

# The Baptist Examiner

A nation-wide, independent paper, standing foursquare for the distinguishing doctrines of Baptists, and shunning not to declare all the counsel of God.

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

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## Missionary Motives

A Sermon Preached Before Old Bethel Association by Pastor Benj. Connaway, First Baptist Church, Providence, Kentucky.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature . . . . And they went forth, and preached, the Lord working with them"—Mark 16:15, 20.

The effectiveness and usefulness of a machine is not to be judged by its dimensions, nor by the number or complication of its parts, but by the efficiency of its motive power. If our churches are to carry out the gospel's order of world-wide evangelization, we must be sure that our mission work is scripturally motivated.

There are many reasons why our churches should put the doctrine and duty of missions first. We shall call your attention this morning some of the reasons why evangelization should always occupy the position of primacy in New Testament churches. And we believe every one who has the mind of Christ will desire the Berean spirit in examining the grounds of this supreme Baptist obligation. The Bible has no message for the worldly, unbelieving mind; but great learning is not the primary qualification for understanding the Word of God. They who desire to know and do God's will may have light. "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know the teaching" (John 7:17).

Usually there is a fascination and interest in the last words of great men. The last words of Jesus before his ascension were concerning missions. The spread of the gospel in the first century speaks eloquently of how seriously the early disciples received Jesus' words. Whether or not they stopped "to reason WHY," there was in them the urge of sound spiritual motives. Dr. Broadus reminds us that the missionary task of the first first Christians was an arduous labor of such magnitude that they could never have undertaken it without the most imperative motives and great assurance from their Lord.

The early Christians had not a single missionary motive that we do not have. We are to enter into all their labors, and, although they have passed on, we are in all respects fellow-workers with them. And we have an added motive. Missions should have for us a definite, concrete meaning; we have a missionary in Brazil to whom we have definitely pledged our support. We have promised to hold the rope while he goes down into the well.

### I. Missions and the Lord's Commandment.

You will observe that the first part of the text is in the form of a commandment. This fact reminds us that certain secondary motives are by no means reliable and effective under all conditions. Feeling, emotion, and impulse do enter into all Christian duties, but they cannot be relied upon as unfailing motives. Our feelings and emotions vary with our health, circumstances, weather, crop conditions, business conditions, and many other things. Bunyan's Mr. Byends said: "We are always most zealous when Religion goes in his golden slippers . . . when the sun shines and the people applaud." A rich man walking in his golden slippers, and basking in the sunshine of

popular applause might cast a great gift into the treasurer out of the exuberance of selfish elation and the Pharisee's pride. But there is not promise that the true follower of the Lord Jesus will always have golden slippers, a cloudless sky, and applause. We may be "pressed on every side." Discouragement and weariness are sometimes our lot. There are circumstances that chill our emotions, quench the fires of enthusiasm, and even becloud our faith. Then we are shup up to one motive: Lord, "AT THY WORD, I will let down the net."

Impulses that are normal to the Christian heart, and which serve as powerful and legitimate spiritual motives, are sometimes choked and weakened by the growth of thorns that infest our lives. How easily weeds and thorns choke our spiritual impulses so that they dry up and "bring no fruit to perfection." For Baptist churches, at least, there is one final principle that leaves us no choice of whether we will go or not. It is the principle of obedience. "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things I command you." A remark attributed, I believe, to Wellington illustrates the case. When some one objected to the attempt to evangelize India on account of its vastness, its deeply rooted religions and philosophies, and racial prejudices, the great soldier replied: "What are your marching orders? Are you not commanded to go?" Our marching orders are: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." People do not like commandments, but what appeal is there more reasonable or final than the command of Him who has all power in heaven and in earth. And does love of God and an obedient heart require more than this: "The Master saith unto thee!"

### II. Missions and the First Christian Impulses.

We believe the early Christians were led by impulses that were spontaneous and normal in the new Christian experience. We read of no modern mission boards, commissions or ecclesiastical groups making programs, scattering mission literature and bringing all kinds of pressure to bear upon the Churches. There was Jesus' command, as we have seen, but at this time the disciples did not need to depend upon that as the main basis of the missionary enterprise. The command coincided easily and naturally with the inclination and impulses of these first Christians. Their reason was, "we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Without the necessity of command they said: "We speak that which we know, and bear witness of that which we have seen." McLaren has well said if there were no commandment, there should still be the inevitable urge of an inner impulse to propagate the gospel.

The church at Ephesus was solemnly warned to return to its "first love." That departure must have included a chilled missionary zeal which no longer delighted in witnessing to Christ and his salvation. Who among us does not sometimes with shame and humiliation contrast our first days with the Lord as personal Savior with the latter days that were too