Address
delivered at Conference
of
Home Missions Ass^n
"H. H. M. A."
at San Francisco or Los Angeles Cal
188?

N533

Subject
Home Mission work on the
Pacific Coast

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The Secretary of our Home Missions came into see me two days ago about coming to this Conference. He said," we cannot spare you,we cannot spare a man!" What would you have thought,General,during the great war,right in the midst of the conflict,when the struggle was the hardest and the cause was hanging in the balance,to have had an order come from Washington calling a halt all along the line because the funds had been exhausted?

"Well,well,he declares,that is just our condition,the condition of those who are waging the Lord's battle on the front line along this coast. What do you mean,Doctor,by such a figure,-I do not understand you. I mean,General,just this;The order from the New York office of the Home Missionary Society is "Take up no new work!" And just now,when the population is like torrents mountain high pouring in upon usfrom the East,and when at least eight new churches are springing up and calling for a little aid-and the aid that must be had at this time. And,then,General,you know something of the needs of moral teaching-of Christian teaching among the multitudes of children and youth that are growing up that are physically so healthful and strong. "Is it time to call a halt!-a halt all along the line?" Now the Doctor went further. He said men have fought for this country. Thousands have given their lives,other thousands are living broken in constitution and maimed for life. They have preserved our institutions,at least,the form of them. Why,this nation,so preserved is the hope of the world. But are not the pure family,the church of

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of Christ and the schools the foundation institutions on which the structure rests? Throw into the Doctor's plea, all his feeling and earnestness, and you have the whole case. How can I add anything to strengthen the appeal? I have come in the face of other calls to duty, to transfer the Doctor's warm appeal from myself to each of you who are here present. Consider the question: "Is it time to call a halt in the Home-Mission field? If no, no it is not! if that be the answer, then let each man and woman inquire seriously what can I do? or scripturally, Lord what wilt thou have me to do?

I have a dear good friend in San Francisco, whose heart is all on fire with zeal in the cause of religion. He penetrates every nook and corner of San Francisco. He talks with merchants, clerks, workingmen, with the good and with the bad, both men and women. His hair is now silvered with age, yet his eye is not dim, nor his natural force abated. He too, like our Secretary, comes to me and sometimes sits or stands with me in a little side room of the office. His discourse always takes on a peculiar form.

"You do not begin to know, he declares, the bottom needs of this city and of this Coast." "Why, the men from '49 to '60 came hither for gold. The large majority of them were here without family ties. So, you see two things were soon in their minds, one gold, i.e. wealth and what goes with it, and the other was the gratification of appetite and passion.

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Now look, how can you expect the descendants, the boys and girls to be other than they are. They lawfully inherit their proclivities He says something has to be done, when a boy has heard only the talk about money; how to make it, how to keep it, what grand luxuries of living come through this channel. You must somehow start his thoughts in new directions. He says with the feeling, "We mourn because hundreds of boys go out to play ball and other games on Sundays and lose the benefit of the rich instruction at the church or at home, with no restraint and no apparent compunctions of conscience about the matter.

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of ~~conscience about the matter~~. We hear among them swearing and cursing and low language which indicates a low grade of morals.

We mourn because large multitudes of youth of both sexes in gay attire go off on Sunday excursions where there is drinking, gambling, dancing and feasting with bands of music discoursing the merry waltzes. We mourn because the play houses and brothels are filled on the Sabbath with our young people.

We mourn more to see the early signs of dissipation in the eyes and faces of our young men and because the alleys leading out of main streets are given up to wanton vice, where disease and death sets in upon youth from sixteen to twenty, where boys from so called good families and sometimes little girls are drawnin by the deceptive glitter of vicious inhabitants.

We mourn because the churches, though many in number take in such a small proportion of our men and of our young people. And when we go out of the city, we find that profanity and license prevails, that it is popular to fear neither God nor man; that soldiers in the army, young men on the railways and stage lines, sailors on the steamers and sailing vessels, and employees at country and village hotels + many, many more use habitually profane oaths, care little for purity of language or conduct; that whole districts are infidel and that with the infidelity goes a disregard of the sacred marriage relation; that men and women are divorced from slight and insufficient causes; and that husband and wife separate forever without any other ~~cause~~ reason than the demands of unholy passion. We mourn to see San Quentin and other prisons so full of men and women, yes, of boys and girls - for there are large numbers there from 16 to 25 years of age.

We mourn, because of millions of money squandered in gambling speculations; b because young men cannot be trusted as cashiers and clerks: because heads of firms are half distracted over the petty absorptions of trusted messengers and

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Express managers are robbed or betrayed on all stage lines and R.R. Trainsby thei theirown men. We mourn to see the houses which have become the nurseries and cent ers of crime fostered by the General Government with its respectable liquor license, its carte blanche for pouring strong drink in streams through the mountains and valleys of the land, so that the influence of its vapor or its draughts cannot be escaped. Yes we mourn, because of the low standard of home-life that is creeping in to families without Bible teaching, prayer book or prayer- where religion is distasteful and good knowledge is ~~a bore~~ despised.

It is not a pleasant picture that my zealous friend with earnest eyes and emphatic voice presents. Ahundeed voices cry out - Oh, that is too bad! It is not so bad as that on this coast. Think of our wealth; See our great Railroad princes! notice our superb climate! behold our commerce! view our splendid cities! there must have been some virtue to produce allthis! Yes, my friends; but let us be loyal to truth ~~and~~ as well as devoted to duty. A few weeks since I heard Chaplain Potter at Fort Bedwell in a serm mon say in substance: No man is as bad as his worst act would indicate; nor as good as his purest thought would imply. I apply the same form of idea to society

No society is as good as the conduct of its best men and women would indicate: nor so bad as the thoughts of the low and vile would imply.

But home missions has to do with tendencies. The venerable secretary and also My zealous reformer wants to correct the tendencies. He has an idea that ~~in~~ the seed of Solomon's wisdom once in the mind of a man or woman or child will germinate.

Now I have gotten imbedded in my very soul a similar thought: it is that every soul may be revolutionized by the Divine Spirit acting upon the Divine Word. For example, plant this divine sentence in the mind, "Whosoever will, let him come and partake of the water of life freely," Now let the warmth of God's Spirit quicken it, and the air and the sunlight of the same Spirit causeit to grow, in time it will bear fruit and the fruit will be good.

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Father Roan and his coadjutors in the Sandwich Islands tried that method faithfully and thousands came out of darkness into the light- out of discontent into content: and in spite of the sowing of Satan and his friends, for they have strewn their false principles most diligently much of the good fruitage remains.

Duncan of England went to British Alaska took a most unpromising field: he sowed the same seed i.e: planted Bible truth. Behold whole tribes converted to God and all the beautiful fruits of a true civilization made manifest. (other Examples given)

How apply this? Shall we call a halt? No. The ground is rough, the hills and mountains are covered with rocks and many valleys appear barren, but the soil is rich. Great labor is needed to open the fields and prepare them - But it will pay you for the labor. Let us do what we can, and cry aloud to God to send us all needed help all needed reinforcements of money and men: that the enemy of good may not prevail.

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