

Poetry.

THE FIRST SNOW-FALL.

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

The snow had begun in the gloaming, And softly all the night Had been heaping flake and highway With a silence deep and white.

Every pine and fir and hemlock, Where'er the wind did sweep, As the poorest twig on the elm tree Was rigid an inch deep with pearl.

From shells, new roofed with Carars, Came Chanticleer's muffled crow, The stiff rails were softened with snow's down, And still fluttered down the snow.

I stood and watched by the window The noiseless work of the sky, And the sudden furies of snow-birds Like brown leaves whirling by.

I thought of a mound in sweet Auburn, Where a little head alone stood, How the flakes were flooding it gently, As the robins the babes in the wood.

Up spoke our little Mabel, Saying, "Father, who makes it snow?" And I told her of the good Allfather Who cares for us all below.

Again I looked at the snow-fall, And thought of the leaven sky, That arched o'er our first great sorrow, When when our mound was heaped so high.

I remembered the gradual patience That fell from that cloud like snow, Flakes by flake, healing and hiding The scar of deep-stabbed woe.

And again to the child I whispered, "The snow that husheth all, Darling, the merciful Father, Alone can make it fall!"

Then, with eyes that saw not, I kissed her, And she, kissing back, could not know, That my kiss was given to her sister Folded close under deepening snow.

Christian Faith and Practice.

Enterprise of Missions.

From the Macedonia.

"Go ye and teach all nations."

The words of our Lord's commission to his apostles are to be viewed not in the light of invitation, or a recommendation of a course proper to be pursued, but in the light of a command. This command was issued under circumstances adapted to give it great force in the mind of the disciples. They had seen their Master's mighty works, through which he had glorified himself, and had given them more or less distinct, they had reason to regard his words as the words of God. They had seen him dead and buried. But now he was risen again from the dead—the same glorious person, the same compassionate Saviour; but more sacred in their eyes on account of what he had passed through. At the scene of his ascension, just before he was parted from them, he commanded them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, giving to the commission the form of a command. The authority of this command was his possession of all power both in heaven and on earth. When, therefore, they went everywhere preaching the word, it was on the authority of his express command, given in the most solemn and affecting circumstances. As often as they thought of him, they were reminded of the ascension of the Lord of glory to the glory which he had before the foundation of the world—in undertones of most subduing power must the command have come back upon their memories, and on each given occasion. "And in their various travels and labors," they went forth under such a sanction—a sanction such as no ambassador of earthly kings or courts ever enjoyed.

Acting under such a sanction, they fulfilled the letter of the command as honest and holy men. As we read of their journeys and labors we applaud the course they pursued, and we are ready to commend their reason and a sober judgment would have us to expect from them. If their ascended Master sent them forth, should they dare to linger? If he, to whom is given all power in heaven and on earth, gave them his mission to fulfil, should they dare to delay? Had worldly ease, profit, pleasure or honor tempted them to stay at Jerusalem, to enjoy its peace, to minister at its altars, to mingle with its people, to participate in its festivals, we can easily imagine that a ringing sound would be in their ears day and night,—"How shall they preach except they go?"

The command of Christ is not abrogated. The commission remains in full force as long as there are those who can fulfil it, and those in respect to whom it needs to be fulfilled. What though we did not stand upon the crucifix, and witness the agonies of the commission to his disciples? Christ's voice has sounded to us—"Go ye and teach all nations." What though we did not hear him with our own ears? The Holy Spirit has reported his words to us. And by the terms of his commission this only alternative is put into our hands. Shall we go and perform the work? Or, shall we sustain those who propose to go in our stead?

The age in which the apostles commenced the missionary work was, in some respects, an age most unfavorable to the dissemination of a new and spiritual religion. Many of the tribes to which they went were ignorant, uncultivated and uncivilized. They had never risen above outward forms. A spiritual faith was to them no faith at all. They were wedded to the pomp of their national religions. They loved the shows of their religions, the sacrifices, the games, the great assemblages of the people, and the gay holidays, full of mirth and revelry which their religions sanctioned. The faith they cherished had nothwithstanding their natural corruptions, instead of resisting them. To desert the established religion was unpopular, if not hazardous,—or even a capital crime. Satan had made strong fetters of his victims. But the uncivilized tribes of the barbarous tribes opposed a less formidable obstacle to their success than the civilization of the cultivated Greek and Roman, who in their search for the true philosophy, despised the philosophy of the cross which they were successful in achieving their victories. These are the seas of suffering, through which they waded to conquest.

But notwithstanding all these obstacles, Christianity went forth, by a rapid progress, conquering and

to conquer. It passed over the limits of empires and kingdoms; it swayed the rude minds of the most uncultivated tribes; it turned the heathen temples into Christian oratories; consecrated the streams as baptismal fonts; impressed its traces even on the heathen islands which have survived to the present age; and made the dens and rocks of the mountains rocks of the praises of God. Feeble means were and have been crowned with great results. Even seeming evils have wrought into good. The blood of the martyrs has been made the seed of the church; and temporary reverses have resulted in greater ultimate prosperity. Thus the Lord Jesus has accumulated to himself subjects from every part of this world.—Thus have many crowns been set upon his head; and many, many trophies have been gathered at his feet. What remains but that all who love him join in the praise—

"Come, Lord, and aided to thy many crowns, Receive yet one, the crown all the earth, Thou who alone art worthy."

Modern Christians are, beyond question, under obligation to take up and complete the work which the apostles left unfinished by reason of their death. The right of Christ to the sceptre of the world is not dependent on the life-time of a man,—of an apostle, or of another man. The proffer to Christ—"Ask of me my Son, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance,"—reaches not to the limits of one age only but to all ages. It seems evident, from the nature of the commission, not as individuals existing in the flesh, but as Christians; as representatives of his church, his followers. Thus it was that Paul exhorted Timothy, "to do as he had done himself." Thus it is that successive generations of Christians carried on the work, till, in the darkness of the middle ages, the spirit of Christianity was nearly lost in its form, and darkness nearly overpowered the earth. But the prophecies are not revoked. The commission is not recalled. The promises of God to his Son are not annulled. Christ is yet to have the heathen for his inheritance. Prophecy and promise must fall, and the word of inspiration prove false, if the heathen are not to be converted—if the sun is not yet to look down on a regenerated world, a universal church, in whom inspiration itself asserted, "They shall be redeemed, sanctified, and filled with the praise of his Creator."

But how shall the heathen believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they preach, except they be sent,—except they go? And how are they to be sent, unless we send them? Many arguments conspire to urge upon us our duty in this respect. Are we able, as instruments under God, to snatch human spirits as brands from the everlasting burnings,—and shall we forbear to do it? Are we grateful to Christ for his staining death, and shall we not manifest our gratitude by bringing gems to be set in his jewelled crown? Are we grateful for the gospel and all its unnumbered blessings,—and do we not owe it to our brethren of the human race,—spirits thus may shine as bright as ours, or sink in destruction as deeply—to give them the gospel too? Do we wish the idolatry,—and shall not our very extent to them a little help? Did Christ give us faith, joy, and life, and ease, when he came on the mission of love to the heathen,—and shall we not endeavour the use of a little of this his good, that others may be saved as well as we? Shall it be written on us, "Ye are Christ's"—and yet shall we say of the glory which is due to his cause and his glory—"This is not Christ's?" Stewards of God, forget not what you owe to your Divine Master. We are to be true to his kingdom cannot forget not that acceptable prayer goes not alone; but prayers and alms together ascend for a memorial before God. And both when we give and when we pray, let us remember that truly as God's promises are unchangeable and trustworthy, so truly when his servants are sent forth everywhere preaching the word, the Lord will work with them and signs following.

Evangelical Progress.

Maulmain Burman Mission.

LETTER OF MR. STEVENS.

ADDITIONS TO THE CHURCH.

Aug. 5, 1849.—Three persons have recently been baptized in this town, by Mr. Johnson, respecting whom one or two particulars, I doubt not, will be interesting. All the three are heads of families. One is the wife of Mong Kala, daughter of Ko A, of the village of Kaung, mentioned in my journal recently sent you.

One is a man from Myay-dai, a town on the Irrawaddy, some distance below Sway Dong. In that only family, a world-wide Sabbath, a planet rolling in space, redeemed, sanctified, and filled with the praise of his Creator.

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