

I have not forgotten the difficulties of all kinds that surround this enterprise—travel, health, unknown regions, barbarous tribes, the great wrath of one who perceives 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 national honor were at stake ; if diamond beds or gold fields of sufficient value had been discovered ; nay, if even a Nile were to be traced and mapped. Is there a part of the earth that Englishmen could not penetrate—for a consideration ? And shall Christ’s command and the world’s needs fail to move ? I repeat it—*It can be done !*

The recommendations of some such plan, so simple and comprehensive—the preaching of the Gospel, and *nothing more*, to every creature, and *nothing less*—are clear and decisive.

There is, first of all, the Divine command and the Divine example. Education is of value ; so is the relief of distress ; the alleviation of suffering ; so are canals, and railroads, and commerce the implements of a material civilization. We honor them all ; but they are most honored when made subservient to the Gospel. When the blessed God stepped forth from his place, as philanthropist (Titus 3 : 4) He gave His law and prophets, and sent His Son. And now all the improvement He works begins in human hearts, and is to spread from within outwardly till all is renewed. There are, be 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.

Some such comprehensive plan, moreover, will have the advantage of proving to the world that we believe what we profess—viz., that the Gospel is God’s remedy for human misery and sinfulness, and that it is the Church’s honor to make it known. Every one sees that our present agencies, with their million pounds a year, for the evangelization of eight hundred millions of people, do not *mean business* ; and there is, in consequence, widespread infidelity in relation to the Gospel and in relation to the sincerity of the Christian Church herself. . . . What an answer it would be to rationalism, and secularism, and sectarianism, and popery, and infidelity in all their forms ; and what a healthy confirmation of our own faith if the evangelical churches of Christendom were to resolve, in God’s strength, to preach the Gospel to every creature. It would be the fitting reply at once to papal infallibility and to rationalistic unbelief.

And how our work would simplify and extend if we confined it to this business of preaching the Gospel. Many men would be found, of every class and of various social positions, competent to do this work, but not competent to become pastors, and not caring to take upon them the business-labors of many modern missionaries—good men, full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost. Nay, might not our best men—our laymen and pastors—whether young or old, be prepared to give five years, or ten, or parts of every year, to this specific work, who are not prepared to become missionaries for life, in the common meaning of the term.