nation under heaven" heard, each in his own tongue wherein he was born, the wonderful works of God, that Joel was summoned across eight centuries of the past to explain so strange a thing. The explanation was that all race distinctions and national boundaries were swept away, that God's spirit would visit all flesh, and that whosoever should call upon the name of the Lord should be saved. A thousand years back of Joel, at the very fountain head of the Jewish race, we find God choosing Abraham to make him the father, not of one nation, but of many nations; to found in him not a restricted church, but a church as broad as the race of man,

promising that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. God's chosen people often had a limited out-look, but God never; and whenever He touched the tongue of prophet to make it speak His own Divine thought, the prophecies thus uttered always throbbed with universal terms. When Christ came, He brought into Divine revelation and human history a still clearer and fuller expression of the all-embracing character of God's redemptive purpose. He was not a Jewish son, but the son of man; He was not a native of Palestine, but of the planet Earth; He belonged not to Joseph's family circle, but to Adam's. He was God's gift to the world; He expiated the sins of the world; He is the light of the world. His love, His atonement, and His saving grace are without geographical division—they are seamless like His robe. His parting charge to His church makes no division in the field, "go ye into all the world." It has been very pertinently said that this text "reaches out into all space and all time. It voices the eternal, ever vivid world-consciousness of Christ, and is addressed to the corresponding capacity for largeness of vision in the church."

Let us note one or two practical inferences.

1. The field being one, the terms Home and Foreign as applied to the church's work are only terms of convenience. They do not note different fields, only different stations in the one field. To those laboring in China, we are the foreign missionaries, and they are the home. We are the missionaries, because all sent of God. "As the Father hath sent me into the world, even so I send you into the world." It is this sending that makes a man a missionary and this sending belongs to all who labor in any part of the one great harvest field. We should not permit these terms, Home and Foreign, to fix any broad distinction in our minds. They are not Bible terms. Neither in the plan of God, nor in the language of God's Book is there any such distinction. To God there are no foreign lands on this redeemed earth. "One mile is as a thousand leagues, and a thousand leagues as one mile. There is no near and far, but just one round world of lost and perishing souls to be rescued and saved through the world's Christ."

2. The field being one, all its parts should have an equal share in the church's regard. If God gives parents a family of twelve children, they should feel an equal interest in them all. They should feed and clothe and educate them all equally

well. They should not make a pet of some to the neglect of others. God has given to the church one family to be reached and blessed through her instrumentality. The church has no right to have favorites to make a pet of the children at home to the neglect of those abroad; nor to make a pet of those abroad to the neglect of those at home. There should never be any rivalry between the different departments of the church's activities. It is hurtful for some of our ministers to become advocates of Home missions as against Foreign, or advocates of Foreign as against Home. It is the duty of every minister to be the advocate of both, and to teach the church that the heathen in Africa and China are as truly at her doors as the heathen in America; that distance has nothing to do with duty; and that as Christ's home was the world, the church's home should be bounded by limits no less broad.

II. The church has one work, viz: to evangelize this one field. The church has not two missions, just one. No organization was ever formed with a more specific and more clearly defined aim than the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. The army of the Potomac was not more certainly organized for the purpose of capturing the Confederate Capital than was the army of Christ for evangelizing the world. The gospel is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation; and the one business of the church is to preach the gospel until the power of God has come into contact with every creature. The church may find it necessary to carry on many lines of work; but only such lines as convey to this ultimate end. What right has the church to establish schools, to run printing presses, to send physicians to heathen lands? Her justification is to be found in the fact that schools and printing presses and the practice of medicine are efficient methods of preaching the gospel. "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." The one work of the church is to lift Christ to the view of the whole world. Whatever she can use to this end she has a right to use; but should see that she does not neglect the more efficient for the less efficient instrumentality. The church cannot bring the word to Christ, and is not required to do this. She can take Christ to the world, and this is the one definite thing for which she is responsible.

In the light of this principle let us note one or two tendencies.

1. A demand is asserting itself for a broader conception of

the church. It is plausibly argued that the church is here in this world to do all the good it can, and it should therefore be the champion of everything that is good. It should take the lead in temperance reform, in political reform and in all reforms looking to the moral uplifting of society. The premise is sound. The church is here to do all the good it can. The only question is, how can it fulfill this mission? Evidently, the idea of its Divine Founder, and of its apostolic preachers was, that the way for it to do most good is to bend all of its energies to the one work of proclaiming the gospel of salvation. Jesus Christ was not a Reformer, but a Saviour. He spent no time in shaking bad fruit from a bad tree. He sought good fruit by making the tree good. The apostles preached no sermons on social problems, or political corruptions. The individual heart was the target for all their arrows. They rightly judged that if they carried the heart for God, they would rescue the life from the devil. Only by the regeneration of the individual did they seek the reformation of society. There is a wise German motto which teaches that "the good is often the enemy of the best." This is illustrated whenever the energies of the church of God are diverted from the one work of holding up Christ to the gaze of lost sinners, no matter for what good purpose such diversion is made.

2. A more hurtful tendency rather in an opposite direction-- a tendency toward a selfish and self-centred life. The average church rests in the undisturbed conviction that its one exclusive business is to live. Self-preservation is not only the first law of its nature, but the only law of its nature. The sum of its duties to God and to man is comprehended in what it pleases to do for itself. It provides itself a shelter; makes itself comfortable; indulges in luxuries, if able to do so, and then feels that its essential mission is accomplished. It erects a magnificent house, and takes great credit to itself for so doing. It exhibits the splendid pile and parades the enormous cost with openly confessed pride, as if it were a testimony to the piety of its membership. At the same time it publishes statistics of contributions to the work of giving the gospel to the world which indicate clearly that it is a matter of profound indifference to it what becomes of the world. The average church considers it the height of prosperity to clothe itself in purple and fine linen and to fare sumptuously every day, though it may give only the crumbs which fall from its table to the

starving world at its gate, and even give these crumbs grudgingly. There is no sense of shame, no repentance for short-coming, because no sense of having sinfully lavished on self, for purely selfish comfort, the money which should have gone to save the lost. Many churches spend on choirs more than they spend on missionaries. Do they believe that choirs are more important agencies for saving the world than missionaries? This question never enters their minds. The choir does more for their selfish enjoyment, more for popularizing their church, not indeed as a place of worship, but as a place of entertainment. A few figures will serve to show how far the church is from the idea that her mission, like that of her master, is "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." In twenty-three of the leading denominations in this county, representing ten millions of Christians, the average annual contribution per member to foreign missions is forty-one cents. For every dollar spent in this great work, they spend fourteen dollars on themselves, not on home work, but for local congregational expenses. In these twenty-three denominations, for every ordained missionary sent abroad there are nine thousand, two hundred and sixty-four communicants at home to provide for his support. It may be possible to imagine, but hardly possible to describe, how attenuated is the missionary energy of the church when there is only enough of it to support one ordained missionary distributed among nine thousand, two hundred and sixty-four members. It reminds us of what Prof. Tyndall says about the alternation of "sky dust." He says if all the floating particles in our atmosphere which give to the sky the appearance of a solid pavement could be gathered together, one might hold it all in the palm of his hand. While there are many earnest Christians, faithful in the support of the missionary work of the church to the full extent of their ability, it seems that the church as a whole is still, as in Dr. Duff's day, merely "playing at missions." One out of every four of the churches gives not one cent to carry the gospel beyond the bounds of our own country. Eleven hundred of our Southern Presbyterian churches, forty per cent. of the whole number, gave not a nickle to this cause last year. Of course, these are the feebler churches; but the duty resting on the weak churches to do a little is just as imperative as the duty resting on the strong to do much. It needs no argument to prove to those who have the slightest acquaintance with the actual state

of affairs that an urgent work awaits the coming pastors in stirring the church to a true conception of her duty to the lost world.

III. The church has one motive. When the church stands face to face with the world as its one field of service, and asks the question, "why should I do this work?" The one sufficient answer is, "because Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, my King, my Divine Head, bids me do it." This is the only motive, unconditional loyalty to Christ, that will avail for the work. The constraining love of Christ made one man a homeless wanderer and a tireless worker to give the world the gospel. Felt in like measure it will have the same effect on any other man. Once let the sense of personal obligation to Christ get a good strong grip on the conscience of God's people, and there will be no rest for them till the sceptre of universal dominion is placed in His hand. Up to this time the support of missions has depended almost exclusively on impulse. This needs to be constantly stimulated by pathetic and pleading appeals. Only thus can funds be secured to sustain the work on its present meagre scale; and every little enlargement taxes faith to the verge of despair. Impulse is not a sufficient solid basis to bear up such a superstructure as this world-wide evangelization. Christ should no longer be placed in the attitude of a suppliant at the feet of His own disciples, but He should be placed on his throne of sovereignty, and His royal mandate proclaimed, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel," until His whole church shall feel "woe is me if I preach not the gospel to every creature." Every Christian has been redeemed by the same blood that redeemed Paul, and therefore every Christian should feel that he is a debtor to Greek and Barbarian, to wise and unwise, and that he always will be a debtor till he has exhausted his ability to give them the gospel. The church should blush with shame, as one dishonored, while she hoards in selfish indolence the blessings which Christ purchased for the world. Had we eyes to see, we should see eight hundred millions of our fellow-men, each holding in his hand a draft on us for the bread of life, signed by the pierced hand of our crucified Saviour, and seeing this we could have no peace till the sacred obligation was discharged. The church will never see this vision till her ministry make her see it, and this will not be until they make missions the staple of their preaching. An annual sermon, a special appeal now and

then will not answer. We want pastors who know in the depths of their souls that Christ has no message for His church, lying nearer His own heart, and more important for His church to bear, than the message which lays on the conscience of His redeemed people the burden of a dying world.

There are seventy-six thousand preachers in the United States feeding twelve millions of Christians over and over again with the bread of life. They are feeding them more than they want; they must scold and coax them to come as often as the feast is spread for them; they must use attractive devices to draw them in. Only one thousand, one hundred and twenty preachers are in foreign lands distributing this bread to a thousand millions of starving heathen. Is this the way Christ would have it? While this remains the case, is the church loyal to Christ? Can the ministers of the gospel do a more acceptable service to Him than to ring His parting command into the ears of His people until they shall awake from their selfish apathy? Whether we look at the condition of the church at home, or of the heathen world abroad, is there any more urgent need just now than missionary pastors?

The final question is, where are we to get these pastors? The answer must be, from the seminaries of the church. Here is where we get all our pastors. No matter what kind of pastors we want, we must look to the seminaries to supply the need. Have our seminaries laid the proper stress on missions as the great end for which Christ has organized His church? Have the seminaries considered it a matter of first importance to send forth servants of Christ with visions of duty as broad as the world, and with sympathies trained to embrace all nations? Recent investigations have supplied an answer not altogether satisfactory. The following questions were submitted to the students in one of the large seminaries of the country, which is recognized by the church to which it belongs as a strong missionary seminary.

1. In what foreign fields is our church at work?
2. Where did Robert Morrison work, and what was the character of his great work?
3. Where did Alexander Duff work, and what was the character of his great work?
4. Where did William Carey work, and what was the character of his great work?

These questions were submitted to the senior class, consist-

ing of forty-eight members. Twenty-eight failed on all the four questions; thirty-four failed on the fields of the church; forty-five failed on Morrison; forty-six on Duff; and thirty-eight on Carey.

No comment is needed to show the necessity of missionary instruction. The relatively large number of graduates from Union Seminary who offer themselves for the foreign field is proof that missionary instruction is given here, and that the missionary cause has a warm place in the hearts of professors and students. But it may be that even here more stress might be laid upon the particular aspect of the subject which I am trying to emphasize. Think of the fact that in eleven hundred churches in our assembly, no collection was taken for foreign missions during the whole twelve months of last year. By a careful estimate it is found that these eleven hundred churches contain an aggregate membership of not less than thirty-five thousand. More than one-sixth of entire membership are not even asked to give anything to the cause of missions. Where does the sin of this failure lie? About five hundred of these churches have pastors or stated supplies. In the case of these, the sin lies at the door of these preachers; and I am tempted to say that any pastor or supply who fails for twelve consecutive months to give his people an opportunity to contribute to missions, should have his license taken from him. In the case of vacant churches, the sin lies at the door of sessions, and should be remedied through Presbyterial oversight.

Young gentlemen, if you would be loyal to Christ, if you would enjoy His favor, if you would do the greatest service to His church, preach the gospel with a view to make its "blessings flow far as the curse is found." Resolve, like Samuel J. Mills, who has been called the father of foreign missions in America, "not to rest satisfied till you have made your influence felt in the remotest corner of this ruined world." Teach your people to recognize in a Christian way that God hath made "of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." It is only such teaching that will lift them out of their selfishness and narrowness and set them in harmonious relations both with God and man.