

PASTORAL LETTER.

THE following letter was written to the members of Clarendon St. Church on the first of the New Year this last January. As it is so characteristic of the man, and opens up the intimate relation existing between himself and his church, that it is here reproduced in full. Would it not be a profitable thing for pastors to appeal to their people's hearts in the same frank and loving way?

DEAR BRETHREN:— In the name of the Lord I greet you, wishing you a blessed New Year, and praying that all grace may abound toward you, and that you may be "enriched in everything unto all bountifulness."

Rom. 1:8 First of all, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, for your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now."

Twenty-five years have passed since I entered upon my pastorate among you. What years of harmony, of brotherly love, of mutual burden-bearing co-operation they have been! And to the praise of God the fruit of these years of labor and prayer and fellowship are now abundantly manifest.

The little flock of a little over three hundred, at the beginning, now numbers about eleven hundred.

By the habit of systematic and special giving, which has grown up amongst us, our beneficence has so multiplied that the last year the church gave more than *twelve thousand dollars* to the cause of foreign missions alone, with proportionate gifts to the other principal objects of benevolence.

Such has been the growing interest amongst us in the furtherance of the Gospel that we have more than half a score of our members who are now devoting themselves entirely to evangelistic work at home; and ten who are laboring as missionaries on the foreign field.

A devoted band of our young people

are going out Sunday after Sunday to preach the Gospel to non-churchgoers at the wharves and at the car-stables. Others of our number are doing a most self-denying work among the Jews and among the Chinese.

In addition to the faithful labor of the pastor's assistant, the young men and young women of the Missionary Training School are carrying on a most efficient and extended work in district visitation, holding neighborhood meetings, distributing tracts, etc., so that by this house-to-house visitation hundreds of non-churchgoers are reached, labored with, and prayed with every week. Never in its history has the church been engaged in such an extensive and aggressive work; never has it reached so many homes weekly with the invitations and consolations of the Gospel. So that without exaggeration, I may apply to it the words of Paul to the Thessalonians: "From you sounded out the word of the Lord, so that in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad."

Allow me to express to you my sincere gratitude for your self-denying service in all these directions.

It is my most earnest prayer and my most constant solicitude that the church may realize its opportunity and may fulfil to the uttermost the demands of its high calling, knowing that, whether measured by the scale of human life or by the years of the present dispensation, "the time is short."

Let me therefore charge and exhort every one of you upon the following points:—

1. Be faithful in your daily prayer, both in the closet and at the family altar. If with any of you this habit has fallen into decline, determine upon diligent amendment for the year to come.

2. Let nothing keep you from a habitual and prayerful attendance upon the Lord's Supper. No sense of unworthiness should deter you from coming, since here is the place to become strengthened and spiritually quickened; and above all, no diffi-

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dence or coldness should cause you to neglect this service, since thereby you slight and dishonor the Lord who bought you.

3. Fail not to be present at every weekly prayer-meeting of the church unless detained by absolute inability to come. I have reason to rejoice over the large attendance and deep interest in this service, but I mourn that there are a few among us who habitually neglect this most important means of grace. Let the New Year witness a renewal of your covenant at this point.

4. Forget not that your first and principal business as a disciple of Christ is to give the Gospel to those who have it not. He who is not a missionary Christian will be a missing Christian when the great day comes for bestowing the rewards of service. Therefore:

5. Ask yourself daily what the Lord would have you do in connection with the work of carrying the news of salvation to the perishing millions. Search carefully whether he would have you go yourself to the heathen if you have the youth and fitness required for the work. Or, if you cannot go in person:

6. Inquire diligently what blood-mortgage there is upon your property in the interest of foreign missions—how much you owe to the heathen, because of what you owe to Christ, for redeeming you with his precious blood. I warn you that it will go hard with you when your Lord comes to reckon with you if he finds your wealth invested in superfluous luxuries or hoarded up in needless accumulations instead of being sacredly devoted to giving the Gospel to the lost.

7. But remember that consecrated giving will be impossible unless there be first a consecrated giver. Therefore I counsel you to seek the special grace and anointing of the Holy Spirit that he may work in you that consecration of heart and life on which so much depends.

Yours in Christ,

A. J. GORDON.

ANNIVERSARY SERMON.

FOLLOWING are extracts from the anniversary sermon of Dr. Gordon, preached on the morning of January 6th. After referring to the growth of the church in twenty-five years, Dr. Gordon said:

“It should be asked and answered to what do we owe this blessed increase in numbers and earnestness? and my reply is out of the Scripture: ‘Said I not unto thee that if ye believed ye should see the glory of God?’ This work of witnessing to the Gospel of the grace of God is a quiet work, and does not manifest itself at once. In the spiritual life as well as the natural life ‘we live by pulse-beats and not by spasms;’ and the work of the Gospel, like the beating of the heart, is the repetition of the same process over and over again. To some it becomes arduous.

I have sometimes been asked, ‘Why do I not preach upon the times?’ to which my answer has always been: ‘It remains for me to preach for eternity.’ As to the force of the repetition of the Gospel, let us remember that continual dropping of water can wear away the hardest stone; and continual droppings of the grace of God can overcome the hardest obstacle. But mark: though the swinging of the pendulum seems monotonous, the hands move steadily up to high noon, and so if we repeat the Gospel we shall see a silent progress until the time comes for the clock to strike, and the word shall go out: ‘Time shall be no more.’

In twenty-five years we have never been under the shadow of impending mortgage; finances have been kept so remarkably in hand that I have often asked: ‘How do you do it?’ I mention some of those who have had this in charge: Charles S. Butler, Charles S. Kendall, and Miles Standish.

Then I remember how in the Superintendent's desk stood that worthy man, Eben Shute, whose absence we are deploring to this day, whose presence was such a