

of ordained preachers can ever meet this world-wide emergency. While the church waits for such alone to do the work of preaching this gospel to the world, or for the training of a regular ministry for its official proclamation, whole generations perish. Christ foresaw this, and so a wider commission was given and actually made the basis of spreading this good news; and the commission was: "Let him that *heareth* say come!"

The divine scheme was to reach every human soul by the shortest road. Hence, (1) an *oral proclamation* was chosen as the method, and (2) *every believer* as a means.

First, an oral proclamation. God chose to send the gospel to lost men, not by means of miracles or the agency of angels, but through natural channels and by means of those who had part in the ruin and rescue. Man could use two methods: books for the eye, the voice for the ear. Christ chose the voice! He said, "*Preach.*" The word means, as Homer uses it, to be a public crier, herald. Oral proclamation then was God's chosen method. Why? Books were then written laboriously and expensively upon huge, heavy parchment scrolls by scribes. The world could not wait to get the knowledge of salvation from books. Even had the press, which dates from the fifteenth century, been then ready as a mute but mighty messenger of grace, still no doubt the commission would still have been, *Go, ye, preach!* For had Bibles been so plenty as to be sown like seed broadcast over the world's field, reaching every man in his own tongue, how few among the masses could have read them! To a very late day even in enlightened England, the famous "privilege of clergy" indexed the ignorance of the common people even of the simplest rudiments of reading and writing; and the Magna Charta was signed June 15, 1215, by nobles who could only make their mark for a signature!

Beside this, when Christ said, *Go, preach*, there was *no New Testament*. The gospel according to Matthew, the pioneer book, cannot date earlier than A. D. 38, and John did not add the fourth and last of the gospels till close to the birthhour of the second Christian century. But had a complete New Testament been ready, how tedious and tardy the process of translation and republication; and how few could have availed themselves of it, even in their own tongue!

The grand reason, however, for an oral proclamation was the peculiar *force and fitness of the voice*. It has a strange magnetism, when through it thrill a true earnestness and enthusiasm, which no book has. Moreover, a man can fit his methods and measures to new times, places, men and needs, as no book can; and the voice has a flexibility and familiarity, compared with which the formality and stateliness of a volume is a disadvantage. And so from lip to ear flew the good news, every hearer a herald; and so while a Bible society would have been translating, publishing and circulating one version, the gospel actually wheeled its first circuit round the known world!