

Today's need for the propagation of the Reformed Witness

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[0 : 00] The subject of our lecture this evening is today's need for the propagation of the Reformed Witness. In a lecture of that nature, it is advisable at the very beginning to make very clear what is the meaning of the terms that we use.

The propagation of the Reformed Witness. Let us see what we mean exactly by that. And in doing so, first of all, let us make a few remarks concerning the word propagation. This word is a word derived from an Italian word, propaganda.

That word was used in the title of a body of Roman clerics who sat in Rome and who still sit in Rome and whose duty it is to have the oversight and supervision of the Roman Catholic foreign missions.

In their native tongue and in their title, the word propaganda comes in. And that word has been taken over into the English language.

[1 : 38] Now, in some minds, a sinister meaning attaches to that word. And that just because it is so often associated with the advancement of that which is evil.

That if we turn to the dictionary to find out the meaning of this word, we are told that propaganda means the organization and the spreading abroad of certain doctrines or sets of principles. And now, therefore, these may be good as well as bad. And we may say that when the Lord Jesus gave his commission to his disciples, here he rose to his own place on the right hand on the high, to go forth and preach the gospel to every living creature.

We may say that that was a species of Christian and spiritual propaganda. So that we see that propaganda may be used in a good sense.

And it is in that sense that we use the term tonight. Then the next term that requires amplification is the reformed witness.

[3 : 18] What exactly do we mean by that? We mean by that the witness left by the reformers in the formularies, the creeds, the catechisms, and the confessions, which they drew out at the reformation and after the reformation in what is sometimes called sub-reformation times.

These creeds and confessions are still with us and are still of lasting value. Now, there are some people, especially sectarians, who sneer at the idea of a church requiring a creed or a confession or a catechism.

They say, we require no creed, for we have the best creed of all. We have the word of God. And we don't want anything to supplant that. That sounds very plausible. But when you hear that, you have a reason to suspect that they are hiding something under a smoke screen.

And that's something that they are hiding under a smoke screen is the unsoundness of their teachings. They are afraid to draw out their teachings in a systemized and brief form so that they could easily be scanned in comparison with the teachings of a word.

[5 : 15] And people will then see right away how absolutely unsewn they are. And they're afraid to do that. Now, an honest church, a church that abides by the word of God and has nothing to hear, is a church which is not ashamed to have a confession, a creed, a catechism.

Because she is willing to show the word. If they care to look into it, that the doctrines that she teaches are the doctrines of the word of God.

Now, the reformers realized this. And it was because they realized this that they drew out so many of these creeds and confessions and catechisms in their day.

And these formularies, as we call them, are as necessary and as valuable today as ever they were.

Now, that is what we mean by the Reformed witness. The witness of the teachings of the Reformers who taught what the word of God teaches.

[6 : 37] That is the Reformed witness. Now, we pass on to consider, first of all, what constitutes today's peculiar need for a renewed presentation of the Reformed witness.

The first reason and the great reason is this, that that witness is largely forgotten. a generation is now upon the earth in this whole land who are sadly ignorant of what the Reformed witness is. they haven't the slightest idea as to what it is. Now, how has that come about?

It has come about because there has arisen in the church those whom we call modernists.

These men, in the name of scholarship, undermine the authority of the word of God. They sneered at orthodoxy and at those who believed in the doctrines of the word of truth.

[8 : 09] And one of the outcomes of their attitude to the word was this, that there arose an agitation in the schools, in the public schools, to have the teaching of the Shorter Catechism stopped.

And in most of the schools in the country, the Shorter Catechism has been cast out and then it was not long until many churches followed their example.

The plea offered for the rejection of the Shorter Catechism was that the children could not understand the questions of the Shorter Catechism.

No, the children cannot understand Latin when it is brought unto them.

They cannot understand it until they are taught it. The children can't understand mathematics until they are taught mathematics.

[9 : 23] And who would dream of casting out Latin or mathematics or any other subject because the children could not understand those subjects. That was only a pretext.

The real reason for the casting out of the Shorter Catechism was that those who desired this hated the doctrines of the word of truth and were determined that the children of the country should not be taught then.

Were they sincere what they would have proposed is that in the secondary department when surely the children would be able to understand the Shorter Catechism should be taught then.

It should be deferred until the scholars reach the secondary department if they were sincere. That is the line they would have taken. but they weren't sincere.

All they desired was to get rid of the Shorter Catechism. And when they got rid of the Shorter Catechism there grew up a generation who have only the faintest idea of the most elementary doctrines of the Christian way.

[10 : 47] Now this has given to Rome an opportunity that she never had before since the Reformation.

And with all her acuteness and cunning she was found ready to take advantage of this opportunity. When the people of Scotland knew the Shorter Catechism they had a good idea of the outline of Christian doctrine.

And as long as that was the case it was impossible for the Church of Rome to make any headway. And in my young days people considered that Rome was finished.

That we had no reason to be afraid of Rome. But alas this casting out of the Shorter Catechism and the work of the modernists have completely altered the situation.

And now we have a generation grown up who because of their ignorance of doctrine are open to the sophistries and the subtleties and the plausibilities of Rome.

[12 : 19] They have no defense now because they are so ignorant of doctrine. There is a vacuum in their minds so far as doctrine is concerned.

And Rome is taking advantage of that. and to make matters worse, we have witnessed with amazement and with sadness of heart an extraordinary change of pace on the part of the state church.

Apparently, the state church is prepared to overlook Rome's black, black record. record, a black record it is indeed.

It's there written in history, and it cannot be eradicated. Apparently, the state church is prepared to overlook all that, and to overlook too the fact that what has been happening in Colombia and in Spain, reveal that Rome is still what she was, and is still as ready to persecute as ever, once she has the opportunity.

These things are overlooked, and the unscriptural nature of the teachings of Rome are overlooked also, and we had the extraordinary happening at last General Assembly, of over a thousand votes

being cast in favor of carrying on those meetings between representatives of the Church of Scotland and representatives of the Roman Church, which at first had been carried on privately and secretly.

[14 : 18] Over a thousand votes were cast in favor of the carrying on of those conferences, no longer privately, but in full publicity, and those who voted against that in comparison were a mere handful.

Now, what do they have in view in carrying on those conferences? What they tell us is that by so doing they will get to understand one another better, be able to appreciate the other side's point of view, and thus better relations will be brought in.

But, when that has been attained, what next? Is it going to stop there? water? When water is poured down a decline, it will reach the middle of that decline, but it doesn't stop there, it won't stop until it reaches the bottom.

And Rome is at the bottom of this decline, decline, down which the state church is rapidly moving. When those ends are attained, which they profess to be seeking, that's not the end of the story. The end of the story is the bottom of the decline, Rome. And Rome makes no secret of it. Ask them why they are keeping those conferences.

[16 : 06] And they tell you, it is made public in the press. They are conducting these conferences by way of preparing the way for those whom they call their separated brethren, as they call them now, to return back again to the Roman hold.

they make no secret of it. There it is then. The state church with her face turned the way of Rome and drifting rapidly in that direction.

And there's only one thing that can possibly stay that drift. And that is that which took the reformers out of the church of Rome.

the knowledge of the doctrines of God's holy word. That is to say, in other words, the reformed witness.

That's the only thing under God's hand that can stay that room or drift. And that is what constitutes today's peculiar need for a renewed presentation revelation of the reborn witness.

[17 : 33] And now we pass on to consider for a little the value and the power of propaganda. Now, propaganda in order to be effective requires two things.

things. It requires expansiveness and it requires intensity. It requires to be spread abroad from person to person, the further the better.

And it requires to be put before the people repeatedly. That so, whatever is being advanced may have opportunity to sink into the consciousness of those who hear it.

And the oftener it is repeated, the more likely it is eventually to prevail. Now, Rome knows how to carry on propaganda and not only knows how to do it, but also has the resources wherewith to do it. the communists have nothing to learn. They are flooding the world with their cheap propaganda. And we are told that Jehovah's Witnesses in New York have the biggest printing and publishing establishment in the world.

[19 : 08] Now, when we consider the attitude taken up by the BBC and the TV with respect to those things, we see that the forces of evil possess the chief media of propaganda.

media. But although that is so, we must not falter. If God be with us, who can be against us? Silence is fatal. If we are silent and do not bear this witness, then this witness in Scotland will perish with us, will perish with this generation.

Silence is absolutely fatal. We must not be silent. No, our resources are pitiably slender.

Our numbers are few. And the replies that we make to the bombasts of the great majority are feeble and ineffective.

[20 : 35] And looking at it from the human side, we might well say that our cause is hopeless. But it was like that before in Scotland.

It was like that before the Reformation. Any person found expounding the Word of God, or even reading the Word of God, was exposed to the fury of both Church and State.

The two were united to suppress the Reformed faith. And those who sought to propagate the Reformed faith might well know that they did so at the risk of being burned at the stake, as many of them were.

But, although that was so, although it seemed to be an absolutely unequal combat, although it seemed absolutely impossible that the Reformed faith could make any headway against the

combined force of Church and State, the Roman Church, of course, and State. Nevertheless, there was underneath a secret work going on. Scottish sailors, whose vessels were trading with the Baltic, were wont to smuggle into the country copies of the Bible.

[22 : 23] And in barns and in private places, men and women used to meet together to study the Word, under the cover of darkness as a room.

Now, that went on for many a day, and then all of a sudden, the light came.

And when the light came, then this propoganda was like gunpowder. When the light came, when the light comes, when the flame touches the gunpowder, then there is an explosion.

And that's what happened at that explosion we call the Reformation. The light came, and the Scottish nation rose like a giant from out his sleep, and threw from them the bands and the fetters of Rome.

That happened, behold, and it can happen again. Through the grace of God, it can happen again. men, but this is the point.

[23 : 43] There must be the initial propoganda. There must be that which is in opposition to those powers which we dread.

There must be a movement. want. It may be in great measure hidden, but it must be there in favor of God's word and the Reformed Witness.

We pass on now to consider some practical ways in which we can propagate the Reformed Witness. Witness. The first necessity is self-preparation.

And self-preparation requires two things. First of all, knowledge. And second, enthusiasm. We must know our subject.

We must know what we are talking about. We must study the Reformed Witness so that we know it through and through.

[25 : 03] That we may be able to say that we know what we are talking about. We must get a grip of our subject. And not only must we get a grip of our subject, but we must allow our subject get a grip of us.

That is to say, we must become enthusiastic for the Reformed Witness. And enthusiasm is a catching thing.

It infects others. If we are enthusiastic as to this matter, we can infect others with the same enthusiasm. What we did today is something like the enthusiasm of the covenanters, when on that historic day in Edinburgh, they came swinging up the west bow, singing there, Psalm 124, no Israel may say and that truly.

There they came swinging up the west bow, marching to the strains of Psalm 124, into the lawn market.

And there, the clerics, the prelatric clerics, trembled in their rooms, as they heard the thunder of the war song of the covenant, and the marching feet of the covenanters, passing under their windows.

[26 : 46] We require something of that enthusiasm. And then, we ought to seek to teach the history of the affirmed witness, and the doctrines contained in the affirmed witness, so far as we have opportunity to do so, for it is evident that the people must be taught.

The people speaking generally are ignorant of these things, and they must be taught, and how can they be taught without those who are willing to teach them, and without means, whereby they may be taught.

This is a necessity, and is a practical way of propagating the reformed witness. Again, the reformed witness may be propagated by literary contributions.

Now, Savara's Scotland is concerned, these are pitifully meager. When the quarter centenary of the reformation was held, Professor Rennick and Mr. Collins produced small volumes of definite value. death. But, apart from that, Scotland has produced nothing in this line since Professor McLeod's monumental work on Scottish theology.

[28 : 41] Over the border, the situation has been somewhat better. We have Dr. Lloyd Jones doing a noble work, and also Dr.

Packer. These men are men who are to the whole, and what they are propagating is the reformed witness.

And then, there is that work being done by Ian Murray through the medium of the banner of truth, which exceeds all praise, and which already has done great good, not only in this country, not only in Britain, but throughout the world.

But, so far as modern contributions are concerned for the banner of truth, we are indebted mainly to exponents on the other side of the Atlantic, Americans, most of them with a Dutch background, that the record for Scotland in this respect is pitifully poor.

And then, another way of propagating the reformed witness is by writing to the press. when we see letters in the press running down orthodoxy or the reformed E, well, we feel vexed and oftentimes disgusted.

[30 : 43] We feel so vexed as that we never think of replying to such letters. We leave them alone.

No, that is foolish. These letters ought to be replied to and their writers ought to be exposed. But, somehow or another, the exponents of the Reformed Faith are very slow in answering these letters. They have an opportunity given them to put forward their view of truth. These very letters open the door for them.

They can answer and they can answer with power and these letters that they write will be read wherever the paper concerned has circulation and we don't know what the effect might be.

And then another method is by circulating cheap literature. Pamphlets and booklets on the Reformed Faith.

[32 : 02] Now, there are many people who will read these booklets and pamphlets who wouldn't bother reading a larger volume. And it is extraordinary how some of these booklets travel about and how they get into hands that are exceeding strange.

There is a line by which we can do a little at any rate by we are propagating the Reformed witness. And then again we can do the same thing by asserting our convictions.

Why are we so silent? We ought not to be silent. We ought to make it clear that we are convinced that Britain is in the miserable state in which she is just because she has apostatized from the God of her fathers and turned away from the word of his truth and that things will never be right with Britain until she returns again to that which she has forsaken.

Again, protests ought to go to the BBC as often as the BBC puts over anything derogatory to the Reformed way and to that for which we stand.

There are certain parties who have protested again and again to the BBC and the stock answer of the BBC is that they have received very few protests whereas on the other hand they have received many letters of appreciation and therefore they take no action they continue in their present policy whereby modernism ritualism and Romanism are extolled and contempt and scorn heaped upon the Reformed witness that if we would only do our duty and fled the BBC with protests they could not possibly ignore protests on that scale and then again we have a further opportunity of propagating the

[34 : 50] Reformed witness in this way by urging our MPs to take action in the House of Commons whenever the Protestant Constitution of this country is breached and it is being breached repeatedly nowadays by the Constitution of the land any communication with the Sea of Rome is forbidden and yet we have an ambassador at Rome in the Vatican we have our chief men calling upon the Pope we have our sovereign even calling upon the Pope and thereby making acknowledgement that they agree to his claim of being the king of kings and lord of lords they say it is a courtesy visit very well if it is a courtesy visit that means that they agree that he is the king of kings and lord of lords on the earth that he said that every earthly king and every earthly lord that's his claim and that is absolutely contrary to the protestant constitution of Britain and it's time and more than time that our

MPs were compelled by their constituents to take up that issue in the house of commons and in the house of lords also last of all we can always adopt this method and it is the most effective method of all pleading with God to revive his cause to pour out his spirit upon the earth as the spirit of repentance that the eyes of the people may be opened that they may see wherein they have sinned that they may realize how they have provoked the most high and may return again unto him in contrition of heart and brokenness of spirit and now lastly certain motives to the performance of this duty of propagation first of all we ought to realize that it is our duty and in the performance of this duty prayer is our chief weapon but although prayer is our chief weapon it does not free us from our duty to do all we can in every way we can to forward the reformed witness when

Christ told his disciples to pray he linked it up with watching watch and pray now the man who watches and prays prays to the point he knows what he's praying about and what you ought to pray for he watches he watches the enemy he watches the progress of evil he watches to see where are the danger points and having watched he is the better able to pray and his watching gives him more

earnestness in prayer there are some who profess to pray and who do pray but they never think of raising a hand for the defense of the act of the Lord not a hand they say they are praying yes but if we read the truth we have to contend what we have to do more than pray we have to fight victory is promised that ought to encourage us but victory can only be given to those who fight if we don't fight how can we have victory the Lord encourages us to contend for the day with the promise of victory at the end this is our duty a second motive to the performance of this duty is that it is a matter that concerns generations yet to come had the reformers failed without question we today in this island would be still under the power of Rome and if we fail when we see the assaults of the enemy on every side the enemy doing everything in his power to swallow up the reformed testimony if we fail then our children's children in all probability will be back again in the darkness of Romanism if the enemy prevails who will be to blame God will not be to blame who will be to blame those who wouldn't fight those who would not contend for the truth for the faith once delivered to the saints they will be to blame and they alone a third motive to this duty is the fact that nations are tried in this world world now the gospel works on two levels it works on the national level and it works on the individual level countries nations can be completely changed by the incoming of the gospel history will show you that again and again now [42 : 01] Arminianism has come into this land in such measure that Christ's kingship over the nations is well nigh forgotten because Arminian concerns itself always with the individual it does not take to do with Christ's kingship over the nations and that is how it is in this our day that there is so little recognition of this and so little understanding of the fact that the gospel is as essential in the life of the nation as it is in the life of the individual that nation is a blessed nation indeed which possesses a sound scriptural church teaching our people the doctrines of truth and it will invariably be found that that nation which has such a church will be a nation possessed of a high standard of morality having a crime sheet almost clean and being entirely free from such problems as juvenile delinquency that always follows the progress of the gospel in a land now

Britain since she has forsaken the gospel has become a land full of violence and immorality Britain is in a dreadful state and it is evident that the land of the Lord is upon her in judgment for she has lost her empire she was once mistress of the seas is now a third class power and who knows to what depth she may be brought yet unless she repents of her apostasy from the Lord her God there's only one thing that can restore Britain to her former state and that Korea is a very natural search water into her
THOMAS in her