

nise obligation in such a form, and stretch his powers to their utmost tension in efforts to discharge it? He reasoned from facts, and *felt* the conclusion. The nations of the earth needed the gospel, and he had it in trust for their benefit. Christ had done much for him, and, as Creditor, had gratuitously transferred his claim to a needy and dependent world, bidding the debtor to discharge it by labor for souls. "Inasmuch as you pay this debt to the Gentiles, you pay it unto me."

It has been fitly said, that "he who withholds from mankind any knowledge essential to their welfare, is, in no small degree, responsible for the evils which result from the ignorance that he might have prevented." Hence the person who, in a stormy night, should extinguish or conceal a light placed by government on a dangerous coast, would be morally answerable for the shipwrecks that might follow. Had the apostles and primitive christians suppressed or corrupted the truth which was revealed to them, they would have been morally answerable for the consequences of their unfaithfulness.

The possession of the word of God is a sacred trust, and out of it, apart from all direct revelation of duty, grow the most solemn obligations. It is "*the word of LIFE*," and the church, the pharos of the moral world, is bound by virtue of the simple fact that she has it, to hold it forth for the guidance of the storm-rocked and sinking millions.

Our vocation is an *agency*, and, as agents, we are responsible for service. It is high time for us to repudiate that vicious antinomian idea that we are *instruments*—passive things, without ability or obligation—and come back to the apostolic truth which teaches that, as "*God's husbandry*"—sowers and reapers—"we are workers together with God." This implies voluntary activity—the rational application of our powers and resources to a specified service. "*The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it*"—not as machines, moved by external force, but as cheerful free agents, obeying the impulses of a generous sympathy.

In nature, seed is often furnished with gossamer wings, by means of which it is often borne on the breeze across mountain, river, and lake, and scattered over the acres of a continent. But the bible, seed though it be, has no such apparatus for self-distribution. God has committed it to his people as the sowers, and a heavy malediction impends over such as violate the trust, or execute it decentfully. "*From him that hath not*"—that is to employ for its intended purposes—"even that which he hath shall be taken away." As a general rule, God does nothing for us which we can do for ourselves; and nothing for the spiritual welfare of others which we can do for them. If we comply not, in this respect, with his requirements, then the work is left undone, and on us rests the responsibility of neglect—a responsibility which no considerate man would willingly incur.

The measure of our obligation is of course determined by our ability, and by the facilities which we have for the effective use of that ability. And here we have startling facts that are seldom allowed their full influence upon the mind. What is our *ability*? How think you we are rated in the books of the great Assessor above? What is his estimate of our means for the conveyance of his truth to the ignorant nations? And