

Missionary Notes - The Office of the Missionary

Rev. G. C. Lubbers

It is a comforting thought that God, according to His infinite mercy, has chosen a church unto everlasting life, and *gathers* it by His blessed gospel unto everlasting life out of every nation, and from all peoples and tongues, unto the fellowship of His Son, in the unity of true faith.

If it were not for the truth of *election* there would be no church gathered by Christ; now where two or three *are gathered* in Christ's name He is in their midst!

If it were not for this work of the Son of God, who *gathers*, defends and preserves to Himself a church unto everlasting life – there would be no work for a minister to perform in a local congregation, nor would there be “work”, an office, a task, for a missionary, either among the “heathen” or among the “dispersed”.

All would be so much vanity, a beating of the wind, a vicious circle leading nowhere, but only affording vexation of spirit; it would be a vast treadmill bringing one nowhere.

Now, however, the missionary's task, his work and office, is firmly anchored in God's elective purpose, His wisdom and power in Jesus Christ. His task is simply: preaching the Gospel in Jesus Christ with all that this implies. Such was the primary calling of Paul. I Cor. 1:17. It is preaching the Gospel, the Word of the Cross, which, indeed, is to those perishing foolishness, but to us, who believe, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation. The Lord Himself says, “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and to bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void but shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.”

What a glory: the Word does not return void!

He who preaches *the Word* of God, the Word of the Cross, preaches a Word which is foolishness to those perishing, but to all who are saved by this same Word it is the power and wisdom of God.

Principally, the Home Missionary's task is to preach the Word. He must be urgent in season and out of season preaching the Word amongst those who are dispersed and scattered. He must preach according to their needs, but he must always preach the Word, the full counsel of God. He must reprove, rebuke, with all longsuffering and teaching. He cannot and may not so “stream-line” his preaching that it is adaptable to itching ears; he must stand out in strong contrast to all such preachers who make merchandise of the Gospel; out of God in Christ he must speak before the face of God!

The “thus saith the Lord” must reverberate in every sentence which he utters: he must be truly a servant of the Word, a servant of God. Only thus is he strong and courageous, and is he assured that in spite of all the baffling circumstances and seemingly insurmountable odds, he is victorious. Being overcome by Christ, chained to the victory wagon, the triumphal procession of the Lord of glory, he is victorious. Yes, he dies daily and bears about the dying of the Lord Jesus in his body, that others may live who hear and believe! Once when very lonely, the writer of these lines was told by a very understanding sister in the Lord, “Rev. Lubbers, you are very lonely, and sometimes discouraged and seemingly beaten; but you are such for Christ's sake. It

is given us in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also suffer for Christ's Name." That put him "on the beam" once more.

Churchill, during World War II, when Britain had suffered her Dunkirk on the shore of western France, and the bombs of the *Luftwaffe* were nightly falling on London, said, "I offer you nothing but tears sweat and blood". However, Christ says to His faithful ministers, in the world you shall have tribulation for the word of God and the testimony of my Name. But when He calls an erstwhile persecutor of the church to be the greatest apostle to the Gentiles, He causes him boldly to preach Him, whom he first persecuted.

What was Paul in prospect? His office, his task to stand before kings of the earth, before a Nero finally, to die for the faith, looking for the appearance of the blessed God in Christ on that Day! Through "blood, tears and sweat" he enters into glory. And with this hope upon God he magnifies his office. He considers himself in the victory march of Christ, the triumphal entry into the heavenly Jerusalem, under the chief Captain, the Author and Finisher of our faith, the faith of all the elect unto glory. He endured all things for the elect's sake.

Such is the office of a preacher, or a Home Missionary, either to the heathen or to the dispersed.

Here the lines too have fallen into pleasant places; it is a goodly heritage, this office, this task assigned by Christ.

Will you too join these ranks of a preacher, a missionary, my youthful *Amice*?

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