

The Local Pastor's Relation to World-wide Evangelization.

A paper read by Rev. A. A. McLeod before the Vancouver Baptist Ministerial Association, March 20th, '05, and published at request of the Association.

Knowing as I do, the purpose that prompts you to ask me to address you, I could hardly expect you to forgive me nor would I forgive myself if I were to aim at entertaining, or merely interesting you with experiences, incidents, or even information, concerning the Orient, or any other land—concerning the Telugus or any other people. Did I find myself before your congregations charged with the service of helping them into a fuller recognition of Christ's great permission, I might, I doubtless would, consider it necessary to take that lower ground, and "tell about the work." But in addressing you I am impelled to take higher ground—impelled by a due regard for the position to which it has pleased the Master to call you.

Do you ask why I refer to Christ's "Commission" as his per-mission? I answer, because when Christ said "go ye," he said at the same time, and to the same persons, "Lo, I am with you"—not I will be, (a promise) but "I am," (the declaration of an existing fact.) I am going on this errand will you come too? Equivalent to saying, you have my permission to come with me—Let us go.

Christ then is the author of Christian missions. Through this agency he continues his own mission to men. It has pleased him to permit his people to co-operate with him in this his enterprise. But he controls the service himself and he declares his purpose to continue to do so to the end of the age. The work commenced by him and continued by him through his people, is to "make disciples of all the nations"—not only to lead all the men and all the women in all the nations into the knowledge of the truth, but to "make disciples" of them. Not learners merely (discipline is not discipleship, duplicates are not disciples.) A disciple is a reproducer of the Master's teaching and characteristics. The per-mission was primarily given to those who had responded to a specific call to leadership in the affairs of Christ's kingdom, and by them it was passed on to the rank and file as disciples multiplied. The pastor is, by divine appointment, the local leader in the church of Christ. The per-mission, therefore, comes direct from Christ to him, and through him to the church over which the Holy Spirit has made him overseer. The faithful, conscientious pastor is always pressed, sometimes almost crushed, by the demands of his immediate surroundings. What then should be his attitude toward Christ's purpose as voiced in the per-mission? What should be the local pastor's relations to world-wide evangelization specifically set forth in the per-mission as Christ's continued purpose concerning his church and the world? He has been definitely called to the pastorate. His sphere of personal activity is circumscribed by the bounds of his parish. With more work in his immediate neighborhood than he can even hope to overtake, how can he give prominence to Christ's purpose concerning the perishing beyond his own designated and chosen field of labor.

Christ's per mission gives the pastor a place in the actualization of Christ's purpose. What place? Home for him and heathenism for his brother? Popular opinion sometimes supplies an affirmative answer to this enquiry. But Christ's per mission are unqualified negative, in terms short, sharp and decisive. The per mission reveals to us not only what we are permitted to do, but also how we are permitted to do it. Our success depends, therefore, not on our wealth, or wisdom, or scholastic attainments, but on the prominence given in conception, and in conduct to Christ and to Christ's authority.

Success or failure in Christian activity, as in all co-operative callings is almost if not always, a question of relationship. Relationship in the work to which we are called corresponds with gearing in mechanics. Unless every cog accurately touches and fits its fellows, the machinery, if it runs at all, will run at a loss, and yield but unsatisfactory results.

Missions are God's machinery for the transformation of the world, and he has, in his wisdom, established what he considers the right relation—not only of the mechanic, and the machine to himself, but also of every wheel and cog to its fellows. These relations thus fixed, must be scrupulously maintained in order to fulfil his purpose, namely, to "make disciples of all the nations."

The first stage of the service in which Christ permits his people to co-operate with him, is to "preach the Gospel to every creature." Not to announce merely, or to tell thoroughly even, but to proclaim as a herald. To inculcate, to impress (literally, to press in repeatedly as with the heel) and the relation of the pastor who is the leader and spokesman of the church, to the non-Christian people to whom the gospel is preached, is that of a herald who proclaims, a transmitter who passes on and inculcates a message from his Master.

The second stage is to baptize—to publicly and formally initiate those who respond to the Lord's proclamation of peace and pardon. And the pastor's relation to those converts is that of a primary teacher.

The third stage of the work assigned, is to teach them to observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded. At

this stage the work is teaching—not preaching. The curriculum, all things that Christ has commanded—not the gospel merely (which is God's offer of pardon to non-Christians). The people to be thus taught are baptized converts or church members—not "every creature." And the pastor in his relation to those church members, is an administrator of the laws of their chosen King. An executor, appointed by the testator, to execute his will. With regard to them he is charged with the one work of securing, on their part, the observance of Christ's commands. It is scarcely necessary to note that this work at this stage, is not teaching the commands, but securing their observance.

It will thus be seen that Christ's per-mission, and the service to which that per-mission directly points, divided the pastor's work into three stages, each stage carrying with it its own peculiar relationship.

In the first, he inculcates, as a herald. In the second, he initiates, as a teacher of first principles. And in the third, he educates (literally, "lead's forth") to the observance of Christ's commands, as the administrator of the laws of Christ's kingdom—executor of Christ's last will and testament.

As a herald he inculcates. This service limits itself to non-Christians. As a teacher of first principles he initiates. This service limits itself to those who respond to the truth, and to the stage in their experience in which they respond.

As an administrator of the affairs of Christ's kingdom, he expresses, in obedience, what has previously been impressed in the preaching of Christ's gospel.

The service assigned the pastor among non-Christians, is to "preach the gospel to every creature." The service assigned him among the members of the church of which he is pastor, is to teach them to "observe all things" that Christ has commanded him. His commission is, therefore, to him, a command to recognize in his work the two co-ordinate aims of didactics—to impart knowledge, and to develop power; to impress and to express; to inculcate and to educate.

In the first, he works from without, inward, that being the principle that must always govern beginnings. In the second, he works from within outward, that being the principle that must always govern development. The first develops mechanical conformity, and produces duplicates. The second develops motor activity, and makes disciples.

In the hope of being at once concise and comprehensive we adopt the method used in the "Shorter Catechism" to elucidate the Ten Commandments.

1. What does the commission teach concerning the local pastors' relation to world-wide evangelization? The commission teaches that the local pastor is an executor of Christ's will, to whom is intrusted the service of administering the self-propagating laws of Christ's kingdom through the church to the uttermost ends of the earth.

2. What is required in this relationship? This relationship requires, definitely demands the doing of Christ's will and the church's work in the proclamation of the evangel to the whole world, as the work to which every other, must be not only subservient but tributary.

It further requires that the pastor be sensitized by the Spirit of Christ, so that he may be qualified to comprehend Christ's thought, and grasp Christ's conceptions. For Christ demands, not only the transmitting of his truth to the nations, but also the transmitting of that truth into Christ-like conceptions and Christ-like characteristics. In this, the purpose for which the Church exists, as in all her minor activities, the pastor is the link in the chain that is nearest to the anchor—Christ Jesus.

It also requires that in view of the threefold relationship peculiar to the pastor's calling, due regard shall be paid to these relationships as established by Christ. And also due regard for the limitations involved in these relationships. It still further requires, that the obedience called forth by this relationship, shall be, not a dead mechanical service, but a living motor obedience, with a real motive behind it, loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a real outcome before it—the evangelization of the whole world.

And also due appreciation of the fact, that the service as a whole, with all its relationships, is a means to an end, not an end in itself, the end in view being to make disciples of all the nations. When this end is reached Christ's purpose is fulfilled, and the service designed to fulfil it is no longer required.

3. What is forbidden in this relationship? This relationship, as Christ's appointment, definite and complete in itself, forbids, the conduct of Christian Missions on a commercial basis, or on a departmental basis, or on a philanthropic basis, and the baneful condition of spiritual debility that such policies foster.

4. Wherein does the importance of this relationship consist? The importance of this relationship consists in its being the appointment of Jesus Christ and in its being the shortest, surest, safest and only scientific way to the attainment of the end that Christ has in view, namely, the making of disciples in every land, Home as well as Foreign, but never to its exclusion. That would be positively criminal, cheerful, unquestioning, and honorable recognition is therefore, the only commendable attitude to ward a it.

Christ does not ask any man's opinion as to the feasibility of carrying his purposes to a successful issue. Nor does he ask any man's opinion as to the methods of procedure that he has inaugurated, or the relationships that these methods involve. He has given orders, and he expects them to be obeyed.

"Sir" said the Duke of Wellington to an officer who urged the impossibility of executing his orders, "I did not ask your opinion, I gave you my orders and I expect them to be obeyed. "All authority is mine, said Jesus Christ, for this reason "go," and do as I bid you, and in the way in which I bid you do it. Recognize my authority and secure its recognition on the part of my people. Thus—not otherwise—thus will my conquering presence continue to be your all sufficient power to the end of the age. No one can afford to substitute revision for recognition here.

We believe that there is no consequence without its cause. We know that the disappointing fact, that so frequently were duplicates are found where we have a right to expect mature disciples, is the consequence of a cause that invariably precedes it and to which it is always traceable. The cause is, the disciple-maker's failure to set in motion all the machinery at his command.

When but two-thirds of his machinery—that which pertains to the first and second stages of his work, is put in motion, his product will inevitably be that which this part of his machinery is calculated to produce. When he avails himself of all his possible resources he will have the joy of seeing his duplicates—the result of the Master's message transmitted merely, transformed into disciples—the certain outcome of that same message transmitted into its legitimate activity, and continued in its original aim. In other words, impression (pressing in preaching) gives duplicates—accurate copies, but copies only, such as must be "handled" in order to any achievement—a field of labor.

Impression, plus expression (pressing out, teaching to observe) develops discipleship, yields motor activity such as will handle forces that make for achievement—a force in a field.

In as much as the recognition of Christ's per-mission in its fullness, and of its involved relationships, in their fullness, is a recognition of the law of propagation in the kingdom of Christ, such recognition secures—insures for itself Christ's presence, Christ's peace, Christ's power, and the product that Christ purposed—disciples among all the nations. While any limitations, little or large, mean a corresponding limitation in the finished product, if indeed, the product of the pastorate can be said to be finished unless the emphasis is left where the Master has placed it.

In closing permit one example of its outworking of the conception that we have been considering—"The First Presbyterian church of Wichita, Kansas, was organized in a "dug out" March 12th, 1870, with thirteen members and two elders. Thirteen or fourteen years ago Western Kansas was struck by what we call a "boom." Wichita felt the impulse. The population grew enormously. Churches were cramped for room. The first Presbyterian church ventured on enlargement. A site was purchased at a cost of \$20,000.00. At that time the old site could be sold for \$40,000.00 but while it was being held for \$50,000.00 the "boom burst." Both sites became practically valueless, though the first church stood pledged to pay \$20,000.00 for the new.

The surrender of all that could be sold reduced their indebtedness to \$18,000.00. This condition of things made their future rather hopeless, while it seemed to render any forward movement absolutely impossible.

About this time the pastorate became vacant, and a call was extended to Rev. Charles Edwin Bradt. Mr. Bradt accepted the call, and beginning his work, followed the policy pursued by him in former pastorates, namely, that of emphasizing the duty of adequate representation of the church on the Foreign Mission Field. "Into all the world" and to "every creature" were the commands of Christ. The church must be a "going" church and make a business of reaching the ends of the earth with the Gospel. The pastor held this to be the one condition of the promised presence of Christ with Holy Spirit power in any church. After a series of sermons along this line, Mr. Bradt revealed to some few of his members, the conviction of his heart, namely: that the church should undertake the support of a Foreign Missionary pastor, at a salary of not less than \$600 a year. This was much beyond even a liberal offering, and few thought it could be done. Difficulties were brought forward, chief among them the debt. But the truth was kept steadily before the church, that he who said "go" had promised his presence with almighty power, on the condition of obedience.

After much prayer it was decided to make the proposition to the people. Subscription cards were prepared. All giving was to be voluntary and cheerful. To the astonishment of nearly all, the whole amount needed for the support of the "foreign" pastor was secured, and Dr. Corbett, of Chefoo, China, was chosen to be the missionary pastor of the church.

At the beginning of the second year of Mr. Bradt's pastorate, the Missionary enterprise of the first year, was made

*Condensed from "Missionary Review of the World," August 1902.

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