

gospel to every creature;" and, "lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The command is as universal as discipleship, and it is to continue obligatory till the Son of man shall come.

Does any one say that this command was given only to the apostles? It may or may not have been so; but were they alone included in the obligation which it imposes? The address at the last supper was given to them alone, as were many other of the instructions of our Lord; but were they the only persons to whom the words spoken apply? Is it affirmed that they and those whom they should appoint are alone to preach the word? I answer that Jesus Christ never said so, and we have no right to add to this any more than to any other of his commandments.

But let us see how the apostles themselves understood the precept. Their own narrative shall inform us. "At that time there was a great persecution against the church that was at Jerusalem and they were scattered abroad throughout all the regions of Judea and Samaria, *except the apostles*." "Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."—Acts viii: 1, 4. "Then they that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake also to the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. These men were not apostles, nor even the original disciples of Christ, for they were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. Yet they went everywhere preaching the word, and in so doing they pleased the Master, for the Holy Spirit accompanied their labors with the blessing from on high. The ascended Saviour thus approved of their conduct, and testified that their understanding of his last command was correct.

If we need any farther confirmation of the interpretation which we have given of the precept in the text, we find it in other portions of our Lord's teaching. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." The words here indicate the manner in which the kingdom of Christ is to extend itself. Leaven assimilates the whole mass to itself by the contact of particle with particle—each particle, as soon as it is leavened, communicating its own virtue to all the particles surrounding it. So every disciple of Christ is bound, by proclaiming Christ to those near to him, to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer; and every one who becomes a disciple is bound to make it his chief business to disciple others.

Again, our Lord declares that every one who believes in him shall be the means of imparting salvation to others. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." This he spake of the Spirit which, not the apostles, but they that believe on him should receive. Thus, as our Lord is the living fountain from which every believer drinks; so every one who has drunk of this fountain becomes, in this secondary sense, a fountain to all who are about him.

So, in the messages to the churches, delivered by the ascended Saviour to the Apostle John, we find these remarkable words: "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

You see then, brethren, the nature and duty of the church of Christ. It consists of the whole company of penitent sinners, united to Christ by faith, animated

by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit, every one partaking with Christ in that love of souls which moved him to offer up himself, and every one laboring after his example for the salvation of the world. This is the object for which the believer lives, as it was the object for which Christ lived. This consecration of himself to Christ for this purpose, is a matter of personal obligation. It cannot be done by deputy. It must be done by the man himself. He can no more delegate it to another, than he can delegate faith, or repentance, or prayer, or holy living. Every disciple must be a disciple. Every individual is heaven, and he must assimilate to himself all that comes into contact with him. As he himself drinks of the fountain, he must become a fountain to his fellow men; otherwise, he has not drunk of the fountain himself. If he bear not fruit, he is cut off as a branch, and is withered.

This is the first and primary duty of a disciple, and to it his whole life must be conformed. He may enter upon no calling, he may occupy no station, he may indulge in no amusement inconsistent with this elementary duty of discipleship. A revival of religion represents a church in its normal condition, the condition which Christ always intended it to maintain. Then every believer makes it his great concern to call men to repentance, not as a matter of form, but with earnest and moving persuasion. Every convert is inviting his former companions to turn unto the Lord. But, if this manner of life is appropriate to a revival, it is appropriate to all times; for men are everywhere and at all times sinners hastening to the judgment seat, and they must all perish unless they be redeemed by the blood of Christ.

It would be easy to show that it is by involving this obligation in the very elementary idea of discipleship, that Christ has provided for the universal triumph of his church. On this depends the vitality of personal religion. We can never in earnest call men to repentance, unless we are living holy and penitent lives ourselves. Hence, also arises the separation of the church from the world, and hence the antagonism which Christ declares must always exist between them. "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." It is under these circumstances that the church has always gained its most signal victories, and when these principles of duty exercise an abiding influence over the life of every disciple, the kingdoms of this world will soon become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

Such, then, is the privilege, and such the duty of every disciple of Christ. It enters into the elementary idea of discipleship. With this every other subsequent idea must be in harmony. No ecclesiastical system which we form can either liberate a disciple from this obligation, or take away his privilege of thus laboring for Christ. Whatever offices are created in the church, are created for the purpose of enabling the disciple the better to discharge this duty. They are made for the church, the church is not made for them; and it becomes us ever to be watchful, lest by any error the church of Christ be deprived of this, the main-spring of all its efficiency.

I have thus far spoken of the gifts which are common to every man of a sane mind. But almost every man has some peculiar gift, that is some naturally bestowed means of usefulness. This also he is bound in the same manner to consecrate to the service of the Master. A brief allusion to some of these will sufficiently illustrate my meaning. One man may be endowed with uncommon conversational ability, so that in the ordinary intercourse of society, he readily leads the minds of men in any direction he chooses. The disciple of Christ is not at liberty to use this talent for the purpose of attaining to social pre-eminence, or for the gratification of personal vanity; he must