

one of rival fields, whether "home" or "foreign"; not of saving our great cities or saving our own land. It is primarily a matter of implicit and immediate obedience to Christ. Our mission knows no limits but the limits of the command, which are the limits of the world and of time. So long as one human creature has not yet heard the message, our duty as messengers is not done, however many who have heard remain yet unconverted. Our Master stands with imperative finger *pointing to unoccupied fields*; and while one such is left, he has not been fully obeyed and the Spirit will not be fully outpoured.

We believe this and therefore we must speak. Though sadly conscious of feebly stemming a tide that with tremendous energy of movement sweeps the other way, we here record our solemn conviction that the church has yet to take up this work of missions in dead earnest. These unoccupied fields will never be taken possession of in Christ's name until the only ground of discrimination between one field and another is their *comparative destitution*. Whether near or far, those whose need is most extreme, and whose ignorance is most appalling, have the first claim. The drift of the day is toward concentration on the most hopeful, and even the nearest fields. Hence remote heathen and degraded pagan peoples are neglected; the question is soberly raised whether it be right to blast the very blossoms of our highest Christian civilization in the furnace of African fever; whether it be not waste to send such women as Harriet Newell, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Judson, Mrs. Gordon, to Oriental pagan and South Sea cannibals; and hundreds of Christians quote with relish the sneer of Dickens, who makes Mrs. Jellyby look past the misery of her own household and neighborhood to sigh over Borioboola Gha!

For a century the Spirit has poured his fullest blessing on families, churches, and schools of the prophets, whence have gone the largest bands of laborers to fields remote. The paradox of modern church life is this: Apparent depletion ends in richest repletion; the most liberal gifts of men and money to farthest fields are the signal for the most rapid replenishment at home. Here is the key to the paradox: the Holy Spirit rewards obedience. Should we recall the 6,000 foreign missionaries to re-enforce the home-fields, it would bring to those very fields the curse of barrenness. Should we, on the contrary, distribute the whole force equally and impartially, with strict reference to the vast extent and awful need of the whole field, such blessing would come upon fields nearest home as never has been known. Of church life, as of individual life, it is true:

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth:
And there is that withholdeth more than is meet,
But it tendeth to poverty."

VII. *The limits of our commission become the bounds of our satisfaction and joy.*