









HOME ORGANIZATION.

A Paper read, by request, at a Conference of Clerical and Lay Members and Friends of the SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS, held at Newcastle-on-Tyne on December 6th, 1880, under the Presidency of the VENERABLE THE ARCHDEACON OF NORTHUMBERLAND, by the SECRETARY of the SOCIETY.

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS, AND MAY BE HAD AT THE OFFICE, 19, DELAHAY STREET, S.W.

Price Twopence.

LONDON :
R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR
BREAD STREET HILL.

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EVERY one who knows what human nature is will admit the necessity of an organization, as complete as it can be made, for stimulating charity and for collecting the offerings of the people, wherever a continuous work on a large scale is to be carried on. There are some persons whose bounty flows forth spontaneously, like the spring of water on the hill-side, but if more plentiful supplies are demanded we have to sink a well and to fix machinery for raising the water which is needed, and the lower we go, and the harder the soil which we pierce, the greater is the cost of raising. Thus it is that in raising money from the whole Church, directly we go beyond the comparatively small stratum of persons who recognize the duty of giving the tithe of their substance, directly the cost of gathering their offerings increases.

“I am amazed,” said Lord Salisbury at the annual meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in 1869, “at the extent of English charity, but I am still more amazed at the enormous machinery required to bring that charity into action. Few people seem to think it their duty to themselves and to their God to offer their charity without the importunity of the present day. We ought to support such a Society as this spontaneously.”

But, alas! people do not give without this “enormous machinery” being put in motion, and the competition for the alms of the faithful is so great that the Society or Organization that will not avail itself of this machinery must be content to go to the wall. The problem is, At what point will the cost of raising money become too great to be justified? I have heard of church builders, before the art now known as “circularising” was much practised, spending fifteen shillings to raise a pound. This is of course unjustifiable; but for the purposes

of Missionary work we are not so tempted, for we have an agency ready at hand, at once not only cheap, but the only agency which we can rightly use. It is the parochial system. If the laity are to be possessed by a Missionary spirit, we must look to the clergy to give it to them. "The standard of reverence in a congregation," said an eminent statesman, "must be the standard to which the minister has attained: individuals may occasionally surpass him, but never the whole congregation." And what is true of reverence is true of Missionary zeal. I shall speak very plainly, believing that this is a gathering of earnest men, come together to consider how defects are to be repaired, and willing to hear plain words and not to be offended at them. We look in vain for large offerings from a parish whose pastor does not make Missionary teaching a part of his ministerial work. On this subject I would crave your attention to a letter of the Ven. Archdeacon Huxtable, recently published by the Society, in which is shown what has been done in forty years in a small rural parish.

People naturally think that the subject is of small importance when Missions are brought before a congregation only once in the year, and then by a strange preacher; when their parish priest devotes neither time nor study to it, perhaps even avails himself of the occasion of the visit of a deputation to take what he is no doubt justified in calling a "well-earned holiday."

It is calculated that at least one-fourth of the parishes in England are absent from the subscription lists of all Missionary Societies whatsoever, and in a large proportion of those which are not thus unfruitful the cause of Missions is brought before the people, not by their own parish priest, but by strangers, at an expense which seriously lessens the available offerings which are made.

Do the clergy realise the cost of that system whereby they consider that they are conferring a favour on a Society or its representative if they allow a stranger to occupy their pulpits and to plead with their people on behalf of Missions? Again competition comes in: the Society which has the offer of a pulpit is aware that, if it refuses, other organizations will accept, and so an endeavour is made to send a preacher, often possessing no special knowledge, sometimes jaded with perpetually telling the same stories or plying the same arguments, and generally sure to be severely criticised.

Is it too much to expect that the clergy should acquaint themselves, not indeed with the grounds on which the duty of Missionary work is based, for these they of course know, as being part of the Holy



Scriptures, but with the details of modern Missionary work? The sources of information are only too abundant: and less effort is required to master the facts of the Church's warfare and aggressions on the kingdom of darkness than is given by almost every man who reads a daily paper to mastering the details of the campaigns in which from time to time our own or foreign armies are engaged.

Knowledge of this kind is always possessed by Nonconformists: you will rarely speak on Missionary subjects to a Dissenter and not find him perfectly well acquainted with the doings of John Elliot, of Carey, of Judson, of Moffat and of Livingstone, as well as with contemporary Missionary work; and yet how often have I attended meetings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and found clergyman after clergyman getting up at the request of the chairman, and in almost the same stereotyped phrases, which have probably done duty on many similar occasions, expressing to his dear friends the pleasure which it gives him to meet them once more on the platform of this excellent Society, and ingenuously adding that he knew nothing whatever of the subject which had brought them together, and would no longer stand between them and the deputation, who would give them, he was sure, "much interesting information." Now why should these worthy men go on, year after year, confessing that they never followed their brethren to the field, nor cared to inform themselves of the fortunes of the host of the Lord who were leagued against the strongholds of heathenism? Interest, which is professed to be taken in a work of which nothing is known, must very soon become perfunctory. Whereas, let a man once master the story of Missionary work and policy, not limiting his reading to selected and highly coloured adventures which represent the Missionary's life as a series of picnics more or less romantic; once let a man grasp how the Colonial Church has grown, and has leavened with Divine life the otherwise godless colonization of Great Britain; let a man learn how the Colonial Episcopate has within the last forty years covered the world with a network of apostolic organization—and he will not be slow to feel and to stir up in his people a warm interest in the work as the noblest work for God which men can be called upon to do. His parish will respond to him, and every effort made for work abroad will be repaid manyfold in increased spiritual life at home. I know not a few cases in which very poor parishes do, absolutely and not relatively, a great deal more for God and the Church than wealthy congregations who are without the stimulus of a Mission-loving

pastor, and the standard of Missionary zeal is no unfair gauge of the spiritual life of a parish or an individual.

To the Clergy, then, we must look, not merely that every parish shall have its organization for Missions, but that such organizations shall be based on devotion to God and on the spirit of the prayer, "Thy kingdom come"; and then, while no unworthy methods of getting money at any price are resorted to, all lawful machinery will be freely used, the whole parish divided among persons willing to become collectors, Missionary boxes in every house whose inmates are willing thus to lay up in store their weekly devotions, and care taken that all shall give on a worthy scale of Christian consistency, the poor of their penury, and the wealthy on a system which ignores the conventional annual guinea.

We cannot venture to say that the Church of England has yet performed her duty in Missionary work; no, not if her contributions were doubled would she do so. It is calculated that the gross total given to all foreign Missionary work by Church people approaches half a million annually, and exceeds, but only to a trifling extent, the contribution of Protestant Nonconformists. This is not justified by the respective numbers, and still less by the wealth of the two sections of our people, especially when we remember how large are the endowments of the Church, and that Dissenters have almost entirely to provide for their worship on the voluntary system; but it is to be accounted for by the fact that Missions are recognized by Dissenters as an essential part of their religion, and I may add, as one who for some years had a parish in Cornwall, where the people were almost to a man hereditary Dissenters, that I never spoke about Missions to a Wesleyan without meeting with cordial sympathy, which often was expressed in gifts of money.

Parochial organization implies, of course, diocesan organization, and as Missionary zeal grows among the parochial clergy, so we may expect that the subject will be treated in every Episcopal charge and be discussed in every diocesan conference, as I am happy to think was the case at the conferences lately held at York and at Truro. I may add that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has done what it could to bring the country into close relation with the head office. It has invited the incorporated members in each diocese to elect two representatives, and at the present time every English diocese except London has two members, chosen by their fellows, who have seats at the Standing Committee.

2. It may seem ungracious and inconsistent, after thus advocating the extension of Missionary Organization, to deprecate the exuberance with which in some quarters it has already been developed, but in truth we suffer sometimes as much from indiscreet and undirected zeal as we do from apathy, and at the present moment we want a Charity Organization Society rightly to guide our Missionary charity as much as we do to economise the relief which is given to the beggars who in so many ways storm our sympathies. This brings me to the question of what are called Special Funds.

It has been my lot often to hear Missionary societies condemned as abnormal and unecclasiastical and the like : I have never been disturbed by such criticisms, because I have felt that they had no reference to the Society to whose service the best years of my life are given, which was called into existence by the joint action of the Southern Convocation and of the Crown of England. But it has struck me as inconsistent when I have observed the very men who have thus vilipended established societies foremost in starting, simply by their own independent action, other Missionary organizations, under the name of associations or guilds or confraternities, and of whose abnormal or unecclasiastical position we hear nothing. Canon Scott Robertson in his statistical account of Missionary work gives twenty-one Missionary associations in connection with the Church of England : but this is a very inadequate statement. Almost every colonial bishop, almost every archdeacon, and I nearly said almost every Missionary, now starts his own special fund. The Church Missionary Society, wise in its generation and being able to exercise firm discipline among its supporters and agents, has nothing to do with any funds which are not at the disposal of the Committee of the Society. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, consistent with its professions of toleration, and anxious to be always the natural head-quarters or agency of the Church abroad, allows its office to be the banker for every Missionary who is connected with it, and also encourages allied or independent associations to make use of its Office and Treasurers as honorary bankers. In 1879 there were 207 separate funds thus managed without charge by the Society, and a total sum of 35,000*l.* was received and remitted, without a farthing of cost to the donors or to the recipients.

These funds are of two kinds : (*a*) the larger associations which have their representatives all over the country ; (*β*) the funds which are raised in answer to the appeal of individual Missionaries.

a The larger associations vary just in proportion to the personal influence of the presence of the bishop whose diocese is specially assisted. A bishop entrusted with the charge of a new diocese goes over England in the busy months which follow on his consecration ; he is received everywhere with enthusiasm, churches are freely placed at his disposal—for insatiable is the desire of our brethren to see bishops in their pulpits—and in due course he goes on his way comforted by the thought that he leaves behind him friends who will see that he is kept supplied with funds ; but his back is hardly turned before the zeal of his supporters cools, and he realises the truth of the adage, “ *Out of sight out of mind.*” Hence he has barely set his plans in motion before he has to return home and revive by his presence the flagging zeal of his friends. One bishop, whose special organization has been on a very large scale, has thus in an episcopate of twenty-one years been absent from his diocese for more than six years, or nearly one-third of his episcopate. His Special Fund has ranged from nearly 7,000*l.* in a year when he has been himself in England, to something like zero when he has been engaged at his proper work. Another bishop, who has covered England with a very well organized agency, has been absent from his diocese for a large proportion of his shorter episcopate ; he returned to his diocese last year after more than twelve months absence, and I see that the affairs of his association compel him to come to this country again at Christmas next. Very recently a West Indian bishop told me that he expected to have to spend every fifth year in England, unless he would see his work fail for lack of funds.

Surely we who lay great stress on the value of a bishop’s presence at the head of his clergy must deplore the cost at which such an organization is kept up, the cost not merely of £ *s. d.*, but of a dispirited clergy abroad, and a wearing away of the strength and energy of the bishop in the depressing work of begging and platform speaking, and an alienation of the episcopal income, which was not given to support a wandering deputation at home.

If any one cares to see what is the fate of a Special Fund which is not nursed by the frequent visits of the bishop to England, I commend to his consideration a letter recently addressed by the Bishop of Honolulu to the Chairman of his Special Committee. Few Missions have ever been started with more enthusiasm or had the benefit of more influential committees than that which was planted nearly twenty years ago in Hawaii. Certainly the present Bishop, whose patient

toil for the last nine years has been most exemplary, has done nothing which should cool this enthusiasm ; but, unfortunately for his finances, he has remained at his post, patiently gathering into the fold the decaying remnants of a race which is dwindling away by its inherent weakness and vice : but almost more rapid than the speed with which the Kanaka race is dwindling away has been the rate at which the sympathy of the supporters of the Mission which was to regenerate them, has died out, so that, as the Bishop shews, only two members of the very influential committee are on the list of subscribers ; the Special Fund which was to support the Bishop and his clergy is in the Bishop's debt to the amount of 1,000*l.*, and but for the aid of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel the Bishop declares that the whole Mission would long ago have been a fiasco.

It is the fate of all Special Funds sooner or later to fall back on the General Fund of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The Borneo Mission Fund collapsed in five years, and for the last thirty years has been entirely maintained by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel ; and if others have not wholly collapsed it is because the Society has come to the rescue, and in almost every case borne the chief part of the burden.

There are, of course, cases in which a special organization is desirable ; I mean when it is the outcome of the zeal of some influential community who have the ability to undertake independent work. Such an organization was the Universities Mission to Central Africa. The four learned bodies which undertook that noble venture of faith were quite capable of maintaining it ; but as a matter of fact the actual assistance given by Oxford and Cambridge (for Dublin and Durham early withdrew from it, although the latter has resumed its connection with it) is very insignificant, and at one time was almost nil ; and it is also a fact that at one period no member of either of these Universities was on the Mission Staff, and that the remarkable man now at the head of it is a graduate of London. The Home Organization is now admirably worked, but on the basis of an independent Missionary Society appealing in common with others to the whole Church ; and in 1879 out of a gross income of 5,753*l.* less than 700*l.* was contributed by Oxford and Cambridge. The recent effort of Cambridge at Delhi is in all respects a noble one, and its promoters shewed practical wisdom in allying themselves with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and strengthening by

the able representatives whom they have sent forth the old Mission of the Society at Delhi, rich with the traditions of the martyrs of the mutiny, and now full of immediate promise. As an Oxford man myself I regret that the Mission which that University is sending to Calcutta declined to be assisted by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and is now appealing outside the University, and is become, in fact, another Missionary claimant on the alms of the whole Church.

The clergy, especially those who have not informed themselves of the details of Missionary work, often prefer to bring before their people only some particular Mission to which all their efforts are limited. It is impossible, they say, to stir up interest in a Society, it is too large, too extended; but in one Mission it is easy to take interest. Might it not be urged, with equal truth, that the Communion of Saints is too vast an idea for us to comprehend, and that our own family or our own parish is a more adequate scope for our faculties and our sympathy? Let me remind these advocates of the maxim *πλέον ἡμῖσι πάντος* that the very Mission which is to them the centre and circumference of their sympathy would never exist but for the assistance which is given to it by the larger association in which they can take no interest; and that while they patronise this or that Diocese, generally because the prevailing theological tone of its clergy symbolises with their own views, they are setting before their people a very mutilated model, a very distorted picture of the vast work to which the whole Church is committed.

β The appeals which are made by individual Missionaries sometimes in newspapers, but more frequently in the pages of Missionary magazines, which depend for their very existence on such appeals, may generally be left unanswered. Such appeals never state what has been done; they consist of peremptory demands for immediate assistance, and assume (a very large assumption indeed) that readers are already acquainted with what has been and is being done by existing organizations in that particular Mission and for the particular claimant. I am told, on competent and indisputable authority, that only on this system of *suppressio veri* can such a periodical be conducted, and that the intelligence and sagacity of the readers may well be trusted to find out the whole truth of every case that comes before them. If they were invited to do so I should not complain, but they never are, and half or fractional truths are put before them as though they were the whole.

The best Missionaries are not generally the greatest adepts in the art of writing what may be called "*Special Correspondents' English.*" The temptation to write exaggerated appeals is one into which many a Missionary has fallen, and from which, when it has once proved successful, he rarely extricates himself. His letters are read not only by sympathizers in England, but by critics in the land which is the scene of his work, and the difference between the reality and the word-picture is readily detected, and does not add to the influence of the writer.

I am aware that it is often said that more money can be obtained by special appeals for particular works than for the cause in the abstract. No doubt this is true; more money can be obtained by the low and degrading artifices of a fancy fair, with its Wizards' Caves and its Lovers' Post Offices, than by the Offertory or by honest self-sacrifice, which looks for nothing in return but the reward of an acquitted conscience; but Mission work has not yet sunk so low as to make "*rem, quocunque modo rem*" its motto; and I will add that these funds are in some cases never audited, that no account of the details of their expenditure is given, that they are spent on no fixed principle, and therefore not economically, and are often applied to objects which Societies, with their greater experience and sense of responsibility to subscribers, would not assist.

Those who know the condition and needs of particular Missions and Missionaries are sometimes filled with indignation at the appeals which they see made, and the success which rewards them. Indiscriminating and mere fleeting sympathy is generated, and money is freely given to a Mission which perhaps is already adequately supported by a society in England, or which ought to be maintained by people on the spot. What Bishop Willis calls "Lion Stories" are good decoys, and the misfortune is that the almsgiving public thinks itself quite competent to decide on the excellence and merits of every claim which comes before them.

Thus a parish thinks it "so interesting" to maintain a native deacon who can live very well on 20*l.* per annum; but such a gift infringes a canon of all good Missionary procedure, which, looking to the future, demands that from the first every native pastor shall be maintained, partially at least, by his own people, as being the only way in which an indigenous ministry is possible; 20*l.* per annum to a Society which is concerned with work that may be called world-wide, is far beyond the capacity of the particular parish,

but 20*l.* for a black deacon, which shall at the same time retard for a generation the growth of a native Church, is readily given.

So in the colonies, a clergyman possessing a facile pen and a lively imagination finds it much easier to write a pictorial letter to a Missionary magazine in England than to press on his colonial congregation the duty of maintaining their own Church; the necessity for such appeals rarely exists, as home societies are able to nurse colonial dioceses and parishes until they can, or ought to be able to, stand alone. The people who are led away captive by a graphic appeal from a British colony never take the trouble to investigate the conditions of that colony: its age, the amount of assistance which it has received or is now receiving from England or from the State, its population, the excess of its exports over its imports, and many other things which are carefully considered by a Society before making its grants.

Therefore my counsel is to support Missions in the block—on principle—as unto the Lord, and not under the influence of sentimental appeals. A large gross total is not the greatest or highest good; the spirit which dictates the motive and the measure of our alms will make those gifts fruitful or unfruitful, precious offerings in God's sight, or silly satisfactions of our own weak sympathies.

3. And this touches on the question of Missionary publications. They are said to be dull. The indictment may often be true, but I think that as a rule they are only dull to those who have no antecedent interest in the matters of which they treat. I suppose that few men have written so much on Missionary topics as, anonymously or otherwise, I have myself written. Some things to which I have never subscribed my name have been noticed with commendation, and have been declared to have been useful, &c.; certainly they were free from all exaggerated sentimentalism; but I say that it will be impossible so to edit a Missionary magazine which is the organ of a Society, as that it shall compete with the irresponsible periodical which is not liable to be called to account by subscribers and members. As a rule the former will be more exact, will have better and fuller information, but will be less rhetorical; and my advice to persons who like in their Missionary reading to sup full of adventures and horrors, is to oppose to them a wholesome incredulity, and to think twice or even thrice before they open their cheque-books.

H. W. TUCKER.













