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METHODS OF MISSION WORK.

LETTER VI.

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ORGANIZATION OF STATIONS PRESENT AND PROSPECTIVE.

THE question, "What is the best mode of organization for native converts in new stations," scarcely enters the mind on one's first arrival in China. Most of us are satisfied that the mode adopted by that branch of the Church with which we are connected is the best; that it is if not the one specially enjoined by Scripture authority, at least the one most in harmony with Scripture teachings, and fully sanctioned by practical experience. Moreover it is the one with the working of which we are individually most familiar and into the practice of which we naturally and unquestioningly fall. If we are unable to adopt it at once, it is a matter of regret, and we are anxious to put it into operation as soon as possible.

When the missionary associated with co-laborers of different nationalities and Church connections looks at the question of organization from the stand-point of mission work on heathen ground, it assumes new aspects; and a few years experience and observation will probably effect a considerable modification of views. He soon finds that missionaries of different denominations ignore in a measure for the time being their several systems, and in the first stage of the work agree in the main in a new plan which all have adopted under the force of circumstances. He sees companies of Christians placed under the care of unofficial religious teachers, and native evangelists preaching in unevangelized districts; while there are as yet no organized Churches and perhaps no Bishops, Elders, or Deacons, nor even candidates for the ministry;—only

missionaries, and native preachers having the names of "helpers," "Native assistants," "Colporteurs," "Bible agents," or "Evangelists." In places where stations have reached a more advanced stage of development, requiring some sort of organization, missionaries are sometimes led, by personal proclivities and local circumstances, to the adoption of methods quite aside from their previous antecedents. Not long since in a conference at Chefoo of missionaries from different parts of China, it was discovered that an Independent was carrying on his work on Presbyterian principles, "because they suited best in his field;" in the methods of another Independent from a different province the prelatical element predominated; while a Presbyterian was found working on a plan which had very little of Presbyterianism in it, but a singular blending of Methodism, Independency and Prelacy.

What lesson are we to learn from these facts? Is it not this, that practical experience seems to point to the conclusion that present forms of Church organization in the West are not to be, at least without some modification, our guides in the founding of infant Churches in a heathen land. If it be asked, what then is to be our guide? I answer the teachings of the New Testament. If it be further asked, are we to infer then that all the forms of Church organization in the West are at variance with Scripture teaching? I answer, by no means. A plan organization in England or America may be very different from one adopted in China, and both though different may be equally Scriptural; and one of them may be suited to the home Church and one to a mission station, just because they are different.

The all important question is what do the Scriptures teach respecting Church organization? Do they lay down a system with fixed and unvarying rules and usages to be observed at all times and under all circumstances; or a system based on general principles purposely flexible, and readily adapting itself, under the guidance of God's Spirit and providence and common sense, to all the conditions in which the Church can be placed?

I believe the latter is the true supposition. The same conclusion might be inferred from the fact that, while the doctrines of Christianity which are obviously and by common consent regarded as fundamental and essential are taught in the Scriptures specifically, elaborately, and repeatedly, there is no portion of Scripture where a complete and detailed system of Church government is presented or referred to. It may be said and very truly, that God might reveal to us a complete, and authoritative system of Church government inferentially as well as explicitly. Had he done so

however, would there not have been a general agreement with regard to these teachings as there is with regard to Christian doctrine?

I believe that the distinctive principles which underlie the different systems of Church organization prevailing in the West are all Scriptural. The principle of the authority and responsibility of individual believers in matters relating to the conduct of the Church is a very prominent part of the teaching of the New Testament. The importance of appointing elders, or bishops, as authoritative leaders and rulers in the Church is taught no less clearly. The Scriptural sanction for the appointment, at least in the early history of the Church, of superintendents or overseers, having the charge and care of many associated Churches, with their elders and deacons is no less evident. The degree of prominence or proportionate use of these different principles or elements of Church organization may vary indefinitely according to the condition and requirements of the Church. This theory provides for constant change and modifications suited to the stage of the Church's development; the character of its members; and its conditions and surroundings.

If I mistake not, diversity and gradual progression in the application of these principles, is distinctly traceable in the New Testament. The Gospels and former part of the Acts of the Apostles indicate a very simple form of organization, or no pronounced form; and the latter part of the Acts, with the Epistles, shows a more complete system gradually developed from previously established germinal principles. Constant development and change in different directions mark the whole course of ecclesiastical history from the Apostolic period to the present time. How far these developments have been Scriptural, or in accordance with the leadings of God's Spirit, and promotive of the best interests of the Church, it does not fall within the province of these letters to enquire. May we not however raise the general question as to whether present forms of Church government are not characterized by the special development of one element, to the exclusion of others which should supplement and modify it; presenting abnormal and disproportionate growths, each Scriptural in its dominating idea, but unscriptural in its human narrowness?

Another question arises in this connection of great importance. In our present position of missionaries representing different branches of the Church, closely related to one another in a common work; our methods simple, and presenting many points of agreement; and our different systems of organization in a rudimental undeveloped state; should we not make use of our opportunity to avoid as far as possible in the future the divergences which impair

the unity of the Church at home; retaining and perpetuating a degree of uniformity and co-operation which in western lands seems impracticable? Is it not our duty to do this? Would it not be in accordance with the express teachings of our Saviour, and also the wishes of most of those whom we represent? Would it not have a decided influence for good on the home Churches?

On the supposition that present forms of Church organization are adapted to secure the best spiritual interests of the Church in the west, the presumption is that in certain respects they are for that reason not adapted to the wants of Mission Churches in China. What circumstances could differ more widely than those of Churches which are the development of centuries or a millenium of Christian culture and those just emerging from heathenism.

The question recurs what may we learn from the Scriptures with reference to the system of organization and supervision for the Church in China at the present time?

I.—*The extension of Christianity must depend mainly on the godly lives and voluntary activities of its members.* In early times, as a result of ordinary business and social intercourse, and the aggressive zeal of the early Christians, Christianity found its way to Cyprus and Syria and Cilicia and Egypt, and as far west as Rome. The disciples went everywhere preaching the word. A great advance had been made before the Apostle Paul was called from his home by Barnabas to assist and strengthen the disciples already gathered at Antioch. Wherever he went afterwards in his work of establishing Churches in new fields, he obtained from the believers gathered into the Church numerous voluntary helpers and co-adjutors both men and women.

I can find no authority in the Scriptures, either in specific teaching or Apostolic example, for the practice so common nowadays, of seeking out and employing paid agents as preachers. At the time when Paul commenced his public ministry, the Churches established in Syria and Cilicia might no doubt have furnished a large number of such persons if they had been wanted. It may be said that there were no missionary Boards at that time, and that the Church was too weak to undertake such an enterprise. This explanation however does not meet the case. Paul did not hesitate to call upon the Churches for contributions when they were needed. He evidently thought them able to give; and that it was their privilege and an advantage to themselves to give; and they did contribute freely when they were asked to do so.

The evils resulting from employing new converts as paid agents for preaching the gospel have been referred to in previous letters

What we wish to emphasize here is that such a course is without precedent in the Bible. The members of the early Church were all witness bearers. Such we must teach our Church members to be; and without such an agency *as our main dependence*, we have little reason to expect the gospel to prevail in China.

II.—*Elders must be "ordained in every city."* This duty is enforced in Scripture both by precept and example. Missionaries have not been backward in carrying out the injunction. It is possible that we have erred in the opposite direction. While elders should be ordained as soon as practicable, we should not forget that the qualifications of elders are minutely laid down in the Scriptures; and to choose and ordain men to this office without the requisite qualifications is in fact going contrary to, rather than obeying the Scriptures. If suitable elders are not to be found we should wait for them, however long a waiting may be required.

The Apostolic usage of ordaining elders soon after their reception into the Church, under circumstances very different from ours in China, is apt to mislead us. The work of the Apostles in heathen lands commenced for the most part in the synagogues of the Jews resident in those lands. Even in such places as Lystra, where there seems to have been no synagogue, there were Jewish families, and their influences had been felt by the native population. Among the first converts to Christianity were both Jews and Jewish proselytes, who for generations had been freed from the thralldom of idolatry and superstition. They were sincere worshippers of Jehovah; familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures, and waiting for the long promised Messiah. From such persons the first elders of the Christian Church were no doubt largely drawn. It is not strange that, as a rule, we in China have to wait for years before Christians of the same intelligence and stability of character can be had. Our experience in this matter in Shantung is worth relating.

Twenty years ago our mission in considering this subject reasoned on this wise:—We are Presbyterians, and our Churches should be organized from the first on Presbyterian principles. If we cannot get men for elders as well qualified as we should like, we must take the best men we can find, men who seem sincere and earnest Christians and who may develop in character and ability to fulfil the duties of elders, by having the duties and responsibilities of this office laid upon them. With these views and expectations several Churches were formally and constitutionally organized. It was found however in not a small proportion of cases that the elders did not, or could not, perform their official duties, and were an obstruction to any one else attempting to do so. They

were placed in a false position, injurious to themselves and the Churches of which they had the nominal charge. Some were hardly able to sustain the character of an ordinary church member, and others were in the course of a few years excommunicated. We then took action as a Presbytery, determining that elders should not be appointed unless their qualifications conformed in some good degree to those required in Scripture. Perhaps we are now in danger of going to the opposite extreme of backwardness.

In central Shantung no Church has been as yet organized with native elders, though some of them have had an existence, with from ten to twenty and more church members, for a period of seven or eight years. We are hoping very soon to ordain in some of these Churches. In the meantime the leaders are unofficially performing many of the duties which will fall into the hand of elders when appointed. The missionary or evangelists in charge transact all important business by consultation with the whole company of native Christians or their leaders. These Christians or leaders have only advisory power; the authority of deciding questions being vested solely in the missionary or evangelist. It is his aim to instruct and train leading Church members in the management of Church business, devolving it on them as they are able to undertake it; and fitting them as soon as possible for assuming the care of the Churches altogether. The evangelist keeps a record of these meetings, following in almost all particulars the ordinary form of session records, and this report is presented to the Presbytery for examination and revision. Many of our present leaders will in all probability, after they have been fully trained and tried, become our first elders. We have found in the experience of the past eight years much reason for thankfulness that we did not ordain elders at an earlier period.

III.—*Our mission Churches under the charge of elders are possessed of a Scriptural organization, without the addition of a paid pastor such as is found in most of our western Churches; and the appointing of such a pastor may prove injurious rather than advantageous.*

In enlarging on this point I will quote the language of Dr. Kellogg, Professor in the Theological Seminary at Allegheny, Penn., U.S.A. It has special weight as coming from one who is not only a highly esteemed theological teacher in our Church, but has been for years a missionary in India and has the advantage of large experience and observation of mission matters. The quotations are taken from an article in the Catholic Presbyterian, November, 1879, page 347. Dr. Kellogg says:—

“We fear there is reason to think that our missionaries have often been in too much haste to introduce the one-man pastorate of the European and American Churches; and that the growth of a Church bearing the true individual character of the particular people or race has been thereby seriously retarded. Fixed in the conviction that the primitive form of the Church government was Presbyterian, men have apparently jumped to the conclusion that therefore the present form of Presbyterianism is the primitive and Apostolic arrangement;—a point which we may venture to affirm, has not yet been established, nor is likely soon to be. Under this belief they have not only felt that if they established Churches, they must give them a Presbyterian form of government—in which they have been right—but that it must be that particular form of development of Presbyterian principles which has obtained among ourselves; wherein, as it seems to us, they have been as clearly wrong. For to take any one of our full grown ecclesiastical systems, and attempt to set it up bodily in our heathen fields, regardless of the widely differing conditions of the case is, we submit, a great mistake.....In too many instances, the course pursued has proved a mistake by its practical working.....

“But it is asked, with some confidence, what is the missionary to do? Shall we leave the young Church without a pastor? We ask in reply, where in the New Testament is there any intimation that the Apostles ordained pastors, in the modern sense of that word, over the Churches which they formed? We read over and again of their ordaining “elders” in every Church, and that, having done so, they left them and went elsewhere. Where is there the slightest hint that, at this early period, anyone from among these elders was singled out and appointed by Paul to a position like that of the modern minister or pastor of a Church, or that until such an officer was found, they did not dare to leave the Church?”

IV.—*The appointment of elders should not interfere with the voluntary activities of Church members.* Rather than encourage such an idea I should postpone the appointment.

We are taught that when our Saviour ascended on high, “He led captivity captive and gave gifts to men.” “And he gave some Apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.” Elsewhere we read of exhorters, workers of miracles, speakers of tongues, interpreters of tongues, helps and governments, and gifts of healing, and power to cast out devils. May we not confidently expect that the Divine Spirit will also confer special gifts upon the Church of the present, perhaps not the same as at first, but gifts specially suited to our times and

circumstances as those of the early Church were to theirs? And should not our methods of Church organization be such as to give the freest scope to the exercise of special gifts conferred?

It is to be observed that in the gifts conferred on the early Church, elders are not included. May it not be that this is because the "gifts" are special and variable, while the office of elder is fixed and permanent? It is not the function of the elder or overseer as such, to assume and undertake wholly or mainly the work of the Church, but to encourage, direct and assist all believers in the exercise and development of their special gifts as members of the one spiritual body of Christ; to set an example of working, for all to imitate; to be leaders and captains in Christ's army, ruling instructing and directing those who are under their authority and care.

I am disposed to think that the tendency to make working for the Church the duty of office bearers alone, rather than of all Christians, is introduced by missionaries from the Church at home. There is a prevailing disposition in western lands, noticeable in Protestant communions as well as in the Romish Church, to an all-prevailing spirit of ecclesiasticism. The Church is regarded as an organization under the direction and superintendence of its proper officer or officers, whose function it is, for, and on behalf of, its members and the ecclesiastical judicatory over them, to undertake and administer all Church matters. A Church member has a quieting sense of having discharged his duty, if he has contributed generously towards building a suitable Church edifice and the support of a preacher, is always found in his place as a worshiper, and attends to the prescribed rites and observances of the Church. This spirit, wherever it is found, tends to formalism both in the clergy and the laity. While it is far too prevalent, and it is to be feared growingly so, we may well rejoice that it is by no means universal. There are not a few Churches in which the main work of the pastor is to keep all under him at work. In such Churches you will find individual growth and Church growth, joy in God's service, and influences for good extending to the ends of the earth.

May we not regard the religious activities which have during the present generation sprung up outside the Church, such as those connected with the Moody and Sankey work, Young Men's Christian Associations, also new methods for reaching the masses recently adopted in the English Church, and even the "Salvation Army," as legitimate protests and healthy reactions against the tendency which we are reprobating. Let us not, by allowing our Church members to think that their chief duty is to contribute money to the support of their pastor and attend religious services, reproduce here in

China one of the most objectionable features of the Church at home.

V.—*Paid or salaried agents should only be added as the people want them and can support them.* Here we meet with the important Scriptural principles that teachers in the Church should look for help in temporal matters to those whom they teach. Many advantages spring from this relation of mutual dependence. As the pastor gives his time and energies to his people and watches for their souls as one who shall give account, his people naturally accept from him not only instruction but admonition and reproof. The fact that he depends upon them wholly or in part for his support gives to them a reasonable claim upon his services, and to him a strong motive for the diligent and conscientious performance of his duties. When the native pastor is supported by the Foreign Board the advantages growing out of this mutual dependence between pastor and people is lost, and a new, one-sided and unnatural relation is introduced, of people and pastor depending on foreign aid, which works evil rather than good.

The experience of the London Mission in Amoy is very helpful in this connection. In the year 1868 a debt of \$100,000 made it necessary for the foreign society to retrench, and the native churches were forced (with great difficulty however, and by degrees) to support their own pastors. That financial crisis is now I believe looked back to as a providential blessing. It developed the strength, independence and self respect of the native Christians, and was the beginning of a new era of progress. Is it not probable that there are other stations and other departments of mission work, from which the withdrawal of foreign funds would prove in the end a blessing rather than a misfortune?

It does not follow from this principle of mutual dependence that the native pastor must necessarily receive a *regular salary and full support* from those to whom he ministers. The wisdom of the London Mission in insisting that they should, in the case above referred to, may be fairly questioned. In the early history of a station it may not be either necessary or desirable for the preacher, or pastor to depend entirely on his flock for support, or to devote his whole time to their spiritual care and oversight. In the early history of the United States, and at present in the new settlements, the minister spent and still spends no inconsiderable portion of his time in secular labor for the maintenance of himself and family. Existing circumstances both at home and on the mission field may make it desirable for the good of the Church and usefulness of the pastor that he should take the same course. The relation of mutual

dependence and responsibility between the teacher and the taught may be fully expressed and the advantages arising from that relation secured, by different degrees of help according to the needs of the minister and the ability of his people.

The evils connected with the appointment and support of native pastors by foreign societies are such as to demand further consideration. The same desire to stimulate and advance the work, prompts the employment of paid evangelists in opening new fields, and paid preachers afterwards. The effect in both cases is I believe in the end the opposite of that intended. In the former case the injury to the cause develops earlier; in the latter it is entailed on future workers, and goes down to successive generations. Here again I cannot do better than to quote further the language of Dr. Kellogg. In speaking of the importance of not employing and paying native pastors from the funds of foreign Boards he says;—

“This plan” (i.e. that of organizing Churches without pastors in the modern sense of that term) “would also meet the vexations, and,—as it has proved in some missions that we could name,—the hitherto insoluble problem of the support of a native pastor. The pecuniary question has been one of the main difficulties, thus far, in the establishment of independent churches in our foreign mission-fields. It is plain that if a man be set apart to give his whole time to the pastoral care of a Church, he is rightfully entitled to a full support. But where ever is this to be raised? Most of these young churches in India, China and Africa are very poor. Fix the stipend as low as we will, they are not able to pay it. Shall the Church in America or Europe supplement their contributions? This is often done, and to the inexperienced might seem a very simple and excellent solution of the difficulty; but, in fact, with this arrangement, difficulties only multiply. For example, what shall be the salary? If, as has often been done, it is fixed at a point much higher than the average income of the people, this works great mischief. It elevates the pastor unduly above the average condition of the people of his church. It degrades the ministry, by making the pastorate an object of ambition to covetous and unworthy men. It makes the church, in many cases, despair, from the first, of reaching the position of self-support. A moderate salary they might in time hope to be able to pay of themselves,—a high salary they, with good reason, look upon as unattainable. We affirm without fear of contradiction, that no one thing has more effectively hindered the development of independent, self-sustaining native Churches in many foreign fields, than the high salaries which, with

mistaken wisdom, are paid to many of the native pastors and helpers from the treasuries of the home Churches. Shall we then give a low salary? We shall not thereby escape serious difficulty, Men educated, even as pastors commonly are in heathen fields, feel that they are justly entitled to more; and when they hear of the hundred thousands which the Churches at home contribute for the support of the Gospel, and which are supposed to be at the disposal of the missionary, they will not, and do not, generally take kindly to the refusal to pay at a high figure. In this way sad alienations often occur between the foreign missionary and his native helpers. In some parts of Northern India, in particular, this unhappy state of things is quite well known, and formed the subject of earnest discussion at the Lahore and Allahabad conferences. [The Presbyterian Board has met with precisely the same difficulty in Persia.] It appears to the writer that the root of all this trouble lies in the direction indicated. Have we not been trying to establish a form of Church government and organization, which, however well adapted to us, and however Scriptural in principle, is in advance of the position of the majority of our foreign mission Churches? And is not this the real significance of these trying experiences in the matter of the native pastorate? On the Apostolic plan of Church organization there would evidently be no room for trouble of this sort. Here and there, indeed, upon our mission fields, there may be a native Church which, in wealth, intelligence and members is ready for the one-man pastorate; but we believe that, for the great majority of Churches, which are weak and poor, the original Presbyterian system of rulership and instruction by a plural eldership is the one form which is adapted to their need. The other will no doubt come in due time, but we act most unwisely in attempting to force it prematurely."

It may be urged as a further objection against the early appointment of native pastors over each Church, that the assumption of such a burden by a weak station while ill able to bear it, renders it impossible for it to do what it ought, and otherwise could and would do, for others; and induces in its members a fixed habit of planning and laboring only for themselves. The sin of selfishness belongs to Churches as well as individuals, and it always bears bitter fruit. We should guard against it from the first, teaching young converts that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth;" that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," and "that those who water others shall be watered themselves." The first contributions of the early Christians which we read of in the New Testament were for others and not themselves.

VI.—*Some results of our experience in Shantung.* Theories are very apt to mislead us : our safest guide is practical experience. Though our work in Shantung is still in its infancy it will throw light on some questions of great importance.

1. It has been proved that the extension of country work and the establishment of new stations is practicable without paid preachers. The more than sixty stations under my care have been commenced within eight years almost exclusively through the voluntary efforts of unpaid Church members. My helpers, who have never been at any one time more than four, have only followed up, fostered, and directed, the work begun by unpaid Christians.

2. *These stations do not now need pecuniary aid from foreigners, and such aid would in my opinion do more harm than good.* The leaders in charge under the superintendence of the helpers are I think caring for the stations as well as they could be cared for under the circumstances. If the plan should be adopted of providing paid preachers for each station, they would of necessity have to be chosen from the leaders, as there is not a sufficient supply of such men elsewhere. Paying them for their work would not increase their influence, but rather diminish it, and would no doubt excite envy and dissatisfaction among the unemployed. Besides, the characters of these leaders are not sufficiently tested to warrant their being used in that way. The natives would perhaps be unwilling to make such a selection. If it should be attempted they would probably divide into parties influenced by personal motives, and the result would be great harm to the leaders, and to the Church. Any change at present would in my opinion be premature and injurious and we can only wait for future developments and Divine guidance.

3. These stations are not only able to provide for their own wants with the superintendence which is given them, but could and ought to do much for the propagation of the Gospel in the regions beyond. These sixty stations might easily contribute five hundred dollars a year. The amount formerly contributed by them for idolatrous purposes was probably double that amount ; and if each Church member should give one tenth of his or her income, the yearly contribution for benevolent objects would not be less than two thousand dollars a year. As it is they do not contribute one hundred and fifty dollars for benevolent purposes, aside from the necessary expenses of keeping up their own chapels. These facts show a manifest failure in duty on the part both of the foreign missionary and the converts. The causes of this failure are various. First and foremost no doubt is the want of a cultivated habit of systematic giving.

Another reason is the failure to set before the native Christians suitable objects to which they should contribute. Here perhaps the principal fault of the missionary lies. Having no pressing need for money in the conduct of these stations, and there being great danger to the natives in hoarding and manipulating money kept for future use, it was feared that an objectless contribution of money might only be a means of temptation and do harm. Last autumn the Christians in one of the *hien* occupied by my stations, subscribed about sixty dollars for employing a helper to devote his whole time specially to that *hien*, and would I think, have paid it cheerfully if the right man could have been found; but neither they nor I could obtain a man whose gifts and qualifications, as compared to those already in charge, were such as to make him worth having.

During the last few years I have urged the stations to contribute to the support of the helpers, as the most natural and available object which could be presented to them. They have done so to some extent; but the plan has not worked well. They have very naturally regarded the helpers as my men and not theirs, since they are chosen and directed by me in the carrying out of my plans. Not only have they shown this disinclination to contribute, but the helpers also are averse to receiving aid from them. I have been disposed to press the point against them, but during the past year have come to the conclusion that the instincts of the natives are right, and that my plan has been unnatural and impracticable. Here again we are led back by experience to the teaching of Scripture; as the Apostle Paul provided not only for his own wants but also for those who were with him, and appeared to the Churches to acknowledge the fact that none whom he had sent to them had received pay from them.

Rev. J. H. Laughlin is now assisting me in my work, and will, I trust, soon take entire charge of it. We are this autumn (1885) endeavoring to inaugurate the following plan, from which we hope for good results. The Christians comprised within the bounds of each district or portion of each district, are to choose for themselves two men to go out as their representatives, and supported by them, to work for the evangelization of new districts. No change is to be made for the present in the relations and ordinary occupations of the men so used. They are to be away from their homes two months in the autumn and two in the spring, the time when both they and the people generally are at leisure, and the weather is most favorable for travelling; and when absent are not to receive a salary but only a sum to cover travelling expenses. We hope that in this way aggressive zeal and a habit of giving will be

developed ; that much may be accomplished in the way of evangelistic work ; that the reflex influence on the stations may be helpful ; and that from the persons selected year by year, men may be found who, after the necessary testing and sifting, may be advanced to more important and responsible positions in the future.

These letters so far presuppose a state of things in which there are native Christians to be organized into stations. We will in the next letter consider questions relating to work in new fields—where there are neither stations nor enquirers.



WHAT OUGHT TO BE THE POLICY OF MISSIONARIES IN REGARD TO THE ORDINATION OF NATIVE PASTORS.

BY REV. H. D. PORTER, M.D.

IF we look upon it in its true significance this theme has direct relation with the development of the Kingdom of God among men. The apostle Paul gives us the key note to all questions relating to that Kingdom. He shows at the same time how all seemingly insignificant themes assume a certain breadth and scope, are at once dignified and ennobled when viewed from the focus of that Kingdom. For he says "Even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." The question before us then is no simple and trite one, it has relation to a purpose so great and far reaching that Christ himself was guided by it, out of which sprang the passion and the victory. The purpose was to present to himself a glorious Church, an organized body of believers, so permeated by the spirit of grace as to be pure, peaceable, heavenly, that it should be holy and without blemish. As the Church is the embodiment of the Kingdom of God on the earth, so whatever concerns the right growth of the Church, its accumulation of strength and beauty, of spiritual energy and efficacy, claims our deepest and constant thought and study. We are so frequently using the phrase "The Kingdom of God," that we often lose the depth and fullness of its meaning. A recent writer* makes a very just remark when he says:—"It is hardly a question if large numbers of the Church are not quite in ignorance of the breadth of the work which that marvelous phrase—the Kingdom of God—includes, and intimates to be far beyond the petty idea most of us have of it."

* *Audover Review*, January, 1885, p. 44.