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Motto for the year:—"We are labourers together with God."

Prayer topic for January. For Parla Kimedey, the missionaries and native teachers and preachers, that their number may be greatly increased, and many souls won to Christ on that field. For our Woman's Missionary Societies.

Rev. J. Hudson Taylor is persuaded (so says the Miss. Rev.) that God's full time has come for a "forward movement in China, to obey more fully the command to preach the Gospel to every creature," and he urges as one consideration:—"The awful peril of the Chinese who are living and dying without Christ."

It seems as though this would apply to India as well as China. Why not a "Forward Movement" in all mission work? If this last command of Christ means anything it surely means that the Church shall move faster in this work than she is doing.

From a Bible study on Haggai, by the Rev. Hubert Brooke we cull the following:

"The man who refused to recognise the word "impossible" as being in his vocabulary, was the man who carried his arms through every nation of a hostile continent and brought all Europe to his feet. And the Church which refuses to write "impossible" underneath God's commands, is the Church which will carry its soldiers through every nation of the earth, and will prepare the world for being brought to the feet of Christ.

Let us recognise, at the outset, that God's commands are always human impossibilities. We can begin at the beginning. "Ye must be born again"; and we say at once, "Impossible, how can a man be born again?" We hear His call, "Be ye holy"; and we say, "Impossible, who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" We hear, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"; and we say, "It cannot be done; it is impossible." Yes, all God's commands are impossibilities. We may write, and truly write, underneath every one of them three things. First of all, "With men it is impossible"—number one. Number two, "All things are possible with God." And number three, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

That has been God's way all through His dealings with the children of men. When one man, Moses, was commanded to bring out two million slaves from the land of the mightiest empire of the East, it was impossible; but when God commanded, and he obeyed, it was done. When Joshua was commanded to cast out seven nations, every one greater and mightier than his own, it was impossible; but when God commanded and Israel obeyed, it was done. When Gideon, with 300 men, was told to scatter to the winds 135,000 Midianites, it was impossible; but he did it in the name of the Lord. When Jehoshaphat one time, and Asa another time, went with their little companies against the "huge host" and the "great company" of allied nations attacking them, what could they do? But when they waited upon the Lord the enemy was scattered, and Israel was delivered. From the first of them to the last God's commands are to men impossible; but when God is obeyed, the commands are fulfilled.

We are face to face to-day with a command on the same terms as those we have looked at and thought of before,—the command to evangelize the world. The title of this morning's subject is, "The Evangelization of the World"; and the addendum to the title is, in every mind here, "in this generation." For we have nothing to do with the generations to come. We have to do with our own and God's command concerning it.

As we consider this call sounding at our hearts' doors to-day to carry the Gospel to every creature, we find ourselves, as representing the Church of Christ, side by side and on parallel lines with, just in the same condition of Israel when Haggai's message was given to them.

They had come back from captivity with one command laid upon them. Have you ever noticed that? When the doors of the captives were opened to return from Babylon, and the king sent them back to their own land, he sent them back for one single purpose—he meant them to be men and women of one idea. (And those are the men and women who succeed.) And their one idea was this, "Who is there among you of all the Lord's people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up, . . . and build the house of the Lord God of Israel." So those 40,000 returned captives were carried through the wilderness, were brought in safety to their own home, were fitted and prepared of God—brought out, and set free, and established—for one purpose, that they should build the house of the Lord. Not a word was said from God's side as to any other purpose in the wide world but this. And if we ask of our risen Saviour for what one purpose, crowning all the rest and absorbing them all, He has called His Church out of darkness into light; for what one purpose He has released them from their fetters and set them free; why He has opened their prison doors, and brought them to Himself: I can hear His voice giving but one reason, five times over—the evangelization of the world by His ransomed people.

When Israel came back to the position of service, they began to prepare the foundation of the Temple—and they stopped. Instead of raising its walls, they raised objections. They said—as God heard them say, and as God has written in His Book for us—they said, "The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built." We have heard it, we have perhaps said it, or we have thought it, to-day, "The time is not come that the world should be evangelized, that souls should be brought out of every human quarry of the world, and that the temple of the Lord should be built for His coming." We are side by side with those Israelites to-day. We who represent the Church of Christ, with a single call before us, have raised objections—as they did—and have said, "We may do a little, we would like to do more; but the time has not come to evangelize the world." "Fantastic" is the latest word, and "foolish" is next to it, attributed to those who believe it can be done, and who by God's grace mean to do it.

They raised an objection, and God sifted their objection. He always does. "Is it a time for you, oh ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house to lie waste?" Think of it—40,000 returned captives. Yes, they had had time to adorn their houses with handsome ceilings; but they had not had time to lay one stone upon another in the temple of the Lord. And if He looks at our ceiled houses to-day, and our progress and comfort in ease and luxury, contrasted with what was the case 100 years ago, well, our excuse stands no better than theirs did. Will He not say to us, as to them, "Is it a time for you, oh ye, to dwell in your