

Bible Missions

THE PURPOSE, MEANS, AND METHODS OF MISSION WORK

A. T. Powers

Definition Of Terms Used

One of the first things for any orderly discussion is for perfect understanding of terms used. \When we begin to study mission work from a Biblical standpoint, we need to understand just what it is we are speaking of. First, we are not studying the plans of man, fanciful though they may be; neither are we studying about some "Utopian" fancy that seems to the world to be ideal, but we are studying about what the Holy Bible teaches about the work that some one was commnaded by Christ to do. By Bible missions, we mean the state of being sent, with certain powers, to do some special service. Jesus, th Supreme Ruler or Authority in heaven and on earth, gave a task to some one, His church, and told her to go "into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them," etc., Matt. 28:19f. The specific service was, and is, the evangelization of the entire world II is command was to "occupy till I come." Luke 19 :13.

This task was given to the church and to her only. No one else in all the ages since has received or had such authority. He did not give the church authority to delegate or redelegate His authority to any one else. It is hers, hers only, and to Him she must answer for her stewardship. The very purpose underlying all this was to make disciples. It is to carry the blessed message of salvation to "every creature." Other organizations may have many good and laudable traits, they may be composed of high class ladies and gentleman, they may do a great deal of good in the world, but the task of evangelizing the world belongs to the "blood-bought church of the hying God." This,, in essence, is the very foundation or purpose of Missions.

By means, we mean the method to be used. Webster de114fines it this way, "as an instrumentality or agency." I think that, in its broader sense, we might also say, "The methods or ways in which this agency is wielded is the means of Missions." God told His church to go, He also safeguarded her future by giving some laws, commandments, etc., that were to be guides or landmarks along the way. These rules and commandments are not accidental, but they were given for the specific purpose of safeguarding and keeping in line with the will and wishes of Him for His church.

The methods to be used have been considered very quaint, outmoded and impractical by most of the human race. The simple story of salvation on the merits of the "finished work of Christ," was the method given to the church. Men have tried to embellish it, make it fit the whims and suit the fancies of men, but all this was and is without Divine Authority.

THE TASK OF MISSIONS

Jesus had a very small church. At the greatest, most fanciful imagination, there were no more than 500. More than likely the number was far less than that. To this little group, He gave the greatest, most stupendous task in all ages, that has fallen to man. Not only were they a small group numerically, but they were very poor. Not only were they very poor, but they were actually ignorant and unlearned. Yet, to them He said: "Make disciples of all nations." They were given the six continents and the islands of the sea. When we stop and think how many millions were to be evangelized it staggers our minds. Yet, that is the very thing, the very heart of the commission. They were commanded to go, to evangelize, to make disciples; it was to all nations On earth. It may be that you can think of a greater task, **but** I think not. We have marveled long and loud that Abram 'staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief: but was st r oig in faith, giving glory to God." Porn. 1:2U. Yet I say to you that Abraham had no occasioul to huav greater faith than this early church. This, then, is the task of missions.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF MISSIONS

This stupendous task was given to the little group of people that Jesus lovingly and endearingly referred to as “My Church.” To her He said, in effect, “be my administrator.” I mean by that, she was given authority to execute and put into effect or carry out the will of Christ in the evangelization of the world. No one else has authority to act in the carrying out of His will, save His church. This is amply shown and borne out by the facts of the scriptures. The church at Antioch was told to “separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” Thus, the Holy Spirit initiated the work of sending missionaries, but the church executed the will of Christ in sending them. Jesus commanded the church to “go into all the world and make disciples of all nations” Matt. 28 :19, but He did not tell her to use her own judgment, to listen to wise men, or in any other way to be led astray of His Divine will as is revealed in the Bible. This is the point that so many men and religious groups of the world have overlooked—sometimes it looks like purposely so. Jesus gave us examples and commands for every thing else, why not in the carrying out of His Divine will in the evangelization of the world. Is this not a very reasonable and logical assumption. I said He gave us commands and examples for every thing else, here are some of them: The receiving of members into the church, Acts 10:47 and Romans 14:1: the observance of the Lord’s Supper, Mat. 26 26-29 I Cor. 11 23-30 ; the method of baptism. Matt. 29 :19, R iii - (:4 and many others ; the calling or selection of a pastor has a scripture example, notably Acts 2() 28 the carrying on of services for Him, I Cor. 14 h). If Jesus gave instructions for these and for many others I have in mind to be named, why should it be considered a strange thing that He gave instructions about the evangelization of the world by His chosen and “blood-bought Church?”

A close study of the church questions us will if we are willing to accept the Bible as our standard, our norm, settle beyond any peradventure of doubt that the church of Christ is an absolute sovereign body and is subject to, and only to, the laws of Christ as are found in the Bible. Many so-called religious groups have never seen this. A church is COMPLETELY SOVEREIGN AND CAN HAVE NO RESTRAINT, Save THE BIBLE TEACHINGS, THROWN AROUND HER OR HAMPER HER IN ANY WAY. She may work with other

116

churches or she may work independent of all other churches. She may start with other churches and be at perfect LIBERTY TO TURN BACK IF SHE CHOOSES OR IF AND WHEN SHE THINKS OTHERS ARE GOING “BEYOND THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN,” or likewise when she is convinced that they are stopping short of “that which is written.” No one this side of heaven has any right to force or try to force her to do or not to do anything. That is true from the calling of a pastor, observing the Lord’s Supper, carrying on regular services or doing mission work or of anything else that pertains to the church and her work on earth. She is subject to His laws and to no other force on earth. Let us see if that cannot be sustained by the scriptures: I have already given where the church at Antioch was told to send Barnabas and Saul as missionaries. Acts 13:1-3. They did not ask any other group, church, but they sent under the (broad) direction and supervision of the Holy Spirit. The church at Corinth allowed others to come in and take collections and have things ready for Paul when he was ready, II Cor. 10:5. They were also to elect some one to carry their offering to Jerusalem, I Cor. 16 :3. (You would have a hard time proving that those SO elected were members of this church). It was a sovereign church and no restraint could be thrown about it. Christ must be the church answer; He is her head and law giver. She is not and can be subject to no other power.

THE DIFFICULTY OF MISSIONS

There have always been difficulties, hardships, and the like in the way of carrying out the expressed will of Christ on earth. That has also been so true in everything else on earth that has been worthwhile or of any account to the world and to humanity. The progress of the world in science, education, commerce, and in every other phase has had its difficulties. Many times, leaders in every field have been stalemated. This has been true in the military field and the great generals of the world have had their difficulties. Let us not think it strange then if we run into difficulties in following the scripture in the evangelization of the world. We should remember that we will run into many more difficulties than in following ANY OTHER SCHEME OR PLAN.

Let us consider some of the difficulties that we face. There is the difficulty of man power shortage. More missionaries are needed. There are such a few for such a task, it seems impossible for them to accomplish anything. Paul had the same difficulties. He never had many helpers and at one time he cried out: “only Luke is with me.” He did not consider that a good reason for quitting or going back. God blessed this difficulty to the spiritual good of Paul and has used it in all centuries to inspire men to launch out and trust in Christ.

Then there is the difficulty of finances. True Baptists have always been confronted with this one. People have thought that they must have an ultra or extra scriptural plan of raising money, that they might be enabled to adequately pay their mission workers. It is a difficulty. We see some of our best church workers, some of our otherwise most consecrated church members carelessly, heartlessly and even listlessly give of their dimes when we know they could give dollars, or hundreds of dollars. Sometimes they do not even give the dimes. Yet the lethargy and indifference of many has often times been the means of consecration and blessing to others. Paul had to work with his hands on occasions, but he endeared himself to all generations and proved himself a lover of his Lord by so doing. The very difficulty of money, the lack of it, in our own ranks at this moment, is driving many of our best folk to greater consecration and greater blessings because they are able to "freely give."

We have the difficulty of unpopularity. It has never been popular to preach the simple story of "salvation by grace." It never will be so. The true church of our Lord has ever been the "sect everywhere spoken against." Here is another difficulty, and that is the difficulty of inconsistencies and of immorality of the part of some missionaries and of some who profess a hope in Christ. This is true at home and on foreign fields. This is a real problem, but it is one with which we are familiar at home. It is not new to us. It is to be deplored that those whom God calls, or who say He has called them, are unfaithful, but it only drives us to the conclusion, more steadfastly so, that we cannot put our trust in men, it matters not where or who those men may be. Our trust must be in Christ and stepping over the unfaithful ones, we must pursue our course with a firm trust in Him and A DESIRE TO, for ourselves, win His loving favor. In spite of all hardships, difficulties or whatever else there may be, the responsibility of carrying the pure Gospel of Christ to the entire world rests on the shoulders of the true church—true churches—of Jesus Christ. Others may carry it, carry a part of it, God may bless them in so doing, but to us, my brethren, He has given the task of carrying it to all the world.

THE SERIOUSNESS OF MISSIONS

If anything ever did sober our thoughts, make us humble and God-fearing and bring us in the very dust of humility, it is the sobering thought of the seriousness of our responsibility. We readily concede that the entire human race is divided into two main divisions, saved and unsaved; we must also admit that the only way of salvation is in and through faith in Christ as a savior. We also are aware that men can only be saved when they are told or taught the story of love as is found in the gospel. We recognize the truthfulness of the statement that "there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12. We know that that is true and neither is salvation in any other. With the Apostle Peter we can say, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou has the words of eternal life." John 6:68. It was so serious to the Apostle Paul that he said: "For I am determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." I Cor. 2:2. He recognized Jesus as the one sure foundation and his responsibility was to tell men about Him, seek to have them believe in Him. "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Rom. 1:16. The only means of saving a soul from destruction in hell is to have the gospel preached unto him. Of course, he must accept, believe in Christ, that goes without saying any more, but the gospel must be preached to him. We are the custodians of the gospel. Our commands, marching orders, direct from Christ, are to make disciples, evangelize, carry the gospel to him and tell him of the "great salvation." Does that bring soberness to you? Does that get your thinking in the serious vein? Does that bring you face to face with the enormous task that is ours? A little reflection right here will get our hands in our pocket books. A little such reflection by the members of your church will put them out after the lost, they will go from here to the uttermost parts of the earth, if they can be mad to see the gravity and seriousness of the situation. The reason so many individuals and churches have never become missionary in word, deed and practice is that they have never been taught to consider the seriousness and hugeness of the task that is ours. A little, crippled girl I heard of sold a very cherished possession, and keepsake from her mother who had passed on, in order to help some one carry the gospel story. Many people would tear some idols and cherished possessions from their bosoms and give to the preaching of the gospel, to Bible missions, if they could realize their responsibility and if they could get enough of the world and the flesh out of their lives to trust and love Him as they should. Get this picture, get it indelibly stamped in and on your mind, when the last song is sung, when the last prayer is prayed and the last sermon has been preached, when all is over and we stand in the presence of the Christ of the Bible, when the reward is given by Him for faithfulness, we are going to be very happy if we have earnestly and honestly tried to fulfill his will and wishes in doing real, honest, Bible, mission work,

I think that is a fair and accurate picture of Bible mission work. God sent His Son to suffer and die for sinners

humanity. Jesus came and suffered and died and rose triumphant over death, hell and the grave. He ascended to be with the Father after He had finished His work and left His church to carry on. The Holy Spirit came as a director and leader to the people of God, and of the blood-bought church. He has protected and lead his church in all the ages that are past. He calls workmen into the service. He initiates the local church. The church under His direction sends forth to different fields. As a sovereign body, she can send as many and to where she pleases. She is under no law but the law of Christ—to Him she must answer as to whether she did His will. Other churches may help, should they choose, this church support this or these men. Each church and each individual member of the church is duty bound under Christ, to help support those called of God and sent by His church, and to be a personal

120

evangelist himself. There we have Bible mission work and our responsibility to our God.

THE Joy AND THE REWARD OF MISSION WORK

A task well done is always a reward and a joy. Especially is this true if the task is a worthy one. Certainly the task of carrying the gospel to all nations is a worthy cause. The Apostle Paul could look over two continents and see the work he had done for the glory of God. There were many churches, hundreds of individuals saved. The course and destiny of men and nations had been changed because of his faithfulness to His calling. True he had been persecuted, he had suffered, but hear him say; “Are they Hebrews, So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I. Are they the ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeying, often, in peril of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own Country—men, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and Painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak, who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities.” II Cor. 11:22-30. Does this sound like there is a **liote** of complaining to you, I think not? Turn and read again with me:

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day: and not me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” II Tim. 4:6-8. I think that the greatest *joy* that Christ will ever know is when He presents, “faultless before the presence of His glory with **exceeding joy**,” Jude 24, all those who have been saved in time.

Likewise, the greatest joy that will ever come to the “blood bought church,” and to the faithful Christian, will be when the rewards for faithfulness are handed out by Him who has the rewards to give. All the rebuffs, scolding, hardships and heartaches will then be forgotten and there will be supreme joy in knowing that we have gone and done the things that our Lord commanded us to do. **THE IMPORTANT THING FOR US TO CONSIDER IS, WILL I HAVE THE JOY OF KNOWING THEN THAT I DID MY BEST?**

THE COMPLETED TASK

All things must come to an end sometime. Whether it is in the scientific, educational, commercial, financial world or wherever it is, it must sometime end. The waters descended forty days and nights, then the flood was over. The drought lasted for seven years and then the rains returned. All things must come to an end. The different dispensations of God have all come to, or are rapidly coming to, a close. This order cannot last forever, thank God. The poor, weak, struggling church of God has been ridiculed, mocked, scorned and persecuted for these centuries, but one day this order will be over. Death may get some of us, but the ending of time will come to all of us. Our struggles and strife will then be over. Our Lord is coming without sin unto salvation and He will then take us home to be with Him and enjoy His glory throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. When that hour comes, it will mean something to be a member of His church and to be found faithful in doing all the things that He commanded us to do. The strife will end, the battle will be over and the church, “blood-bought,” persecuted though she may be, will

have finished the task the Master gave her to do. I plead with you to honor her, support her with your means, your time and labor, and if necessary, with your blood, AT ALL COSTS BE FAITHFUL TO HER. AMEN.

Restricted Communion

J. W. Kesner, Sr.

OUTLINE

Introduction

I. Restricted Communion Proven By The Scriptures

1. Restricted to one place, in the church
2. Restricted to the regenerate
3. Restricted to those Scripturally baptized
4. Restricted to an orderly walk
5. Restricted to a united church in fellowship—one faith
6. Restricted to church discipline
7. Restricted communion restricts unclean lives
8. Restricted to the right purpose
9. Restricted as to the right motive
10. Restricted to self examination

II. Concessions Of Major Denominations To Baptist Views Of Communion

1. "Neander", quoted by Wailer, Open. Corn., p. 20.
2. Dr. Dwight, a congregationalist.
3. Dr. William Wail, of the Church of England.
4. Cheetham, Episcopalian, Professor of Pastoral Theology in King's College, London.
5. The Episcopal Record.
 6. Wailer, on Open Corn., p. 86. Dr. Griffin, Congregational.
7. Wailer again on Open Com. in Hue Unit in re Christian Advocate.
8. Wailer again: The Pastor Recorder, Congregationalist,
9. Dr. Dodridge, Presbyterian.
10. John Wesley's sermons, Vol. 4, p. 153.
11. John Wesley practicing close communion.
12. Jones of England quoting Alexander Campbell.