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Poetry.

THE SIGNAL.

Fluttering there,
In the still gray of the morning air,
A streaming signal of black and white;
Somebody's darling died last night,
While you and I were asleep,
There, in the hushed and lonely room,
In the solemn midnight gloom.

Died, did I say?
Why, only the angels came that way,
And called for a little child to go
To the bosom of Him who loved them so,
Where the many mansions be,
And speeding up with the ransomed boy,
The heavens were filled with a song of joy.

But over there,
Waking never to pain or care,
Lies the little form to rest,
The white hands crossed on the quiet breast,
Soft eyes sealed with an angel-kiss,
The smile of heaven on lip and brow;
Say, would you waken the sleeper now?

But the busy day
Is rushing in with its work and play,
And soon the patter of little feet
Will pass the house on the village street,
And seeing the signal flutter there,
The children will pause, and whisper low,
But the little sleeper will never know.

On, to your play,
You will gather the stains of earth, to-day,
And the thorns of sin shall wound your feet,
In your careless patten upon the street,
But little Charlie is safe.
Sorrow or taint cannot reach him there,
White are the robes that the ransomed wear.

—Emily J. Bugbee.

Religious.

APOSTOLIC MISSIONS: THE GOSPEL FOR EVERY CREATURE.

BR JOSEPH ANGUS, D. D.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."—Mark xvi. 15.

It is seventy years since the revival of the spirit of missions. At the close of the last century, amid the din and bloodshed of an earlier French Revolution, Dr. Carey was publishing his first translation of the New Testament into one of the languages of Bengal. After seven years of apparently fruitless labour, he had begun to desecrate the water of the Ganges by the baptism of his first convert. In the same year Dr. Vanderkemp reached the Cape, and began missions in Africa. It is only seventy years ago since; and now the Bible has been translated for the first time into more than a hundred languages, spoken by half the globe. A thousand missionary evangelists are now laboring among the heathen. More than ten thousand native preachers and teachers have been raised up through their toils, and native church-members are counted by hundreds of thousands. There are still found men who ask tauntingly for evidence of our success, and yet I venture to affirm that as mighty a work has been done in these last seventy years as in any seventy since the beginning of the Gospel!

Cheering as this success and these labours seem, they have not kept pace either with the march of Providence or with the needs of the world. Knowledge and commerce, and material civilization, the bounties and the openings of Providence have multiplied faster than our missions. When Carey began his work, India was closed to the gospel, as was nearly all Asia. Over Africa there brooded a darkness which made even its geography a mystery. Europe was everywhere under the power of the Man of sin, or its churches frowned upon all evangelical labour. Within living memory India and China, Turkey and Egypt, Burmah and Persia, have all become open. Africa has been traversed from end to end; and as to Europe, there are two Baptist churches in Madrid, while the gospel can now be preached again "at Rome also"—the gospel that is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The march of Providence,

I repeat, has outstripped the progress of the Church.

Or if that march be measured by other standards than the number of open doors, it is no less striking. When Franklin, the American printer and statesman proposed for his wife, her mother objected to the marriage, because there were already two presses in America, and she thought there was no room for a third. It is little more than seventy years since, and there are now six thousand printing offices in that country alone. To reach that continent required as many weeks as now it takes days. Only ten 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 ten weeks out of every twelve; and if he were to spend his life in travelling, the facilities of travel would practically multiply his years five-fold. Half a century of life spent in travel would now effect as much as two centuries and a half a hundred years ago! In San Francisco I read what has been written that morning near Sedan, seven thousand miles away; and most marvellous, perhaps, of all, I reached that city within a month of leaving home, by the gentlest touch of human hands controlling or using forces that are among the mightiest that men wield. Yet within seventy years the man who spoke of "steam waggons" was deemed insane, and was helped, only because "his invention," it is said, "could do no harm, and might lead to something useful." So it is with everything. The human eye can now see through space, millions of miles further than it could even when we were born. The three thousand or four thousand fixed stars which the apostles saw are now known to be six or seven million. The yearly income of England is five or six times larger than at the beginning of the century, and has doubled within thirty years. The effect of all this is that, for openings of providence, for facilities of usefulness, for material strength and resources, this year of grace 1871 is much further beyond the year 1800 than are the missionary labours of this year beyond the labours of our fathers. The march, the bounty of Providence, has outstripped us all.

You will readily gather from these remarks what the feelings are in which we ought to indulge; devout thankfulness and as devout discontent.

Our labours have been more abundant, the results are highly satisfactory, and yet comparatively very little has been done. It is in this spirit I desire for a few moments to discuss the subject of missions, under the two-fold division of—(1) The work itself; and (2) the extent to which we are to prosecute it. We are to preach the Gospel—that is our work, and we are to preach it to every creature, "to all creatures" as the word is also rendered—that is the limit of our work. May the Good Spirit Himself help us to understand and to observe both parts of this command!

1. Our Work—We are to preach the Gospel.

The Gospel! In an important sense, it is as old as creation! From the very first, men knew of a Divine law, fixing distinctions between right and wrong. Their sinfulness and guilt, atonement through vicarious sufferings, God's free and yet righteous mercy, the obligation and 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. This Gospel we may describe in various ways. It is a three-fold message—of repentance and remission of sin through our Lord—of personal holiness, and of the work of the Spirit whereby the new life is begun and perfected—of blessedness for all who love and serve God. Forgiveness, holiness, blessedness! What more can we need? Or it is 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. Or it is a single message—of Christ as crucified, the true revealer of the Divine holiness and love, the Redeemer and Comforter, and pattern and sanctifier of us all. This Gospel—at once a three-fold, and a two-fold, and a single message—Christ came to found, even more than to teach. Yet it is the Gospel He taught, as it is the Gospel His Apostles taught. So mighty did it prove, that the most successful preacher of the Apostolic age resolved, as much, perhaps, from experience as from direct inspiration, to know nothing among men, save Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ as crucified—the power and the wisdom of God.

And this Gospel we are to preach. The words that describe our duty in this respect are all of them suggestive. The first of them is the one used in this passage—We are to proclaim it as heralds; not making our message, but carrying it and announcing it 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 readily 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 oftentimes there.

We are to be heralds, and talkers, and reasoners, and publishers of good things.

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 His disciples to teach all nations: thus, the apostles ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ: the word suggesting that the truths which we announce, we are 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 to God.'"

Here, then, we have in brief the inspired description of our calling. We are to proclaim the truth 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 explanations, by appeals to what we have ourselves felt, by earnest entreaty. There is a preaching that never speaks with authority, but questions and doubts on all things. There is a preaching that never reasons, but is always dogmatic or emotional. There is a preaching that never "talks," but is ever stilted and formal. There is a preaching that is cold discussion, or bare announcement, and never entreats. Apostolic preaching was a combination of all these processes, saturated with prayers and tears.

These statements of the work of Christian evangelists are, I hope, familiar to us all. It is part of their glory that they contain nothing new; and yet they rebuke theories and practices which are found on all sides.

They tell us that it is the gospel we are to preach; not science, or art, or ethical duties; not what we think on public questions, or even on subordinate points of theology, but what we know of essential truth. This gospel we are to preach, not to discover, or to manufacture, or to excoerate from our own consciousness. We are to preach the gospel; not become pastors of the churches which our preaching may form; not exhibit a gorgeous ritual, or repeat a solemn litany. We are simply to preach it, as men who feel its power, are convinced of its truth, and know that they have a divine authority for all they are saying. To this work we are to restrict ourselves when carrying out our Lord's commission. This is the command that is embalmed in the tenderest feelings of true disciples; the one legacy which, besides His peace and the promise of His presence, he bequeathed to His Church until he came again.

2. But the second part of my theme may create difficulty. The words of the text not only tell us what our word is, but what its limits are; to what extent we are to prosecute it: "To every creature," "to all creation" is this gospel to be preached. "In Jerusalem and Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth," is the inspired description of the duty as defined in the Acts; and in thirty years after the death of our Lord, it has been preached, as the apostle expresses it in the Colossians, "to every creature, 'in the whole creation, under heaven.'"

The words are addressed to the apostles, "the eleven;" but to the apostles as the representatives of the entire Church; for it is a duty in which all share. It was in the spirit of this command that Andrew found Peter, as Philip found Nathaniel, preaching Christ to him, and brought him to Jesus. It was in the spirit of this command that the woman of Sychar went and told, in the fulness of her heart, of Him who seemed the Christ, and on her talk great multitudes believed. It was in obedience to it that the members of the Church at Jerusalem, when scattered by persecution, all except the apostles, went "everywhere preaching the Word." Hence, apostles welcomed all fellow-helpers, men and women, in the patience and kingdom of Christ. Hence, the Thessalonian church earned the high praise that they were "examples," a model church to all that believed; for from them sounded out the Word of the Lord through all the regions beyond them. A common duty!

The only other peculiarity that needs notice, is that the form of the command, as given in Matthew, shows by the very expression that this work of preaching the gospel to every creature belongs to each age. It is not done once for all. It has to be done again and again. The church of each generation redeemed by the same blood, renewed and blest by the same Spirit, has practically the same honour and responsibility; the honour of making known to the world of each generation "the manifold wisdom" and mercy of God.

Here, then, is our work, and here its limits. 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 every one he can reach; and Christians collectively are to tell it, if they can, to all the world. Till this is done we are not free from obligation; and if any of the millions we can reach perish unwarned and unbidden, we divide with them the guilt of their ruin. "Many have not the knowledge of God: 'I speak it,' says the Apostle 'to your shame.'"

The Gospel for every creature! Can we give it? Is it possible for the age to tell to the age, for the Church to tell to the world the glad tidings of the Gospel? In ten or twenty years can repentance and remission of sins be preached through Christ, to all nations?

I believe that they can. The Christians of the nineteenth century are more able to preach the Gospel to the whole world than the Christians of the

first century were to preach it to the world of their day. If so, the duty is binding and the precept of the text is a literal command, a summons claiming obedience from us all.

(Conclusion next Week.)

DEEP PLOUGHING—IN THE PULPIT.

There is much mere goodish preaching and exhortation, both by ministers and laymen, in which one hears scarcely anything except a mention of God's compassion, of Christ's willingness to save all who trust in him, and of the ease and pleasure of a religious life. There is truth in these representations; but how much and with what limitations, or with what relationships to other truths, no one can understand without a deep work of conviction, wrought by a clear presentation of fundamental doctrines. Men must see the vile character and ruinous nature of sin; the holiness of God and his sure purpose to punish persistent sinners; the entirely fallen condition of man, and the necessity of a complete renewal of character by the Holy Spirit; the coming fact of a final judgment and of eternal awards of destiny; and the positive need of redemption by the blood of Christ. Those who slightly realize their guilt and danger, will slightly appreciate the fullness and grace of Christ's salvation; and thus their purpose of a new life will be feeble, their joy will be faint, their gratitude will be small, and their testimony of little power. Deep ploughing requires the preaching of law as well as of grace, of hell as well as of heaven, of Divine severity as well as of Divine compassion, of unconditional, whole-hearted consecration as well as of forgiveness. Did not Jesus himself so preach? Did not the most fearful warnings fall from the same lips which uttered the tenderest invitations? Did he not say that the Holy Spirit, when given, should reprove (or convince) the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment? Did not Paul make the dissolute Felix tremble, as "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come"? And did he not cry aloud, "Behold, therefore, the goodness and the severity of God"? Let us have deeper ploughing, and we shall see more marked and abiding results. Men have not changed; the gospel has not changed; and in its grand characteristics the utterances of the pulpit should not change.—*The Advance.*

CHRIST MORE THAN THE CHURCH.

There is an exclusive and sectarian bigotry—not confined to any one Christian denomination, but in a measure, at least, common to them all—which talks rather of "the Church" than of Christ crucified; of sacrament, rather than of the sacrifice; which practically regards the grace of God as flowing in the channels of its own exclusive ordinances, and the healing power of the living water as abiding rather in the earthen chalice than in the sparkling spring. To hear these men talk of ordinations, and confessions, and baptisms, one would think that this fountain of salvation were, like a mineral spring at a watering-place, enclosed, and appropriated, and surrounded by liveried water-dippers, so that the soul that will not drink from these particular cups must needs perish in agony. And the abomination of this last thing is worse than the first. Tell me that God's eternal decree shuts me away from salvation, and I could better be reconciled to it. The grandeur of the Eternal One, as with his majestic sceptre he waves me back from the fountain, would give dignity to destruction.

But to be repulsed from the sweet waters by a poor mortal gesture; to lose the healing draught because a spider's web is spun by the well-side; to be driven backward upon God's uncoovenanted mercies by some fair-lipped champion of successions and