

## MISSIONARY OBLIGATIONS.

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THE Church of Christ must be missionary. Its Founder was Himself the greatest example of the missionary spirit. Those whom He chose and qualified to carry on as his agents the work He began, were filled with his spirit and appointed to be his witnesses "unto the uttermost parts of the earth." The seventy chosen and sent out to herald Christ's own visit to the towns and villages of Judea and Galilee were missionaries. His last command was, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and with it was given the promise of his perpetual presence, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." In obedience to his command the Apostles went forth preaching the Word everywhere. The members of the Church at Jerusalem became missionaries when scattered by persecution, proclaiming the Gospel wherever they were driven. Paul was a missionary, travelling during a brief ministry three times over a great portion of Asia and Europe, and so preaching that "all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus." From the Thessalonians "sounded out the word of the Lord." If the Church is to be true to the spirit of its Founder, and to follow the example of its first preachers and members, it must be missionary.

One of the great purposes for which the Church has been established is that it might be a channel of richest blessing to the world. Christ came to be a blessing to the nations; and though in his bodily presence He has gone from the earth, his life is perpetuated among men in his Church, which is his body, indwelt by his Spirit. By the agency of his people He who came to seek and save the lost continues his gracious work.

The Church has received light and knowledge for its own sake and for the sake of the world. It is to be both the possessor and reflector of the light. Dwelling ever in the presence of God, it is its high calling to be a medium of blessing to the strangers and aliens, proclaiming the way of access and of peace, inviting and persuading the wretched and perishing to seek God and be saved. The heralding of the Gospel is the great end of the Church's existence. True, its own life must be nourished; it must grow in knowledge, faith, love and purity. But it lives, not so much for its own sake, as for that of a perishing world. It lives, not to be nourished, but to serve God. It is nourished that it may live and labour for the welfare of men and the glory of God. And if it is to be true to its vocation it must be missionary.

The Lord gathers men into his Church visible, that He may accomplish a work in them as well as by them. The graces of the Christian character are to be cultivated. Holiness is to be promoted. God's children are to be conformed to the image of Him who is the first-born among many brethren. For this end God has established his ordinances and means of grace, and bestows the gift of his Holy Spirit. Upon the members of Christ's body He confers gifts which they are called to exercise for the common welfare. It is their duty to avail themselves of all the helps to holiness that God has bestowed. The sanctification of his Church is an object that lies near the heart of the Saviour. Now surely no one will doubt that an active living interest in the extension of Christ's kingdom is one of the most important means of promoting the Church's life. It is