

A P L E A  
FOR THE  
V I L L A G E S  
OF  
Great Britain & Ireland.

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"He went throughout *every* city and *village*,  
preaching and showing the glad tidings of the  
kingdom of God." (Luke viii. 1.)

"To preach the gospel in *the regions beyond*."  
(2 Cor. x. 16.)

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## A P L E A.

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BELOVED BRETHREN,

I feel constrained to address you on a subject which has for some time, much engaged my thoughts, namely, the state of the villages of Great Britain and Ireland. It seems to me that we are urgently called of God to make a loving effort to carry the glad tidings of His salvation to the hundreds of thousands of precious souls in those dark and destitute places. I am persuaded that there are many hundreds of villages throughout the three kingdoms where the sound of God's glorious gospel is never heard, and where the people are as ignorant of that gospel as the heathen who have never heard of the precious name of Jesus.

True, they may have the Bible in their houses, and in their churches and chapels ; but they are ignorant of its contents ; and alas ! in numberless cases, they have no one to teach them. Many of those who take the place of

religious teachers and guides are themselves utterly ignorant of the gospel ; dead in trespasses and sins, worldly, pleasure-hunting men, caring neither for their own souls, nor the souls of those whom they undertake to teach.

Then there are, in some of the villages, a few of the Lord's beloved ones, in utter spiritual destitution, longing for something, which, alas ! is not within their reach. They do not know the things which are freely given to them of God. They have not peace with God. They do not even know the full forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Now, I must confess to you, beloved brethren, that the thought of all this weighs heavily upon my heart, day and night. I have been crying to God about it ; and I believe He has laid it on my heart to address you on the subject. I have been to some villages, and I can only declare to you that what has come under my notice, even in my very limited sphere of observation, is enough to make the heart bleed.

Thousands of souls sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Not a sound of the gospel ; not a breath of spiritual life ; not a leaf stirring ; here and there, perhaps, some poor famished sheep, without pasture or care, destitute and desolate.

While contemplating this heart-breaking condition of things, I have asked myself, again and again, the question, Can nothing be done to meet it ? And now I must relieve my heart by seeking to press the question upon you. I would ask you, dearly beloved in the Lord, are we all discharging our holy responsibility to the villages of Great Britain and Ireland ? The Lord, in His infinite goodness, has given us His gospel, in all its blessed fulness—given it to us, with a clearness unknown since the days of the apostles. I say not this in a boastful spirit, for what have we that we have not received ? But then, what are we doing with this glorious gospel, and with all the heavenly truth as to the church of God, the body of Christ, its position,

its portion, and its prospect? Are we doing what we ought and what we might to make it known? Are we seeking to share our precious things with others? Are we making loving efforts to carry the knowledge of them into the dark and destitute villages around us? I long to have a full, clear, heavenly gospel preached in every village throughout England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland—preached in the streets, if possible, or preached in the cottages by the living voice and the silent tract.

I trust, my beloved brethren, you will not think I am taking too much upon me in addressing you, thus urgently, upon this subject. God in His mercy forbid! I write in the full confidence of brotherly love. I long to engage in the work myself, but my years and state of health forbid; and I must content myself with crying to God and appealing to you. I want to awaken a lively interest in this blessed work. I am persuaded it would prove an immense blessing to all our assem-

blies to have this subject brought before them, and to have their interest, sympathy and prayers called forth in reference to it. I believe it would exert a most powerful influence upon them to have their hearts drawn out in real desire for the evangelisation of the adjacent villages and hamlets. It is always good and wholesome to be led out in loving service to others; and, above all, we have the assurance that our God is glorified and His heart gratified in the proclamation of the glad tidings far and wide. I am persuaded that the subject which I am now pressing upon your attention is in accordance with the heart of God, and the mind of Christ. This is the very highest motive for action. It furnishes a most powerful spring to the heart of every true evangelist, on each occasion of rising to speak, to remember that, notwithstanding the church's shameful failure as the witness of God on the earth, yet the precious gospel tells out what His heart is to every poor, guilty, heart-broken sinner that will only trust

Him. Nothing can exceed the moral power of this.

Of course, it is not for me to attempt to prescribe or even suggest a mode of working. The Lord Himself must do this; and He will do it for all who truly wait on Him, in lowly devotedness. My object in sending forth this appeal is to lay the subject upon the hearts of the beloved brethren in all the large towns throughout the kingdom, that they may ponder it and pray about it. If this object be gained, I shall rejoice and praise our God.

May the Lord in His infinite goodness, stir us all up to more thorough whole-hearted devotedness to Himself and to His interests on the earth. And may He, in a very special way, lay upon the hearts of all His beloved people, the urgent claims of the dark and benighted villages of Great Britain and Ireland!

I am, beloved brethren, most affectionately yours in Christ,

C. H. M.

*August, 1884.*