

Obligation of the Church to Give the Gospel to all the World.

It is a serious reflection on our every day life, that certain words and phrases are still in use, and we fondly hope the time may soon come, when as Christians we shall not have to be reminded of such terms as obligation, duty. However, we must treat conditions as we find them, not as they should be, so we still have to talk of "the obligation of the church to give the gospel to all the world." By reference to the standard dictionary, I find the word obligation has several meanings, one of which reads as follows: "The binding or constraining power of conscience holding to duty." I believe this to come nearer the idea of those who selected this subject, than any other, although several are neutrally allied to it, showing, it implies a subjective principle, requiring an objective for its practical fulfilment. Assuming this to be an accepted postulate, we will examine the leading words, that we may have an intelligent starting point. By the word church we understand: "a body of baptized believers, banded together for worship, the study of the Scriptures, and the administering of the ordinances." If this be accepted as a fair definition, then obligation should not be needed, as the heart, inflamed for worship by the love of God, prepares the way for its instruction and profit, by the Holy Spirit taking of the things of Jesus and revealing them to the soul. This would undoubtedly be followed by frequent administering of the ordinances—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The last word to be examined is the World. By this we understand, that portion of the human family, who either persistently, or ignorantly, have not believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and accepted him as such. If they have persistently refused to accept, our obligation ends, where their responsibility begins. If through ignorance they have not believed, one of two conclusions is evident, either they have not been intelligently taught, or they have not been taught at all. The former problem is serious, but the latter is calamitous. Shall intelligent, well-informed consecration, view unremoved the condition of misery and wretchedness, that must inevitably come to neglect, ignorance and superstition? The thought is inconceivable. What then is the expectancy? That we should examine with honest, earnest purpose, our position, between God's fulness in Christ, and man's poverty and degradation, when deprived of the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. My subject naturally falls open before us, under three heads—Self-preservation, Privilege, Obedience.

I. At first sight it may appear a selfish motive, that prompts one, under self-preservation, to engage in God's service; but with a more deliberate look, you see it is simply another form of saying, to insure my own spiritual health, as well as that of the body of which I form a part, I must keep active. There wells up in the soul of God's child ambition and plans, which, if nipt by the yoke of reticence, or fear sink back into eternal seclusion or want of an encouraging outlet. This renders the soul less healthful, just as the frost bitten buds, affect the thrifty rose-bush, compelling it again to go back to the beginning, to form new buds. If persisted in being set-back, it must eventually fade and die, having lived a useless life, so far as fruit-bearing, its intended end was concerned. If God keeps renewing our ambitions and plans, let us give them their true outlet, that the peaceable fruits of righteousness may be realized. Soul-health is dependent upon the un hindered flow of the Christ life—which diffuses Christ-love and displays Christ-light—that is made manifest by the life of His children, to the needy and destitute, who come under their influence. If the stream is sluggish it is in danger of becoming stagnant and impure, hence unsafe for use. It is then the flowing place for low forms of life, disease germs and death. If you partake of it, a malarial fire burns in your bones. Increase the flow and by its swift current purify the stream-bed. All inflow without any outlet is disastrous. God intended the "streams to make glad," but most certainly is this true of the streams of eternal life. God will not waste His love and grace on a life that is solely an absorbent. You must give as freely as you have received, and then you will prove the "more abundant" receiving. May we not impede the progress of God's stream of life, until we see the wilderness and solitary place made glad, and the desert rejoice—and blossom as the rose. Then shall this earth be as the garden of the Lord.

II. Obligation of privilege. Mine is the exalted privilege of partnership, with Jesus as head of the firm. No need to fear bankruptcy, or expansion of operation, as there is an infinite resource at my disposal, infinite wisdom to teach me, and infinite strength to stay me, for every task I undertake with his consent. If we realized our relation to the work, in the light of God's word, as "fellow-laborers with God," we would have more honest returns in life's service. It is man's privilege to work, accompanied by God's Son as yoke-fellow, and when he assumes one end of the yoke, it is always the heavy end. In the light of God's encouragement in his word, it should be the pleasure of Christian men and women, to make a more complete surrender of self, to in-

sure success. In business concerns you sometimes find capital and experience entering into co-partnership. Capital—known as the silent partner—furnishes the security of the enterprise, experience—the working power of the concern—insures the success of the venture. So long as capital is solvent, experience need not worry; but should it become insolvent, aye there's the point, the fondest expectations of the genius of experience, vanish like the morning vapour. In our partnership with Jesus, he supplies the capital, experience, business knowledge, and what more is required? For me to give myself wholly, without reserve, to him. And shall I not do it? May we all say: By God's help, I shall. Nothing short of an absolute abandonment of self, will be accepted by God. If I give myself, he accepts me, but if I do not, some one else will be found to take my place. Who can correctly estimate the true value of his effort? God only knows where the "Spurgeon," or "Moody," may be found, who shall out-shine the finder, so successfully that he is only mentioned in connection with his more brilliant confrere; but happy indeed is that man, or woman, who is thus, so highly honored of God, as to be used to introduce his or her superior, to the splendid task of saving souls. Much of the spiritual death of our lives is due to the chronic habit of squaring, ourselves by those about us, who are weak and prove to err as we are. What pastor has not been pained to see the large proportion of church members, who turn their backs on the Lord's table, and who offer the paltry excuse that they could not sit and partake with some brother or sister, by them regarded unworthy. It is the one supreme moment of life, when we should see Jesus only, in commemorating his dying bequest. My life must always be the medium, through which the life of Christ is manifested, and his light made to shine into the dark recesses of this life universe. As twilight is the effective disinfectant, the natural purifier of impurities, and the only power to dispel darkness, so the sun of righteousness is the only successful disinfectant of sin, the purifier from the effects of sin, and the adequate power that dispels the darkness of error, and superstition. It is our privilege, to see to it that the channel is not blocked by obstructions, that impede the power of the stream in its onward flow of enlightenment, and enlargement, in the master's service. The rocks of stubbornness, the logs of meanness and unscrupulousness, and the mud-bit of selfishness, must all be looked after, and by our aid exposed to the power that rushes it out of the way, and thus cleanses and refreshes, the stream course that carries the cheer of our God, into the desert of misery and sin whether near us or far away. Do not dam the river, when you have enough and to spare without doing so. Let the surplus flow on to some one else, who may in turn be used for similar ends. May we not pray that all the streams of God's life may be more positively converged into one majestic torrent—the church—that by its unhindered, onward, mighty movement it may overwhelm all the forces of evil, and speedily bring triumph to our Saviour, in reaching all for whom he died to redeem them by his blood. This certainly is the ultimate consummation and he asks us to co-operate with him, in bringing it to pass. So long as any part of the world is not cared for by the gospel, and the church is indifferent, she is either guilty of culpable carelessness, or of criminal neglect. To say we are not informed is no excuse in this age of cheap printing, newspapers, magazines, books on missionary topics, all are knocking at our doors to enlighten us respecting the real condition, with the hope of enlisting our sympathy and co-operation in bringing about a different order of things.

III. Obligation of obedience. Matt. 28: 19, 20. "Go ye therefore and make disciples . . . teaching them," etc. This is the burning anxiety of the Master's soul finding expression in a mild command couched in a yearning request to bring deliverance to all the captives of Adam's race: The British Government is making provision for South Africa, by sending qualified English speaking teachers, to teach the principles of our noble Anglo Saxon speech. If they prove unfaithful, how long will they be retained in the work? And yet men and women think they can violate with impunity, the commission of a Sovereign, greater than he who rules the British Empire. They forget we have a teaching to impart, that eclipses the work of our S. A. teachers so completely, that theirs fades into oblivion. Only those are qualified to teach, who have tasted the good things of the kingdom. As Daniel knew the writing of God upon the wall as soon as his eye fell upon it, so his children must know, what his mind is, and discriminate the pull of his hand of love, leading them into larger spheres of usefulness, and must obey. The church has failed to reap the full import of her mission, or the fact of 80,000,000 of the earth's inhabitants, who have never heard of Christ, would not still stare us in the face. True, much has been done but it does not alter the truth that there is much yet to be accomplished. When the entire membership of God's church fully realize that whatsoever they do "whether they eat or drink" they must "do all to the glory of God," the complexion of their work will assume a brighter and healthier form. When the focal point is Christ-centred

the work will be accepted with more enduring favour, and the result will be soul-stirring with heavenly activity toward fulfilling the obligation laid upon her. "Behold to obey is better than sacrifice" today, as in the past. God changes not. There is no truly acceptable service, except that which has first been prefaced by obedience. How many thousands have told, and still are telling, the same lie as Saul: "I have performed the commandment of the Lord, when, God knows they have not, and they have an uneasy feeling, because they are assured he knows the deception, and they cannot please their conscience with words. How long before we learn that salvation is not so selfish, we can continue it to the individual. The community is greater, and more important than any person in it. Man is by the grace of God to be the leavening power to overcome, and subdue the world, for God. If we do not possess all the territory, God-given, God-promised, we will find in a spiritual sense the unconquered enemies becoming thorns in the sides of our religious experience. The church cannot fold her hands, and take times easy, so long as a vestige of the world's curse remains, for she will find, that it will become her curse too. Poisoned air cannot be inhaled, except we are prepared to pay the rental—sickness, decline, death. God expected us honestly to do the work, when he entrusted us with it; let us not shatter his confidence. He expected we would be faithful; let us not betray that trust. He had a work to do, and knew he could trust no one, if not his own child.

In carrying forward his work, he knows no divisions of time, past, present, future, but one eternal now. He recognizes no geographical bounds, but one undivided here. He sees neither caste, nor color distinctions; but souls for whom Jesus died. Until the church tries to see the world's need, through the eyes of Jesus, she is enjoying a sleep that is detrimental to her best interests. When Terence uttered his famous sentence "I am a man and nothing human is foreign to me," he gave expression to a sentiment that must be intensified by professing Christians. God laid the foundation in his own Son, and he gave us the pleasure, privilege and command, to build upon it the indestructible structure of character, that constitutes the garment which gives beauty, comfort and permanence, to the bride the lamb's wife.

Then:

"Build it well whate'er you do,
Build it strong and straight and true,
Build it clean and high and broad,
Build it for the eye of God."

He who designed the work, still superintends, and attends it, in all its appointments. We cannot act our selfish pleasure, in the matter of Christian service.

For:

"I think the king of that country, comes out from among his tireless host,
And walks in this world of the weary, as if he loved it the most,
For here in the dusty confusion, with eyes that are heavy and dim,
He meets again, the laboring men, who are looking and longing for him.

He cancels the curse of Eden and brings them a blessing instead,
Blessed are they that labour, for Jesus partakes of their bread,
He put his hand to their burdens and enters their homes at night,
Who does his best, shall have as a guest, the master of life and light.

This is the gospel of labor,—ring it ye bells of the kirk,
The Lord of love, come down from above, to live with the men who work,
This is the rose that he planted, here in this thorn cursed soil,
Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but the blessing of earth is toil."

The Temple of Fame.

Was established in the city of New York a year or so ago. That philanthropic, and generous young lady, Miss Helen M. Gould, giving from her own personal funds, the sum of a quarter of a million dollars, to erect the edifice. Niches in this building were prepared for fifty of the most distinguished, and immortal Americans, who have lived and passed away. 100 of the most prominent living persons throughout the United States were chosen to make the selection. The first selection resulted in only securing 29.

These were as follows, 5 presidents, the 3 who first held office, viz., George Washington, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson, and two as the result of the civil war, Abraham Lincoln and U. S. Grant. Three clergymen were chosen, viz., Jonathan Edwards, Dr. Wm. B. Channing, and Henry Ward Beecher. Three judges were chosen, John Marshall, John Story, and James Kent. Three inventors selected were Robert Fulton, Samuel Morse and Eli Whitney. The four great literary in mortals are, the poet, Longfellow, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Washington Irving. Of course Benjamin Franklin, Daniel Webster, Henry Clay were chosen. The two great philanthropists, were George Peabody and Peter Cooper. Horace Mann the great educator was selected. Also the great naval hero Farragut, Asa Gray the