

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XVIII., No. 45.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, November 5, 1873.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXXVII., No. 45.

Poetry.

SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY.

Because in a day of my days to come
There waiteth a grief to be,
Shall my heart grow faint, and my lips be
dumb,
In this day that is bright for me?

Because of a subtle sense of pain,
Like a pulse-beat threaded through
The bliss of my thought, shall I dare refrain
From delight in the pure and true?

In the harvest-fields shall I cease to glean
Since the bloom of the spring has fled?
Shall I veil mine eyes to the noon-day sheen,
Since the dew of the morn hath sped?

Nay, phantom ill with the warning hand,
Nay, ghosts of the weary past;
Serenes as in armour of faith I stand,
Ye may not hold me fast.

Your shadows across my sun may fall,
But as bright the sun shall shine;
For I walk in a light ye cannot pull—
The light of the King divine.

Religious.

DUTY OF THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO MISSIONS.

A paper read before the Evangelical Alliance, by Rev. Joseph Angus, D. D., President of Regent's Park College, London.

OUR LORD'S COMMAND AND EXAMPLE.

The last command of our Lord—the command he gave after promising the Spirit to guide the disciples unto all the truth, and after praying that they might be one, and after settling the relation of his kingdom to this world—the command he connected with the promise of his perpetual presence, the command he embodied in the tenderest feelings of his followers, bade men to preach the Gospel to all creation. Truth and unity and a spiritual kingdom are a blessing in themselves; but it is no small part of their glory, that through them the world is to believe. On this command our Lord himself acted. In the three years of his public life he travelled three times over Galilee, announcing the glad tidings of his kingdom. Three times he visited Jerusalem. For weeks together he preached at Capernaum, a border town where many were coming and going. Six months he labored beyond Jordan, and twice he sent out disciples to extend his work. He came not mainly to teach, and yet in those years he labored as an itinerant. It was thus our Lord sought to spread his Gospel a Home Missionary—among perhaps three millions of people. His followers caught his spirit—Andrew found Peter (as Philip found Nathaniel) and though not yet an apostle, he preached Christ to him, and brought him to Jesus. In the same spirit the woman of Sychar went and told in the fulness of her heart, of him who seemed “the Christ;” and on her talk multitudes believed. It was in obedience to this spirit that the members of the Church at Jerusalem, when scattered by persecution, went everywhere preaching the word. In five and twenty years Paul travelled three times over a great part of Asia and Europe. Twice he spent two years as a prisoner, preaching to all who came to him, as well as to successive soldiers to whom he was chained. At one place he wintered, at another he spent a year and a half, at a third two whole years, so preaching “that all they that dwell in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus.” All fellow helpers, men and women, he welcomed, and when he heard of a church that sounded out the word of the Lord through the regions beyond them, he honored that church as an “example”—a model church, to be copied by all that believed.

THE CHURCH'S FIRST BUSINESS.

Christianity is a universal philanthropist. It trains the young, it feeds the hungry, it heals the sick. It rejoices in the increase of all the elements of material civilization, but it

maintains that all these agencies are subordinate. The divine method of human improvement begins in human hearts through evangelical truth, and it spreads from within outwardly till all is renewed. There are, we may feel assured, profound reasons, as there is a divine command to justify the announcement that the preaching of the Gospel is the first business of the Christian Church.

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The Gospel; what is it? and can we agree in defining it? In one sense it is as old as the first promise. For, from the beginning man's sinfulness, atonement through vicarious suffering, God's free and righteous mercy, the efficacy of prayer, the necessity of holiness, all were revealed. But now these truths are set forth with new proofs, are enforced by new motives amid stronger light and for a wider audience. The Gospel—we agree in saying that it is a three-fold message—of forgiveness through our Lord, of personal holiness through the renewing and ever gracious help of the Spirit, of blessedness amid all earthly changes, for those who love and serve God. Forgiveness! Holiness! Blessedness! What more can we need? The Gospel—we agree in calling it a two-fold message—Christ's work for us, in living and dying, and pleading, and reigning; and Christ's work in us, beginning in grace and ending in glory. The Gospel—a single message—of Christ as crucified, the concentrated revelation of the divine holiness and love, the Redeemer and Comforter, the patron and sanctifier of us all. This Gospel—three-fold, two-fold, single—Christ came to found even more than to teach. Yet it is the Gospel he taught, as it is the Gospel his apostles taught. And so mighty did it prove, that the most successful preacher of the apostolic age resolved from experience, as well as from direct inspiration, to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ as crucified. The Jews deemed it no “sign,” no embodiment of power, and the Greeks deemed it foolishness; but he found it to be power and wisdom—power, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

WHAT IS PREACHING?

And this Gospel we are to preach. What is this preaching? Are we agreed in defining it? Let us mark the words that describe it. One of the commonest means that we are to proclaim it as heralds, with boldness and authority. Sixty times in the New Testament is this word found. Everywhere it describes the bearing of men who feel that they are speaking in God's name. A second word, translated in the same way, means “to talk.” It is applied to the easy conversational method adopted by our Lord, and to the somewhat exaggerated sayings of the woman of Samaria. It describes a gift of priceless value—the power of introducing and speaking of religious themes. A third word means “to reason,” “to discuss.” It is the word used to describe Paul's discourses, and it was preaching of this kind that he continued at Troas till midnight, as it was under such preaching Felix trembled. The fourth, and one of the commonest words of all translated “preach,” means to announce “glad tidings.” More than fifty times this word is used. It forms the glory of the new dispensation—that “the poor have the Gospel preached to them.” This is the thought that justifies the outburst of the Prophet, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace.” “Blessed (happy) are the poor in spirit,” is the first word of our Saviour's longest discourse, and it is the word that is found oftener there. We are to be “heralds” and “talkers” and “reasoners” and “publishers of good things.”

THREE PRESCRIBED METHODS.

Constantly connected with these terms, which are all translated “preach,” are other three. One

means “to testify or bear witness”—from Scripture, and especially from our own experience; another means “to teach,” and a third “to exhort, or entreat.” Thus at Pentecost, Peter testified and exhorted, saying, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Thus Christ sent disciples to teach all nation: thus, the apostles ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ; the word suggesting that the truths which we announce, we are able also to explain and apply. Thus also, wherever Paul went, he exhorted and entreated; his own summary of his ministry is, “As we go, we beseech men in Christ's stead; be ye reconciled unto God.” Another fact deserves to be named. From the promise given in Matthew in connection with this command, it may be gathered that the work of preaching the gospel to all creation belongs to each age. It is not a thing done once for all; it has to be done again and again. The Christian men and women and children of each generation—redeemed by the same blood, renewed and enfolded by the same spirit, have the same honors and responsibilities. It is their glory that they have to make known to the world of each generation the love and the wisdom of God. One fact more and this part of my statement will be complete. The first teachers of the Gospel took pains, under the direction of their Lord, to put the substance of their teaching into a permanent form, and to supply further instruction in writing as it was needed. Hence the Evangelists wrote their Gospels, the records of “all that Jesus began to do and to teach.” Hence the apostles wrote their letters to put the churches in remembrance of what they had taught, and preserve the uncorrupted truth for after generations, and to settle questions which spring up in the course of Christian and ecclesiastical life. The written word supplements the living voice and is essential to the completeness of our work: A holy, devoted ministry, carried on by all saints; and the open Bible.

EXISTING PRACTICES REBUKED.

These statements, which embody the inspired description of our duty, are familiar to us all. They contain nothing new, and yet they rebuke theories and practices which are found on all sides. They tell us it is the Gospel we are to preach: not science, or education, or ethical duty; not what we think on public questions, or even on lesser points of theology, but what we know of essential truth. We are to send evangelists, not pastors; we are to preach the Gospel with the authority of ambassadors, and in God's name we are to announce it in quiet talk; we are to enforce it by argument, by appeals to what we ourselves have felt, by earnest entreaty. There is a preaching that doubts in everything and never speaks with authority. There is a preaching that will not reason, but is always dogmatic or emotional. There is a preaching that never condescends to “talk,” but is ever formal and stilted. And there is preaching that is cold discussion or bald announcement, never caring to entreat. Apostolic preaching was authority, and argument, talk and testimony—a combination of them all, saturated with prayers and tears. There is a ministry that only preaches, giving no Bible, as in the Jesuit Missions of China and Japan, and then the Gospel dies out in a generation, or becomes thoroughly corrupt. And there is a ministry that gives only the Bible, leaving it without the witness of a living heart and a holy life. God's method combines the two, and bids men “fully give” the Gospel, spoken and written, to every creature.

THE GOSPEL FOR EVERY CREATURE.

To every creature. Is this possible? and is it therefore our duty? The Christians of each age are to give the Gospel to the people of that age. Every Christian is to tell the good news to as many as he can reach. Christians are collectively to tell it, if they

can, to the world. What is the limit of our ability and duty? In ten or twenty years can repentance and remission of sins be preached through Christ to all generations? I believe they can. The Christians of the nineteenth century are more able to preach the Gospel to the world than the Christians of the first century were to preach to the world of their day. If so, the duty is binding, and the last command of our Lord is a summons claiming a liberal obedience from us all.

OUR RESOURCES.

We can do it. Remember how largely our material facilities are increased. When Franklin, printer and statesman, wished to marry, his wife's mother objected to the marriage because there were then two presses in America, and she thought there was not room for a third. It is not 100 years since, and there are now some 8,000 printing offices in this country alone. A title of them could print the New Testament for the world. Only 10 years ago to cross from the Atlantic to the Pacific was a six months' journey, perilous and toilsome in the extreme; now it is pleasantly done between Monday morning and Saturday night. Any man who has to travel much will save eight weeks in every ten, and if he spend his life in travelling, the facilities of travel would practically multiply his years five-fold. In half a century of travel, a missionary can now effect as much as he could have done in two centuries and a half 100 years ago. The yearly income of England is five or six times larger than at the beginning of the century, and has doubled within 30 years. The income of the United States doubles, it is said, every five and twenty years. In printing power, in facilities of travel, in material wealth, the church is incomparably stronger than it has ever been.

FIFTY THOUSAND MISSIONARIES.

But what is it we need to fulfil this duty? With 50,000 missionaries at work for ten years, and with fifteen millions a year for ten years to support them, it is demonstrable that the Gospel might be preached, and preached repeatedly, to every man and woman and child on earth.

It seems a great company—fifty thousand preachers. And yet the number is not one per cent. of the members of evangelical churches in Christendom. There are three or four denominations in America, any one of which could supply all the preachers we need. England sent as many men to the Crimea to take a single fortress, and to keep up for a few years a Mohammedan despotism. Ten times the number of men fell on each side in the great American war. Five hundred years ago the Crusades had cost more lives, and they fought to win from men well nigh as obdurate as the invaders, an earthly Jerusalem and a temporal sovereignty. And cannot fifty thousand and redeemed men be found to win back the world to Jesus Christ? Have our hymns no meaning?

Send ten thousand heralds forth,
From east to west, from south to north,
To blow the trump of Jubilee,
And peace proclaim from sea to sea!

It seems a great sum—150 millions sterling in ten years; yet it is less than £3 a year—\$15 from each member of evangelical churches in Europe and America. England alone spends as much as the whole £150,000,000 every two years on intoxicating drinks. The Crimean war cost 100 millions, the American war ten times as much. An annual tax of sevenpence in the pound on the income of Great Britain would yield the fifteen millions we need. Nay, more; it would not be difficult to name 10,000 professing Christians who could give it all!

Looking only at men and money, is it not self-evident that it can be done?

A TEST.

I have not forgotten the difficulties of all kinds that surround this enterprise—travel, sickness, new tongues, unknown regions, barbarous tribes, the great wrath of one who would soon

perceive that his time is short. I know, or can imagine, them all. But I venture to say that whatever these difficulties, they would be overcome if English national honor, or American progress, or the German Fatherland, or Swiss liberties, were at stake; if diamond-beds or gold-fields had been discovered, nay, if even a Nile were to be traced and mapped. Is there a part of the earth that English or German speaking people could not penetrate—for a consideration? And shall Christ's commands and the world's needs fail to move? I repeat it—it can be done!

“CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME.”

But ours is a practical age. Charity begins at home. We work for present results. We want them told upon the palm. The field of missions is distant, the process costly, the success small. Is it not truer economy and wiser philanthropy to work in our respective countries till they are evangelized and saved? My reply is, I plead for home also. Wherever men are found who have not heard the Gospel often and earnestly proclaimed, there we are to preach it as at first “in Jerusalem and in Judea, in Samaria, and to the very ends of the earth.” Such is the divine order. Already, however, we have more devout men laboring for the evangelization of London than all Christians send for the evangelization of the world. In New York there is a larger evangelical agency sustained by Christian people than all the missionaries of all the Foreign Evangelical Societies of America. Begin at home by all means, but don't end there. If the world is to wait for the Gospel till London and New York is converted, till nothing more is needed there, the world will never get the Gospel at all.

THE SUCCESS OF MISSIONS.

And as to the smallness of the success of missions, I entirely deny the accuracy of the answer. It is demonstrable that the success of the Gospel in the last one hundred years is greater than the success it has achieved in any preceding hundred years; I may even say in any preceding 250 years. We look back fondly on the first ages and sigh for the gift of tongues and for Pentecostal blessing, and yet in the last century more has been done to give the Bible to the world than was done in the first ten centuries of our era. Twenty versions at most were made in the first 1,000 years; in the last one hundred years a hundred and twenty have been made—in languages spoken by more than half the globe. There are more conversions from heathenism in proportion to the number of preachers, than there are at home. It costs more per man to make a Christian in London or in New York than it costs in heathendom. Even when Constantine proclaimed Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire, the nominal Christians of the Empire were fewer than one-fifteenth of the population of the entire globe. Nominal Christians now form one-fifth. Each generation of the modern world consists of 30,000,000 of children, and they have to be Christianized individually one by one. Of these 30,000,000, 6,000,000 (one-fifth) become nominally Christians, and a considerable portion of them really Christians. In the Roman Empire there were not 3,000,000 of nominal Christians out of every 30,000,000; while for the whole world, the nominal Christians were only about 500,000 out of every 30,000,000. If any one wish for these facts in detail, he may find them in a sermon preached years ago by the Rev. Henry Venn, and in a recent address delivered by Canon Lightfoot. Had the results been different, there still stands the Maker's command—the marching orders of the church! But in fact our obedience to that command is enforced by prophecy—the promise of final victory, as it is also by victories already achieved! We can do it, and God has encouraged us to proceed.

ADVANTAGE OF SUCH WORK.

The recommendations of such affect,