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"ABSOLVE TE."

"Absolve te"—"I absolve thee," are the words used by the Romish priest, when he assumes the Divine prerogative of forgiving sins. A recent convert from Romanism in Ireland, was threatened that if he forsook the priest, the devil would have him. The man replied, that it was true enough that if he forsook the Priest he would be lost; "but," said he, "I cling to the TRUE Priest, who ALONE can pardon my sins, and save me from the devil." (See Isa. xlvi. 25; Mark ii. 7.) In no one instance do we read of even the Apostles forgiving sins.

"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."
LUKE vii. 50.

ONE Priest alone can pardon me,
Or bid me "Go in peace;"
Can breathe that word, "Absolve te,"
And make these heart-throbs cease;
My soul has heard this priestly voice;
It said, "I bore thy sins—Rejoice!"
1 Pet. ii. 24.

He showed the spear-mark in His side,
The nail-print on His palm;
Said, "Look on Me, the Crucified;
Why tremble thus? Be calm!
All power is Mine—I set the free—
Be not afraid—" Absolve te."
Isa. xiv. 22.

In chains of sin once tied and bound,
I walk in life and light;
Each spot I tread is hallowed ground,
Whilst Him I keep in sight,
Who died a victim on the tree,
That He might say, "Absolve te."
1 John i. 9.

By Him my soul is purified;
Once leprous and defiled;
Cleansed by the water from His side,
God sees me as a child;
No priest can heal or cleanse but He;
No other say, "Absolve te."
Matt. viii. 3.

He robed me in a priestly dress,
That I might incense bring
Of prayer and praise, and righteousness,
To Heaven's Eternal King;
And when He gave His robe to me,
He smiled and said, "Absolve te."
Zech. iii. 4, 5.

In Heaven He stands before the throne,
The Great High Priest above;
"MELCHISEDEC"—that name alone
Can sin's dark stain remove;
To Him I look on bended knee,
And hear that sweet "Absolve te."
Heb. viii. 1.

A girded Levite here below,
A willing service bring;
And fain would tell to all I know,
Of Christ, the Priestly King;
Would win all hearts from sin to flee,
And hear him say, "Absolve te."
1 John ii. 1.

"A little while," and He shall come
Forth from the inner shrine,
To call His pardoned brethren home;
O bliss supreme, divine!
When every blood-bought child shall see
THE PRIEST who said "ABSOLVE TE."

THE BOOKS OF CHILDREN.—The poet Cowper beautifully says, speaking of the charming and simple religious books that pleased his childhood: "Twere well with most, if books, that could engage their childhood, pleased them at a riper age; The man, approving what had charmed the boy, Would die at last in comfort, peace and joy, And not with curses on his heart who stole The gem of truth from his unguarded soul."

THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY:

A Discourse delivered in Rochester, N. Y., before the New York Baptist Union for Ministerial Education, July 12, 1853.

BY FRANCIS WAYLAND, PRESIDENT OF BROWN UNIVERSITY.

Mark xvi. 15. Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.

These words, uttered by the Son of God, a few moments before his ascension, contain the last precept which he ever delivered to his disciples. They constitute the commission under which we labor to extend the reign of the Messiah; and they furnish the assurance on which we rely, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. A proper understanding of the text must therefore convey important instruction on the nature and duties of the christian ministry.

The precept in the text is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

I. What is this Gospel which we are here commanded to preach? The Gospel is good news. What good news are we here commissioned to proclaim?

In order to answer this question, let us glance at the moral condition of those to whom the gospel is sent.

In the beginning, God created man in his own image, with a moral constitution perfectly adapted to a holy life, and placed before him every motive which should impel a moral agent to a course of spotless virtue. The law under which we were created was holy and just and good. The probation assigned to us was, however, wholly subjected to the principle of law. Its conditions were two: first, the man that doeth these things shall live by them; and secondly, cursed is every man that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Through the abounding grace of God, eternal life was promised as the reward of obedience, and on the other hand, disobedience to the law, or rebellion against the moral government of the universe, was punishable with eternal death, banishment from the presence of God, misery everlasting. Under our first probation no provision was made for pardon, and therefore no hope was offered to the guilty. Every thing was to be gained by perfect obedience, every thing was to be lost by a single transgression.

Such were the moral conditions under which we were originally created. But our first parents sinned, and "by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners."—Without inquiring here into the manner in which his posterity are affected by the fall of Adam, it is sufficient to state the fact, that, from the date of the first transgression there has not been "a just man on earth who has not sinned." The moral blight fell upon all born of woman. The whole race became rebels against God. "They did not like to retain Him in their knowledge," and preferred to live in open defiance of his authority. "The thoughts of their heart became evil, only evil continually." Sin became the irrevocable habit of man.—Though impelled by the constitution of his nature to worship something, he chose to worship birds and four footed beasts and creeping things, nay, the work of his own hands, rather than "God over all who is blessed forevermore." "The earth was filled with violence" and steeped in pollution. In every single individual of our race, unrenewed by the spirit of God, evil tendency assumed the form of fixed and unalterable habit, and thus every man was making himself meet for eternal banishment from all that is holy; while, at the same time, he was "treasuring up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

The conditions of the probation under which we were created having thus been universally violated, nothing remained but for the law to take its course. By the deeds of the law could no man be justified, for we had broken the law during our whole existence. We were thus all under condemnation. The law contained no provision for pardon. Sentence had been passed upon us, and we were awaiting the day of its execution. Earth had become a mere suburb of hell, into which death was commissioned to sweep the myriads of our race, from the first sinner Adam to the last of his sin-smitten posterity.

But though all was lost, the compassions of God were not exhausted, and he did not leave us to perish without hope. The terms of our first probation having been violated, eternal life, on the principles under which we were originally created, was impossible. It pleased our Father in Heaven to offer us a second probation on infinitely more favorable conditions, so that, although we had "sinned and come short of the glory of God," we might be "freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But before this new probation could be offered to us, it was necessary that the law which we had broken should be magnified and made honorable. It must be perfectly and triumphantly obeyed by a being in our nature, and yet one who by his own nature was not under the law of humanity. No other Being than the Son of God himself was competent to assume the work of our redemption, and our "help was laid upon one that was mighty." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The Messiah fulfilled every requirement of the law in our stead, and, "as by the disobedience of one the many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one the many were made righteous." He suffered whatever was necessary to redeem us from the curse of the law. He died for our offences, and offered himself without spot to God in our stead. His offering was accepted, and, to assure us of its acceptance, he was raised from the dead. Having finished the work that had been given him to do, he ascended to "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." Having "humiliated himself, and became obedient to death, the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and of things on earth, and of things under the earth, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

By this interposition of the Son of God on our behalf, the destiny of man was changed. A new probation on more favorable conditions was granted us. By the condition of the former probation we were doomed to despair in consequence of a single transgression. Now, through the righteousness of Christ, though guilty of innumerable sins, we may be accepted through the beloved. "God is well pleased for his righteousness sake, for he hath magnified the law and made it honorable." On the most merciful conditions, repentance for sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, every child of Adam may be pardoned, justified, sanctified and raised to a higher glory than that which he had lost by his own wilful transgression. Henceforth the gate of heaven stands as wide open for all born of woman as the gate of hell. The change in our condition is such as the imagination of man could never have conceived. It is a change from darkness to light, from death to life, from pollution to purity, from a dwelling forever in hell with the spirits of the damned, to an

"inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."

Every one must at once perceive that this is the great event in the history of our world. Compared with it, what are the revolutions of nations, what the deliverance of peoples from bondage, what the progress of man from ignorance to knowledge, and from barbarism to civilization! Nay, could we combine in one event all the most stupendous social changes which the world has ever seen, they would all be lighter than the dust of the balance, in comparison with the mystery of Christ and him crucified. This is the good news spoken of in the text.

II. Let us in the next place inquire what is meant by preaching this gospel.

The word preach, in the new testament, has a meaning different from that which at present commonly attaches to it. We understand by it the delivery of an oration, or discourse, on a particular theme, connected more or less closely with religion. It may be the discussion of a doctrine, an exegetical essay, a dissertation on social virtues or vices, as well as a persuasive unfolding of the teaching of the Holy Ghost. No such general idea was intended by the word as it is used by the writers of the new testament. The words translated preach in our version are two. The one signifies simply to herald, to announce, to proclaim, to publish; the other, with this general idea, combines the notion of good tidings; and means, to publish, or be the messenger, of good news. From what I have already said of the nature of the gospel message, it is evident that no other idea would so well have corresponded with the facts of the case. A great and unexpected change had been wrought in the condition of humanity. Our whole race had been, by a most astonishing act of grace, redeemed from inconceivable misery. They, however, remained ignorant both of their danger and of their deliverance. The knowledge of this act of infinite love had been communicated to a few men who had availed themselves of the gracious conditions of the new covenant, and had consecrated their whole being henceforth to their Redeemer. The rest of the world was wrapt in Egyptian darkness. Mankind still continued under the curse of the law, and were passing by millions to receive in everlasting despair the just demerit of their transgressions. The command was, go abroad every where, proclaim to every creature the news of redemption; tell them of the love of God in Christ Jesus. All things are now ready, bid them come and welcome to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

When the Israelites were bitten by the fiery flying serpents, and the bite was inevitably fatal, Moses was directed to set up a brazen serpent, with the assurance that whosoever that had been bitten, looked upon it, should be healed. You can imagine how the first man who felt its saving efficacy, flew to communicate the news to his brethren, and urge them to avail themselves of the remedy which had delivered him from death. Every man who was healed became immediately a herald of the glad tidings to others. Every one who was saved became a publisher of the salvation, or, in other words, a preacher, until in a few minutes the news spread throughout the encampment, and in this sense every tribe was evangelized.

Allow me to illustrate the meaning of this term, as used by our Lord, by an occurrence of which I was an eye-witness. It so chanced, that, at the close of the last war with Great Britain, I was temporarily a resident of the city of New York. The prospects of the nation were shrouded in gloom. We had been for two or three years at war with the mightiest nation on earth, and, as she had