

MISSION FIELD.

FOREIGN MISSIONS:
THE GREAT PRIMARY WORK OF
THE CHURCH.

By EUGENE STOCK, Esq.,
Editorial Secretary of the Church
Missionary Society.

But are Foreign Missions the
Church's great primary work?

Let us look at the ground upon
which we undertake them at all.
Let us go back to that great central
event in the history of the world
and the Church, the Resurrection
of our Lord Jesus Christ. His
mighty work of atonement is fin-
ished. Sin is put away; Satan
"brought to nought," (Heb. ii. 14,
R.V.); Death conquered. What
is next to be done? He appears
to His disciples. What command
does He give them?

St. Matthew's Gospel only tells us
of ONE,—"All power is given unto
Me in heaven and in earth; go ye
therefore and teach [make disciples
of] all nations" (xxviii. 18-20).

St. Mark's Gospel only tells us of
ONE,—"Go ye into all the world
and preach the Gospel to every
creature"—with the results that
shall follow obedience—(xvi. 15-
18).

St. Luke's Gospel only tells us of
ONE,—"That repentance and remis-
sion of sins should be preached in
His name among all nations"—
with the direction that they were
to tarry in Jerusalem until the
"power from on high" to enable
them to do it came upon them
(xxiv. 47).

St. John's Gospel has more: It
records personal words to Mary
Magdalene, to Thomas, to Peter;
and no doubt some of those words
have their application to us all: but
still, to the disciples generally, only
ONE command is actually given.—
"As My Father hath sent Me, even
so send I you"—which is illustrated
in the next chapter by the miracle
wrought when they responded to
the order to "cast the net on the
right side of the ship" (xx. 21).

The first chapter of the Acts also
records the Lord's last words before
His Ascension: what were they?—
"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . .
unto the uttermost part of the
earth." Not that what we should
call Home work was excluded.
The Apostles themselves were to
"begin at Jerusalem." But only
to begin (vor. 8).

THE OBEDIENCE OF THE APOSTLES.

In the Acts we find these com-
mands obeyed; though sometimes
not obeyed fully without fresh re-
velations from the Ascended Lord,
or providential indications of His
will. It is "the persecution that
arose about Stephen" that scatters
the disciples from Jerusalem, and
sends them "everywhere preaching
the word." It is by a special vis-
ion that Saul of Tarsus is (if we
may say so) dragged from the
home-field he inclined to himself.
See xxii. 19-21: "I said, Lord,
they know that I imprisoned and
beat in every synagogue them that
believed on Thee"—that is, "Lord,

how suitable a place Jerusalem is
for me: they knew me before:
they will believe me now"—and,
as events afterwards proved, it was
a brave request; but—"He said
unto me, Depart, for I will send
thee far hence unto the Gentiles."
Then he does go to the Gentiles,
at Tarsus, and at Antioch, those
great heathen cities: but even at
Antioch he must not stay (xiii. 2),
"Separate Me Barnabas and Saul
for the work whereunto I have
called them"—and the struggling
infant Church, just getting suffi-
ciently known to have a nick-
name given to it (xi. 26), and with
the pomp and wealth of the East
and West arrayed against it, has
to send forth, with fasting and
prayer, not its third-rate men
scarcely good enough for home
work, but its two apostles, the very
men who, it might more naturally
be thought, could not possibly be
spared. In the face of all this,
what do we suppose is the Lord
Jesus Christ's estimate of Foreign
Missions?

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