

**THE CHURCH'S LIFE; A  
STUDY OF THE  
FUNDAMENTALS OF  
THE CHURCH'S MISSION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649525621

The Church's Life; A Study of the Fundamentals of the Church's Mission by Wm. C. Sturgis

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**WM. C. STURGIS**

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# THE CHURCH'S LIFE

A STUDY OF THE FUNDAMENTALS OF  
THE CHURCH'S MISSION

BY

WM. C. STURGIS, A.M., Ph.D.

NEW YORK

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY

281 FOURTH AVENUE

1920



## PREFACE

This book is the outcome of dire need on my part. When, in 1917, I accepted the position of Educational Secretary of the Board of Missions and began work as such, a very serious difficulty at once presented itself. Although a lifelong Churchman, a member of the Board of Missions for nearly ten years, and a leader of men's Bible classes for thirty, I had only the most rudimentary idea of what the Church exists for, what the word "missions" means, and what is the teaching of the Scriptures on this subject. It was quite obvious that if, as was necessary, I was at once to begin trying to make these matters clear to others, I must first clarify my own mind. For four months, sleeping and waking, I thought of little else; and then I became bold enough to prepare notes and to lead a Summer conference class on "The Fundamentals of the Church's Mission." Whether my students received anything of value is of little importance. I did. For three successive years I gave the same course, always once, sometimes twice, constantly expanding it under the stimulus of the Holy Spirit's teaching, and the invaluable experience of being obliged to think logically and to express myself clearly. The attempt to

## Preface

convince others is the only way to become convinced oneself; teaching is the only road to learning; one makes the best advance in company. By this process my brief notes gradually became sufficiently copious to form the basis of a volume; and as there seemed to be a need for such a book—judging at least by my own abysmal ignorance when I began—it seemed advisable to place them in that form, as a textbook for a study of the Church's mission in the world.

The book, I think, contains nothing new. Indeed he would be venturesome who dared imagine that he had discovered anything new upon this well-worn topic. Still, the point of view may, in some cases, be found to differ from that commonly occupied. I do not, for example, remember having seen in any book a statement of the objective of the Church's mission as being the transmission of life from those who have it to those who have it not. Certainly "missions," as commonly defined, fall far short of this, and hence do not appeal to the average layman.

The reader at all acquainted with the subject will have no difficulty in tracing my constant indebtedness to certain notable books, especially Dr. McLean's, *Where the Book Speaks*; Dr. Lawrence's, *Introduction to the Study of Foreign Missions*; and Bishop Gore's, *The Sermon on the Mount*.

New York, August, 1920.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. The Failure of a Nation. . . .	I
II. A Chosen Generation . . . .	25
III. Life More Abundantly . . . .	53
<i>The Church and Physical Well-being</i> . . . . .	64
<i>The Church and Education</i> . . . . .	71
IV. The Model Missionary . . . .	81
V. The Great Charter of the Church	110
VI. The Call to Intelligence . . . .	135
VII. The Power in the Church . . . .	168



# THE CHURCH'S LIFE

## CHAPTER I

### THE FAILURE OF A NATION

However much there may be which the average layman can neither understand nor explain in religion—whether natural or revealed—one thing seems fairly obvious, i. e., that the whole story of both nature and revelation is, to any man who looks about him and reads his Bible, a record of God's eager desire to make Himself known to man and to make man able to learn at least something about God.

Undoubtedly there are men—often even students of science—who are so inexpressibly dull or so hopelessly immersed in things which they can see and taste and smell, and which therefore they take to be real, that they can look up at the sky on a clear night of stars, or feel the out-poured vigor of the sun, or catch the odor of flowers fresh blown, or watch the ebb and flow of life in a microscopic cell, without a thought of the Power hidden behind the