

given by signs and wonders wrought by Jesus and his immediate disciples, and more particularly by the miracle of the resurrection. To this was added the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit and the many various gifts which succeeded it. These were sufficient to prove that Christianity is of God, and to warrant the rational acceptance of it as truth, both by Jew and Greek.

These were extraordinary times and circumstances, so God gave extraordinary officers and gifts, but when Christianity was established, these officers and gifts ceased. The tender plant which had been hedged in by miracles, and watered with the blood of Apostles, soon grew so strong and struck its roots so deep that it needed no more extraordinary dispensations to ensure its full development, but could bid defiance alike to the chilling blasts and to the withering heats of hostile and persecuting powers.

Unquestionably, Evangelists were then employed in the work of the Church. They may or may not have had gifts of miracles, that was not essential to their office. The office of Evangelists was to preach Christ where he was not named; to establish the Church where no Church existed. Their work lay among those who know not Christianity, not among believers; among the ignorant, not among the savingly enlightened.

Now we have no doubt that if Apostles were again necessary for the Church, they would again be given. If in God's providence the circumstances of the Church were such as to need miraculous interposition, the same All-wise Head who has always wrought miracles when required would do so again. But they are not necessary. When the missionary goes forth now to establish Christianity, he has no need of any but moral miracles,—but Christianity and all its attendant blessings. The completed Word of Revelation, in its majesty and morality, forms so convincing a manifestation of the excellence of the true religion and of its superiority to every system of error or of partial truth, that its success is uniform in overthrowing error and elevating mankind even where the heart is uninfluenced. Miraculous gifts therefore and Apostles are not needed in the present circumstances of the Church, and therefore are not given.

But we cannot say this of Evangelists. We will never go so far as to allow that in a Christian land, even where full provision is made for the religious instruction of every individual, there is no need of any Evangelist, other than the stated gospel minister, labouring in public and from house to house. We contend that in very few places if any, is such a state of things to be found, and wherever there are persons ignorant of Christianity, the circumstances exist which call for Evangelistic labour. The Church of God must send forth Evangelists to teach these the way of life. In this way the office of Evangelist is ordinary and necessary so long as there are any heathen nations to be taught, or any regions not yet blest with the knowledge of God.

What is the missionary but an Evangelist? He preaches Jesus. He teaches and reasons with opposers; he educates and civilizes or plies his healing art, only to recommend Christianity, and to bring the degraded heathen to appreciate it. The Missionary is no pastor. His work is to gather, to organise, to train a native ministry, to ordain elders, in a word to establish the Church, and to bring it to its fully developed state. Till this is done his office is necessary, when this is done his office in that place is unnecessary.

What are our city missionaries but Evangelists? Their duty is to go into the streets and lanes of the city, and the degraded resorts of crime and practical atheism, little better than heathenism, to teach those who never learned Jesus, or who had forgotten him. The objects of their concern are the lapsed masses, not the Church of God gathered in. And when a Christian congregation has been formed by their instrumentality and is fully organised, the Evangelist must turn from them to those who are still in darkness.