

its reach and involving so many momentous questions, it is obvious that in such brief papers nothing more than mere suggestion can be offered, and that touching a few special points only. It is the purpose to present a more complete discussion of the subject at a later date.

In the great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," the verb has the imperative form. Christ's words are words, not of entreaty, but of *command*. The command, "Go ye," is in the present tense, not in the future. That means "Do it *now*." It means "Do it, *ye* to whom the words are addressed." It has been taken up by the Church and the ministry through the ages, as presently and directly applicable to them. That command, with the obligation it carries for the salvation of the lost world, has rested upon every generation of the Christian membership and the Christian ministry, from the beginning until to-day; and Christ has held every generation responsible from the beginning until now, unless it could give the best of reasons for not fulfilling the requirements of the great commission. If, in any particular age or generation, the Church and her messengers have been able to give a valid reason for failure to accomplish the appointed task, either from lack of men, or lack of means, or lack of opportunity, well—the reason has been so far accepted and approved. The means of the Church may have been limited; the world of heathendom may have been inaccessible to Christendom; the nations may have been closed to the Gospel,—these and other excuses have been reasonably urged in extenuation of past failures. The past has been able to give at least a partial reason for lack of complete success in this so great enterprise; and beyond that, and so far as its reasons have not been adequate, it has suffered even to judgment for those failures.

THE CRISIS AND ITS DEMANDS.—Although the form of the preacher's commission is the same to-day as always, there has been an absolute change in its present and immediate requirements and responsibilities. The world has changed front. Christendom has come to the fore. The learning and wealth and power of the world are in its hands. God calls upon the Church and the ministry to complete the conquest of the world for Christ—not one, five, ten, twenty generations hence, but *absolutely now, in this present generation*. The first task of the preacher of the Gospel in this age, as the bearer of the great commission, is, therefore and necessarily, to understand that commission in its present pressing demands, that he may understand his own mission and responsibility so as to enter intelligently, energetically, and enthusiastically upon his task of leadership, inspiration, and impulse, in the Church, in the accomplishment of the work of saving the world. If he misunderstands the situation or fails to take it in, he will be found wanting in his place of leadership and direction; the Church will be hindered or fail in her work; and the world

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