

Without believers in Christ, called out of every kindred and people under heaven, there is no church of Christ upon earth. And therefore the church by its initial constitution and in the very idea of its being is a Missionary institution, composed of the scattered company of the people of God, and with the law of self perpetuation imposed upon it, existing for the very purpose of extending itself, and bringing the nations into its living union. For this reason when our Lord founded his church on earth, it was as at Pentecost, by the effusion of the Holy Spirit upon all. For this reason, when he ascended, the great promise, made not for immediate consolation so much as for future guidance, was that the Holy Spirit should be given continuously unto the end. For this reason he sketched to his disciples the future contests and persecutions his people should meet with in the world, all of which should issue in the glorious triumph of his kingdom in his Second Coming. For the same reason when he commissioned his Apostles, it was with the express command, "Go into all the world and preach my gospel to every creature." And to this idea of the Church as a Missionary organization the Book of Acts remarkably corresponds; for, amidst all vicissitudes of persecution and internal corruption, the fundamental thought of the book is growth. Three thousand at Pentecost, five thousand later, among people and priests, in spite of persecution and because of persecution, in spite of hypocritical members and of internal dissensions and because of

overcoming these, it continued to grow. From Jerusalem to Samaria to Cyprus, and to Antioch; from Antioch to Pamphylia and Pisidia, to Galatia and Phrygia, to Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and Corinth; to Ephesus, Colossae and Laodicea, until from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum there was no space left, and the circle must win westward to Rome also. In the first instance, in the nature of the case, the process must begin in Palestine, and among Jews. It was only the more efficient because the church at first failed to understand the universal scope of her mission, and concentrated her energies upon the field within her reach; yet the Spirit within her could not long be thus confined. It burst the barriers of the ritual, and spread on every side and by every opportunity, without waiting for Apostles either to lead or to point the way. Apostles themselves regarded with wonder the expansive force of the gospel which they were commissioned to teach, and learned by the effect of the Spirit in the church as well as by the revelation of the Spirit within them, the purpose of God toward the world. It follows, therefore, that in whatever degree the church fails to appreciate her duty to the world, and to neglect the means of this growth, she vitiates the idea of her being, and dwarfs and despiritualizes her life. It follows that these notions of ours of churches restricted nationally, or by denominations, and these distinctions between the church and her missionary agencies,—as though the life were in the home organization, and only the far