

THE HOME MISSIONARY.

GO,.....PREACH the GOSPEL..... *Mark xvi. 15.*
How shall they preach except they be SENT? . *Rom. x. 15.*

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SERMON.

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THE LEADING NATION.

“GO THROUGH, GO THROUGH THE GATES; PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE PEOPLE.”—*Isaiah 62: 10.*

DR. ADDISON ALEXANDER gives this exact translation, which is even more urgent than the energetic utterance of our authorized version, “Pass, pass through the gates; clear the way of the people.”

Isaiah was the evangelist of the Old Testament. He was as pre-eminently the prophet of promise as Jeremiah was of punishment. How clear a conception he had of the coming Christ. His perspective of the realm of the Redeemer's reign does not have a dull or disappointing line. At present his prophecies are deranged in the order of their record. But had we the wisdom to arrange them as we presume they lay in the mind of the prophet, the result would be a matchless mosaic, manifesting the history of grace more completely than the fresco of Michael Angelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel exhibits the preparation of the world for the advent of Christ. Human scholarship has not had the skill to do this at all perfectly. Time will assign the parts their place, as the Holy Ghost interprets their sense in history. But if we cannot compose the parts into a harmonious whole, as they are yet to be when they shall have rolled off the scroll of prophecy upon the permanent page of history, we may dwell upon the independent situations sketched, and study the obvious implications of such a startling summons as: “Pass, pass through the gates; clear the way of the people.”

THE REFERENCE OF THE SUMMONS.

To what event is reference here made? Some think Isaiah had in view only the return of Judah to Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon. This would limit the meaning to one event and nation. Others suppose the prophet, discerning that the monarch of Babylon would do what he after-

wards did, give orders to his subjects, living along the line of the road by which the Hebrews were to return, to go out of their gates and help the exiles home, seized the fact and used it as a figure of the final gathering of all the ransomed into glory. It thus represents Isaiah looking along the coming ages and over all the earth, and crying, in the spirit of foreign missions, to everything that hath breath to come forth and help in the conversion of the chosen. It is the bold conception of the seer seeing the issue of all the economies of ceremony, sacrifice, and salvation culminating in the redemption of those for whom Christ died. This is the evangelical perspective of the prophecy with foreign missionary features, limited by the lines of election.

But other and as eminent scholars do not concur in either of these senses. To refer it to the small event of a tribe returning to the city is quite too narrow a range of meaning.

The foreign missionary sense is also lost by understanding it as a call to enter into the gates, not to go out.

Judah, these think, is summoned to set an example to others by entering the ideal Jerusalem of a holy life. As she enters others will follow into the kingdom of the King of kings. Set the world an example of the proper kind, and it will prove to be the most effective preaching. Rouse all energies and achieve excellencies as home missionary workers, that you may not only send the gospel to the perishing nationalities, but also recommend its acceptance by showing them what it has done for you. The people are after you; "clear the way of the people."

As certainly as the tribe of Judah was allowed to head the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, some nation is to head the procession of peoples into that ideal life which is to characterize the kingdom of Christ. Can it be possible that ours is the nation summoned?

THE ADDRESS OF THE SUMMONS.

It speaks to the spirit of progress. That suits us. The whole world accords us preeminence in this.

More than any nation, ours has planned, proposed, preached, practised, and prated of progress. Progress is a term which our pigmies have played with as a toy; and as well, a word which eloquent tongues have turned into a trumpet and started the eternal silences with its entrancing syllables. From shaping a shoe to preaching a sermon, from teaching a child to controlling a congress, from building a house to lifting up social highways, there is on all sides uncommon deference paid to progress. We certainly have the spirit of leadership in us, if we have the grace!

And we also know that human progress depends on leadership, and waits for it in all things. Men do not rise in intelligence, virtue, and religion as the oceans do, drawn up in bulk by the attraction of the heavenly bodies.

Mankind rises as rivers grow, from some tiny spring and stream into which others empty, until the flood rolls majestically to the sea. Men do not move with God, as planets roll round their suns. They rather rise heavenward as migratory birds which fly in wedge-shaped flocks, some high

spirit splitting the air in the line of travel. Few leaders, many followers.

One Moses leads the Hebrews out of bondage. One Joshua to lead the new-born into the land of blessing. David's kingdom lies at the foundation of stable government as typical of that coming and perfect one whose mild sceptre shall repose in the hand that was pierced. Ezra editing the incorruptible revelation, led the sacred scholarship of the ages. John Baptist breaking the silence of the besotted centuries with his resounding declamation of one doctrine, whose echoes cannot die until the last sinner repents, stands out as the example of the only power which can break otherwise invincible evil, the power of the preached law.

Paul stepping outside the circle of circumcision, pulling away the purple curtains of ceremony, and cancelling in the blood of Christ the ancient lines of Abrahamic covenant, that the Gentiles might come in, is the majestic figure in the foreground of all Christian missions.

When Luther's disgust with papal degeneracy and Tetzels indulgence traffic broke forth in the famous utterance, "God willing, I will beat a hole in his drum," slumbering Germany started from her heavy apathy.

And when the monk's hammer was heard driving nails into the church door, and pinning before the eyes of the people the ninety-five articles of a pure faith, the force of the strokes, and the flutter of the paper, sounding like an angel's energy, awakened the realm to a radical reformation which the world followed, as the monk Martin went ahead, crying: "Pass, pass through the gates; clear the way of the people."

Reformed Germany did not reform England by sending missionaries across the channel. The quickening moment came to the island before it moved the bosom of the continent. Huss was but a boy of five summers when Wickliffe was summoned before convocation to answer for his attacks upon the papacy. And this all occurred one hundred and forty-two years before Luther stormed the Vatican at Rome with the echoes of his hammering against the church door of Wittenberg.

But if Wickliffe, and therefore England, was so much earlier moved than Huss and Germany, reformation in our mother country might have died out had not Germany exhibited, during the reigns of the last of the Plantagenets and the first two of the Tudors, such rich results of thirty years' freedom from the thralldom of Rome, that when Edward VI. was crowned he could utter no more popular proclamation than "Pass, pass through the gates; clear the way of the people." It was the example of Germany that led England to endeavors of lively emulation.

And so human progress ever depends upon a conspicuous and conquering example. It advances through blazed forests after bold leaders; across oceans after a Columbus; through dark continents on the track of a Livingstone. Great Britain broke the shackles of the bondmen; then all the fetters on American slaves were shaken loose, as the locks of the iron gate which rolled back when the women prayed and Peter was released. If, then, progress needs leadership, and we are sufficiently progressive, have we the right to claim the leadership of the people to which the prophet refers?

REASONS ASSIGNED.

According to the assertions of some, and the arithmetic of more, and the affections of all, this result is already made out: that we are to be the honored leader in the van of nations entering the ideal life. Saint and sinner, democrat and republican, all outside lunatic asylums—except the insane socialists, who were better inside—sincerely desire that our harbors shall float the heaviest shipping, our marts have the richest merchandise, our fields the fullest harvests, our home economy the fairest fruits of family life, and our future carry the largest blessings to the unborn generations.

When pressed to give a reason for such a hope,

1. One rests it upon the favor of Providence toward us in the past. It is a cogent reason. Considering the Red Seas through which He has brought us, the pillars of presence by which He has led us, and the munificent plenty with which he has fed us—as much more than manna as a bride's cake is sweeter than a seaman's biscuit—we may well hope upon His mercy. An eminent statesman is reported to have said: "The Lord takes care of children, idiots, and the United States!" No ship sailing the Straits of Messina ever more narrowly escaped capture and wreck by Scylla and Charybdis than has our beloved country more than once. Still we survive! Notwithstanding let us not argue for future security entirely upon our safety up to the present time. A soldier passed through twenty battles without a scar, and then came home to die in the time of peace with three days' sickness of a carbuncle.

2. Others base their hope of this being the leading nation because we are not in a position, to be interfered with and broken up. Our geographical situation makes foreign interference improbable, and puts us on our good behavior to live peaceably together. But this idea of safety coming from our isolation is as obsolete as the mythical conceit of the Olympian Jupiter. When a traveler can belt the globe in ninety days, and tick tidings nearly round it in two hours, the time has passed when any nation can consider herself separate, though she may dwell behind the vestibule doors of broad oceans. The planet is a common with the dividing fences down, because the prayer is being answered, "that the mountains might flow down at thy presence."

3. Much boast is made of our ample boundaries enclosing such opulent resources. Shall we not be on this account the nation of all the peoples of the earth? Our cords of empire, covering twenty-seven hundred and sixty-eight miles of meridian measure, and looped over sixteen hundred miles of longitudinal lines do bind into one such a republic of States as, some say, must stand the shock of any stroke that may fall. As the ship Great Eastern sails quietly through seas which would swamp smaller craft, so we, the Great Western nation, will weather easily those stresses of weather which have wrecked smaller states. With our head cooled by breezes off the Bay of Fundy, and feet bathed in the soft Pacific, back warmed by the rising and eyes turned on the setting sun, we imagine ourselves to be the very people to stand with index finger reaching forth from the coast of the Aleutian Island, saying to each other, as we count the old nations of the East: "Pass,

pass through the gates; clear the way of the people." But in the midst of the vigorous boasting over our vastness, we might well listen to that gentle voice which says: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

4. But think of our free school system and the general intelligence of the people. Can we with this fail to become the leading nation?

Because free schools and general education agree so well with the spirit of the Scriptures, and run so strong from the spring of our ancestral piety, we may indeed hope more from these than any other cause hitherto considered. Congregationalists belong to a denomination which cherishes general education, and free schools are among its chief products and dearest pets. The Yankee school-teacher is as well known the world over as Plymouth Rock. So sympathetically and inseparably are school and church united that school-books are next to the Bible, and the school-room underneath the droppings of the sanctuary.

But does the present or prospective operation of this factor of our national affairs justify the expectations which are often built upon it? Thirty per cent. of our population are partial illiterates. Fifteen per cent. are entirely so. Supposing this dismal mass of mute intelligence to be instructed as far as grammar-school courses carry pupils, what assurance would this afford that our national peace and purity shall be securely preserved?

A conservative editor of a great daily newspaper recently wrote: "What a terrible satire upon our boasted free school system is conveyed in the fact that nine-tenths of the young criminals sent to the penitentiary have enjoyed school advantages."

Long ago Sir Walter Scott wrote to his countrymen: "We shall never learn our real calling or secure our destiny till we have taught ourselves to consider everything as moonshine compared with the education of the heart."

VOICES FROM HISTORY.

Whatever be the foundation or form of argument in favor of our perpetuity and pre-eminence, we are liable to fallacies, because the wish is so surely the father of the thought that we shall survive all vicissitudes. Better far turn back, take the lamp of history in hand, and look over the course by which nations have come, and see in what conditions we may find them. And when you do this, what scenes rise on the astonished sight: of distracted, dying and dead nations; of turbulent and torn, debased and embruted peoples. The air grows thick and the lamp-light sick as one presses his way back among the skeletons and spectres of once splendid but now despised peoples.

Does our hope rest upon the care of Providence in the past? There is wandering the whole world over, amid hissings and reproaches, the remnant of a people which alone, of all the human race, had the honor of being his peculiar people.

Are we to lead the world because we educate the children of the rich and poor as well? We remember that when Athens was the most polished city of learning in the world, she was sunk in the basest sensuality and idolatry. But it is said they only educated the upper layers of society, while we descend

to lift up the lowest. Then we may come to our own time for illustrations. On the one hand, see restless, revolutionary Russia shivering with an ague of anxiety as to the next turn of the Nihilists. Noble and plebeian hands are brandishing weapons of destruction in the eyes of the authorities, and the cowering Czar does not dare to cross the threshold of the throne room except his head be covered by the drawn arms of the Cossacks; nor ride in a railway carriage unless it be built of iron and crowded with soldiers, "Ah, yes; and this is what comes of having the mass of the nation illiterate." But if that be the cause, how shall we account for the condition of things in the more eminent empire of Germany? It will not answer to count a nation secure, if only it be a high patron of liberal learning and public education, until that great country sails on smoother seas. Educated she surely is. Her laws provide for general and compulsory education. And such is the result that, when the united German army fell into rank to fight France, in 1870, there was not a soldier who could not both read and write. Single states of the empire, as Würtemberg, will show you a population of nearly two millions, among which there is not one over ten years of age unable to read and write. And yet with all these fine results, he must have a dull ear who does not hear violence and vice rumbling in Vesuvian rage around the imperial throne and threatening to overthrow the very foundations of society. Though the masses of Russia are illiterate and the times are stormy, the monarch has so far escaped the assassin's bullet. While William, who reigns over the land of universities and scholars, carries so much lead in his head that the question is not yet settled whether he will die of disease or of the wounds of the wicked socialists.

Such reflections disturb the serenity of our hope of salvation by common schools or university courses.

And what of the idea, that the greatness of our national domain provides for our perpetuity and prominence before all nations? Do size and fertility and full natural treasuries go for so much? The drubbed and desolate lands of Palestine are as fertile, we are told, as the fat lands of Kansas. Once Egypt was a great nation. Great in lands, learning, politics, and preëminence over others. So great that a steady stream of admirers and scholars pour into her from all points of the compass at present to see the relics of her immemorial magnificence. For she has fallen choked with the three-ply cord of debased poverty, political corruption, and priestly superstition, pulled by the hands of Turkey, France, and England; there is a sound of something like the death-rattle in her throat, and some say she is drawing her last breath. We look over Persia. As Daniel saw it, it grew from a good beginning until its lines girded the wealth and greatness lying above Æthiopia to the Black Sea, and around by the Caucasus and the Caspian eastward and south again until the Indian Ocean and Arabian deserts were embraced. If location, amplitude, and opportunity were sufficient to assign a nation the place of leader, Persia would not be the peeled and prostrate skeleton of her former self that she is to-day.

And was Rome not vast enough to have been sure of an endless life? When her colossal limbs of iron spread so wide that the clay toes took hold

upon the top line of Great Britain on the north, and of the tongue of the Egyptian sea on the south, it might not have seemed possible that any strokes of adversity could ever knock her knees together. But now we see only her shrunken limits, shivering nakedness, and mummied glories.

And her fate is not more suggestive than that of the immense dominions which Charles V. donated to his proud and perfidious son, Philip. What does all this Fourthth of July oratory over the vastness of a country, as the guarantee of its future greatness, go for, while we walk in this Campo Santo of debased nations? While we study Spain in picture as she was on the coronation day of Philip, and compare her as she is now, a tattered patch of spoiled territory, peopled by a despairing population of crushed taxpayers gnawing the dry crust of their abused inheritance, without a star of hope in the heavens to cheer their comfortless meal?

In very truth, there is not in acreage, either great or small, a reason why nations stand upon a pedestal of power, or start staggering toward the grave of oblivion. Neither does time, long or short, account for decrepitude, nor effect their decay. As Charles Sumner once said in the American Senate, when his flaming lips were leading this nation out of the blackest Egypt it ever was in: "Nations have decayed, but never with the imbecility of age. Righteousness exalteth a nation, and sin is the reproach of any people."

RELIGION OUR HOPE.

Since the world began it was not heard that a powerful empire rested on anything deeper than religion. It has been according as they recognized and satisfied the religious instincts and aspirations of men, that obsolete nations have lasted as long as they did.

When Romulus with his brazen share ran the famous furrow around the future confines of Rome, it was a sacred furrow. So sacred that when he came to the place set apart for gates, the plow was thrown out and no scar made. Because the ground scarred by that religious act would have been too sacred to be afterwards trampled as a thoroughfare. Noble states of old have excelled each other as they have been most religious. Had Romulus and those who came after him not been pagans but Puritans, not been guided by dumb oracles, but illuminated of the Word of God, and led of the Holy Ghost, there is no reason in nature why old Rome might not have been young even until now.

As her first act after returning from Babylon, Judah reared the altar of God. Around that altar, as it was devotedly honored, a vigorous and victorious national life revolved. But as religion lapsed in practice, and piety became a mere name, the glory of Judah departed, and darkness settled on all the land.

This nation of ours had a more distinctly religious origin than Rome; and as much so as Judah. It was founded on a biblical faith, and fostered by the prayers of our pious ancestry. If Bancroft was correct when he wrote, that constitutional liberty was born when the compact was signed in the cabin of the Mayflower, then we may add, the first utterance of the new born nation was a petition of prayer and a psalm of praise to God.

Are the eyes of the ends of the earth on us, as the sick seeking an asylum, as pale plants leaning toward the sunlight? Certainly we cannot satisfy them with any fruits of our physical or purely political products, which have not already been tasted and tested at some time in history: and every time they have turned to ashes on the tongue of the eater.

But the genius and grace of our godly faith is, we believe, fully sufficient to meet the need. The inmost spirit of our faith is progressive in motion, methods, and all moral manners.

The virtue of the faith only needs the vigor of an earnest practice to prove that it is able to save to the uttermost. But this earnest and honest practice there must be, otherwise the name to live while we are dead will not long deceive the nations, nor suffice to sustain us in their present esteem of our superior standing. There is scarcely a scripture more easily learned by rote and repeated by lip than, "Physician, heal thyself."

It is largely because of what the heathen nations hear of our religion, as to its working at home, that our foreign missionaries are able to bear down their prejudices and lead them through the gates into the kingdom of Christ. And considering the horrible brutalities and defilements of their heathen faiths, there is enough that is true of us to make an effectively eloquent tale for the herald of the gospel.

But what might occur if the mass to which we send missionaries in Africa should learn of the atrocities which have been practised upon the blacks of the South? How would the East Indies appreciate our solicitude for their salvation, if they all knew well how we have robbed the Red man of the West, and pushed him further and further into the wilds with almost every aggravation of injustice? Give every ear of China the facts; how with fair signs and honeyed phrases we allured the yellow men of lower Asia to come and reside in our national mansion, and then rudely smote them in the face when they had hardly a foot athwart our threshold?

What if the dark lands saw in the daylight, as we do, the millions of state, city, county, and corporation debts which are being repudiated with almost defiance added to indifference.

Give the heathen an opportunity to count the footprints of prominent professors of our religion who, proving false to trusts or foul in life, have tracked through prayer meetings and past sacramental tables into cells in Sing Sing or Concord. And might they not break out in a long and low lament: "Physician, heal thyself?"

Array before them the ghastly records of our licensed crime of rum selling, as it foots up in money squandered, misery multiplied, manhood crushed, womanhood corrupted, and the country cursed, and assure the heathen that all this has the sanction and patronage of the government. The darkest heart might answer such an exhibition in our Lord's words: "First pull out the beam which is in thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote which is in thy brother's eye."

Spend a morning with a company of educated heathen reading Herodotus. Turn to the chapter which relates that although the laws of Egypt allowed polygamy, even to a brother marrying his own sisters, yet down to the time

of the Ptolemies it was a rare thing for a man to have more than one wife. Then close the book and tell the company of the crime of Utah. That we have laws prohibiting polygamy, but that transgressors laugh the laws to scorn, and go on stretching salacious cords which are too foul to touch across the very Eden of our land, and fastening them to stakes which seem as firm as the beetling mountains which fortress four of our fairest territories.

But if you should make such a showing, would it not utterly degrade our efforts to save other nations?

We must repent, or this candlestick will be removed out of its place. The present condition of public and private morals will be purified greatly and improved every way, or we shall as certainly fester and fall into the corruptions which have carried other nations down, as the law of the Eternal is uttered in the inspired word: "The wages of sin is death."

REACHING THE RESULT.

And how is this result to be reached? Not by statecraft, nor political party-working. Statesmen nor politicians began this nation. Stalwart Christians did. Not churchman of the kind named by Carlyle as "prim friend with the black serge and gown, with the rosary, scapulary, and I know not what other spiritual block-and-tackle."

Not devotees of the dilettanti order whose calling it is to fringe and perfume the phylacteries of religion after a worthier hand has woven the texture. Not the bigoted sectary of any school which sets too much store by a shibboleth and too little on the salvation of a soul.

None such are capable of correcting our course of progress and purifying our spring of motives, and inspiring us with the life which by its high aims and holy achievements shall transform men into the sons of God, and our part of the earth into an Eden whose excellence all the lands shall be anxious to copy.

On the brow of the hill overlooking the bay where the Mayflower was moored, they have reared a colossal statue. On the corners of the pedestal repose four figures representing law, morality, freedom, and education. There ought they to rest by right. But above these stands erect the gigantic figure of Faith. Thirty and six feet she rises from the foot, which rests on a slate of Plymouth Rock, to her brow bound with evergreen laurels. With one hand she grasps an open Bible. With the other in graceful gesture she points the nation up to God. Not down to rocks and earth and living creatures, but up to God. The only book she opens to the eyes of the nation is the Bible. And so should it be! That Holy Word holds the only light which has led our advances into any virtue of life. It was when the Bible spoke with the highest authority that all the people lived most in the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom.

When the colonists of Massachusetts carried the uncorrupted and cleansing faith into the Connecticut Valley they reproduced their political virtues by baptizing them in their primitive faith. And no reason that has ever seemed sufficient can account for our recent Western extensions becoming morally worse and worse, but this, that the pulpit and church have hushed

the anathemas of God's Word against sin, and turned to feeding the present generation upon the thin gruel of human theories instead of the substantial diet of primitive doctrine derived directly from the Divine Word.

The supreme solicitude, therefore, which takes hold of a patriotic and Christian heart is, that this venerable Missionary Society may snuff the old candle, and not that she shall strike any new light. That as in the divine beneficence her favor was never greater among the men of fortune and faith in the centres of culture and wealth, her comprehension of the call we make upon her, not to carry "another gospel," may be such that every echo from her work in the waste places may have the fullness of the whole Word of God.

Claude Lorraine is counted as accomplishing a revolution in art by his success in setting the sun in the skies of his canvas. Before him painters had produced only hard and mechanical effects. But Claude's suns seemed to move the mists of the morning, to mix with the moving dew-drop slipping off the leaf, and to make the observer half imagine he saw heat waves rising from a noonday scene.

We have no desire to imitate the efforts of the ancient times in so far as they set Christianity and Christ before the world in hard and mechanical ways. We ask for those who, after the French artist's excellence, will take the same subjects, as he did the one only sun, and so place the eternal verity and beauty and blessedness of our Bible faith before east and west and all the earth, that whoever sees it first shall be charmed with its charms, and be carried up toward its open and eternal attractions until the transported soul shall enter the gates and see the King in his beauty, and all mankind will follow.

THE MIGRATION OF THE COLORED PEOPLE TO KANSAS.

REV. R. M. TUNNELL, WYANDOTTE, KANSAS.

No one can state with accuracy how many colored people have come to Kansas, from the South, since the opening of river navigation last spring. In April, C. W. Prentice, the chairman of the St. Louis Committee on Transportation, told me that he had ticketed twenty-six hundred to Wyandotte. Since that time (I write June 25) I am sure that committee has sent forward from twelve to fifteen hundred more; and I estimate that from one to two thousand have come by other routes than that by which the St. Louis committee have forwarded those in their care. This estimate makes the aggregate immigration since the first of March about six thousand. To have received this number of penniless immigrants within three months is a serious matter to us of Kansas. But the problem is vastly more serious when we consider the thousands already here as but forerunners of scores of thousands yet to come.

And I think most men who have watched the springs of this movement for months share with me the opinion that the exodus has just begun, and