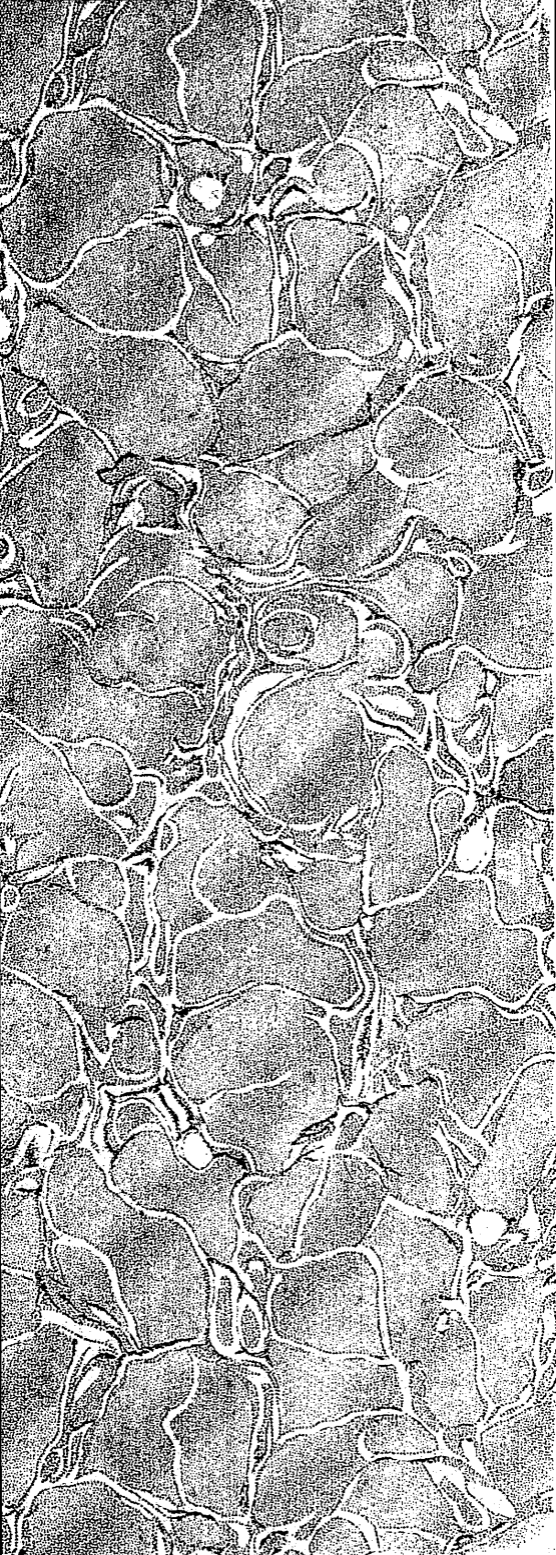


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EXCHANGE

God's Purpose in Planting the American Church.

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A

S E R M O N ,

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THE

MEETING IN BOSTON, MASS.

OCTOBER 2, 1860.

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BY SAMUEL W. FISHER, D. D.

President of Hamilton College.

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AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

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BOSTON, Ms., OCTOBER, 1860.

*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Board be presented to the Rev. Dr. FISHER for his Sermon, preached on Tuesday evening, and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

Attest,

SAMUEL M. WORCESTER, *Rec. Secretary.*



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## S E R M O N .

ISAIAH XLV. 1-6.—XLIII. 21.

THUS saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the Lord, and there is none else.

This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

It is an obvious fact that, for the enlargement of his church, God often selects special instruments. In setting into motion a whole system of agencies, this is almost uniformly the case. We recognize the fact all along the history of the church. We see men raised up with peculiar gifts, and clothed with peculiar powers, to effect certain great works. The text gives us a remarkable illustration of this method of divine procedure. Cyrus was a heathen; but there was that in his character, training and circumstances, that pre-eminently fitted him for the special work he was to perform as the restorer of the church. His magnanimity, his love of

justice, his respect for religion according to his light, the fact that he belonged to neither of the races that had done most to crush out the life of God's chosen people, but was himself their conqueror, qualified him for the work to which God had anointed him.

In the bosom of the church itself there are two still more remarkable examples of this law; the two men who bore the largest part in the inauguration and establishment of the chief dispensations. Moses and Paul were not indifferent characters; nor were their training and position like that of the multitude. They stand out boldly in history as men of peculiar natural gifts and attainments. Their early discipline exalted their intrinsic power; while their relation to the people among whom their work was to be performed, and to the science of the age in which they lived, imparted special qualifications for their great mission. It was not merely the fact that divine grace had consecrated them, that made them all they were. Back of their conversion, the providence of God, never, like man, neglectful of the minor things of life, had chosen, guided, disciplined and trained them in respect to those qualifications which belonged to them rather as men than as prophets and apostles. There is here a completeness, a symmetry of character and position wonderfully characteristic of the divine agency. Nor in all this do we see anything derogatory to the divine Word, or the divine Spirit. These are indeed *vital* to the progress of the church. It is their prerogative to give strength to weakness, courage to timidity, and,

with the worm that man treads upon, to thresh down the mountains of human pride and power. Beside these, all things else are as weakness. But if, when exalting these, we practically affirm the uselessness of all things else, we shall betray an ignorance of the method of Providence in the conversion of men only less great than that shown by its opposite error. It is not that the human is thus exalted above the divine, but simply that the divine uses that kind and measure of humanity which are best fitted to accomplish its purposes. It is nothing more than that common law which in all things else God has established; the law of means adapted to ends, from which in the natural world we ascend to the idea of his wisdom; the law which makes a sharp sword cut better than one that is dull; which makes a wedge split the gnarled oak, when a blunt surface would only bruise it; which hollows the bones of a bird and gives its wings their force and working, in order easily to rise on the elastic air; which makes a word spoken in one manner, better fitted to move the soul than the same word spoken in a different manner; it is this law exalted into the supernatural which God uses in his nobler work of leading his church onward to conquest. Just as he chose the passionate, magnanimous, courageous Luther to tear down the vast structure of Romish superstition; just as he chose the acute, constructive Calvin to make and build up, out of the chaos of scholastic theology, the glorious temple of Christian science; just as he chose the impassioned Whitfield to breathe new life into a dying church,



just so he works all through the world and the church, subsidizing the natural gifts and powers of his own creation, to bring forth the elevation of the race into the light of his glorious gospel. This is the first lesson I derive from the passages before us.

The second is but an expansion of the first. It is just as certain that the great Sovereign chooses *particular nations* to effect certain parts of his work in the final triumph of the gospel, as that he chooses certain *individuals* for some special operation. “*This people have I FORMED for myself; they shall show forth my praise.*” We place the emphasis here on the fact that he has *formed* this people for himself. He may not select as his agent this or that nation indifferently. His sovereignty reaches back of the immediate work. It chooses according to the character of the nation; it reaches to the antecedent training and the natural characteristics which combine to prepare the nation most fully for the work; nay, this sovereignty in its far-reaching wisdom has been busy all along the history of the people in so ordering the moulding influences under which character and position are attained, that when the time comes for them to enter into his special work, they will be found all ripe for his purpose.

This nation, to whom the passage before us refers, is a marked illustration of this thought. The Jew was designed to be the *conservator* of the word of God. He was chosen for this purpose. The object was not propagation, but conservation. The race, by nature and education, had just those

qualities which fitted it for this work. Its wonderful tenacity of impression, its power to hold what once had fairly been forced into it by divine energy, like the rock hardened around the crystal, belongs to its nature, reveals itself after Providence had shattered the nation, in that granite character which, under the fire of eighteen centuries, remains unchanged. It was its mission to hold, not to give; to stand, not to advance; and it was not until a mind of large Grecian culture was chosen to bear the truth to the Gentiles—not until the men of another race and another style of thought had received it, that the gospel went forth to win its grandest triumphs.

At every step of the progress of Christianity since, illustrations multiply of the truth contained in our text, that God forms nations to his work, and chooses them because of their fitness to accomplish certain parts of that work. I need not dwell upon the Greek, with his high mental culture and his glorious language—fit instrument through which the Divine Word breathed his life-giving truth; upon the Roman, sceptred in power over the whole realm of civilization, and undesignedly constructing the great highway for the church of Jesus; upon the German, with his innate freedom of spirit, nourishing the thoughtful souls whose lofty utterances awoke, whose wondrous power disenthralled a sleeping and captive church.

Passing by these and other illustrations of the truth before us, rich though they be in thoughts full of instruction, I deem no apology necessary for engaging in the inquiry, as to what work in

the cause of evangelization God has been forming *this* nation to accomplish. This unusual occasion—this gathering of representative Christians from all parts of our country, to celebrate the close of our first half-century of special missionary activity, is amply sufficient to justify me in turning from the general discussion of the theme before us, to a special application of it to our own time and nation. We stand this day on an eminence from which it needs no prophet to discern the rapidly converging lines of God's providence, or indicate the point of light towards which they hasten. Twenty-five years ago, this would have been difficult; fifty years ago, it would have been impossible. Trains of influence that once demanded centuries for their development, unfold and open in the life of a single generation. All over our brief history, impressed on every page of it, God has revealed a great purpose to be accomplished by this nation. The object for which he has been forming us is no longer hidden in the darkness of the future; it stands forth more clearly than did his great purpose in respect to Israel, when Solomon dedicated his temple, and for nearly a thousand years that purpose had been ripening.

In speaking to you on this subject, it will not be in my power to do even partial justice to it, without including some things that belong to the great nation out of which have flowed the main currents of our national life. Other nations have contributed some of the finest influences that have moulded us; our position has modified our character; but the vitality, the commanding energy

that has given birth to such great results, is directly traceable to the Anglo-Saxon. That wonderful race moves forward step by step with us in this work of evangelizing the world. The half century which has done so much in developing our missionary activity, has produced results scarcely less remarkable in the nation that planted us here. The nation which has brought forth Whitfield, and Wesley, and Wilberforce, and Newton, and Cary, and Morrison, and Williams, and hundreds like them, has done vastly more for us than all the world besides. We glory in this filial relationship, not because it allies to earthly greatness, but to the piety which, clothed in the radiant panoply of a consecrated learning, has entered, with unconquerable zeal, into the work of preaching the gospel to every creature.

To this point, therefore, let us direct our attention; let us trace out some of those things which indicate *that God has formed us as a nation to exert a special and vast influence in the evangelization of other nations.*

I. If you look at the natural constitution of this race, you will see in it an admirable fitness for this work. The character of a nation's influence is in part grounded in its natural constitution. The Anglo-Saxon inheriting, in common with the Northern races, strong intellectual powers, conjoins with these a hardy, persistent, energetic nature. The child of the temperate zone, the very extremes of temperature to which it is exposed impart vigor, elasticity, restless energy to its temperament. It

stands midway between the phlegmatic and the passionate—between the races so cold as rarely ever to be roused to great attainments, and the hot blood which, like the torrents raised by the summer shower, is stirred by slight causes, and then as quickly sinks into lethargy. It has the constitution which bears up under the severest toils of body and mind; it conjoins with this an energy springing from the fullness of natural vigor, that delights in action and perpetually impels to progress. The clear, practical understanding, laying its plans far in the future, the courage that danger cannot daunt, the fortitude that counts suffering a triumph, the persistent energy which works on in the eye of despair, find their most splendid and numerous illustrations in the history of this race. These are the native qualities which fit it for conquest; these prepare it not only to conquer, but to possess, not only to acquire, but to hold; these enable it to make one advance the stepping-stone for another, to wring out of the barrenness of nature rich tribute, to coin the gold of a triumphant civilization out of the granite, and through pathless snows, or the bloody welcome of savage foes, win freedom, plenty and peace.

This race thus constituted, while it takes from others only what is in harmony with its nature, gives vastly more than it receives. The multitudes, that from other races unite with it, are quickly subdued by its all-controlling energy; their prejudices, their habits, their language vanish; the forms of their religion change; a spirit, silent, all-embracing, like the warm breath of spring upon

the snows of winter, dissolves their stubborn nationalities and mingles them as homogeneous elements in its own rich life.

A race like this is formed of God to be a vast power for good in this world. He combined in it the finest qualities of half a dozen nations, that it might impress itself upon others; that its laws, its knowledge, its spiritual life might become quickening forces among the dead millions. Not for itself, not for any merely temporal object has he created it; but to diffuse the truth, to be a plastic power among the nations, in the hand of Jesus, in hastening his final triumph.

II. Let us look now at the peculiar training which God has given to this race—a training all in harmony with this great object. With the same original qualities, education—especially an education working in the same direction for centuries—makes a vast difference. In one direction it may restrain, repress, modify, almost annihilate the primary tendencies of a nation; but when it falls in with those tendencies, its effect is to enlarge and stimulate them. Now just as the education of Cyrus and Moses and Paul gave them a special preparation for their missions towards and in the church—just as the peculiar and protracted discipline of the Hebrew fitted him to be the conservator of the truth until Messiah should come—just so the divine Providence has given scope and stimulus to the original endowments of the Anglo-Saxon and American, fitting him for the offensive work of missions among the nations.

His home was on that little Isle of a few thousand square miles, scarce surpassing in extent one of our larger States. He was girt about by no impassable mountains, by no overcrowded populations. The sea—the open, the boundless, the free—mingled the music of its surges with the harvest-song of its reapers, and the anthems of his Sabbath worship. Each creek, each bay nourished the adventurous spirit of his sons. The boy who rode his skiff over the ripples of its quiet waters, in imagination was the captain of the merchantman, the admiral of the fleet. And so, from the necessities of the case, and the inward energy of his soul, the sea became his home, the sailor his representative. Gradually commerce grew into ever enlarging proportions. His ships traversed all oceans, visited all shores; round and through the world they carried the spirit and the power of the little Isle. They became the carriers for all nations, gathering peaceful tribute from all peoples, spreading their victorious enterprise over climes inhospitable with eternal ice or sweltering in the hot luxuriance of the tropics.

From this adventurous spirit three results followed; each great in itself, and all combining to develop this power of positive impression. The first was reflexive; this people, who could thus take, must also give. Hence sprang up the artisan; manufactories rose on all sides; villages of yesterday swelled into vast cities, crowded with earnest workers. The Island became a work-shop for the world; a work-shop not of dumb-driven cattle, but of high intelligence, of bold, far-reaching, practical science. The Anglo-Saxon must not re-

ceive tribute as a lazy lord, but as an intelligent, high-minded worker, to return it a hundred fold. And so the enterprise of commerce, and the enterprise of domestic industry, mutually stimulated each other ; and both, under the conduct of consummate tact and prudence, influenced not a little by the quickening spirit of a revived Christianity, gave birth to powers and influence unexampled in the known past.

Associated with this was a second grand result. Undesigned on his part, seeking at first only a field whereon his peaceful energies could develop themselves, this Anglo-Saxon seats himself upon what was once the richest throne of the past.

India, to which he went as a tradesman, becomes his vassal. The sceptre of Aurungzebe passed into his hands. This sceptre, though again and again dipped in blood ; this throne, though often shaken by the volcanic throes of religious fanaticism, is his to-day. God sent him there and keeps him there for a glorious purpose. As Cyrus dreamed not that he was conquering Babylon for the deliverance of Israel, so this nation imagined not that India was given to it yet to be set as a crown jewel in the casket of Jesus. Through this process of blended commerce and conquest the energies have been developed which fit it to impress its spirit and its laws, and in the end, a pure Christianity upon the dead millions of the East.

But in addition to these there is a third result of this education of the Anglo-Saxon which bears more directly upon us in this our half-century gathering—a result which, more than all the others, has



reacted on the race, fitting it to be God's chosen instrument for the evangelization of the world. This spirit peopled this continent. We were born not of the inward pressure of an over-crowded population which forced Greece to colonize; not of the lust of empire which led Rome to plant colonies to secure her conquests; not of the lust of gold which led the Spaniard to enthrone himself in Central America. We had a unique, a noble origin: The spirit of enterprise was interpenetrated by the spirit of vital Christianity; it was guided by the practical wisdom, which sought here to create the home of a free, God-fearing people. This spot on which to-night we gather; these waters where pilgrim barks floated; these hills and intervalles which heard their calm, confident supplications amidst terror and death, and their anthems of thanksgiving in the hour of deliverance, are the mute witnesses of that living faith and stern resolve and high emprise which gave us birth.

No sooner is the Anglo-Saxon here, than the original conditions under which he has been in training are either changed or enlarged. The land has a broader margin of ocean, the lochs expand into inland seas, the rivulets swell to rivers, the little island home has become a continent. The education of the race for its work advances in this wide, free land, with increasing power, but substantially in the same direction. It is not in mere art that embellishes life; it is not in the finer works that concentrate the powers while they limit their range, that the American is to win his most remarkable triumphs. He is not to follow in the

old, effete methods of thought and life. His is a nobler destiny; and for him there must be another style of education. He is not to paint miniatures, and sculpture men in marble and brass; he is to *form* men, to give laws to nations and interpenetrate the souls of millions with the truth as it is in Jesus. To fit him for this work, his *individuality* must be developed; the forces that give power and influence must be quickened within him; he must possess self-reliance and sturdy independence. The spirit that made him forget the glad hearths of England, must ripen under these ever-changing skies. His work is not to conquer millions for a despot, but to unfold the energies of his race along the line of individual achievement in the peaceful pursuits of a thoroughly Christian civilization. And so the ocean, the forest, the lake, the prairie, welcome him to their stern toils. A virgin continent lies before him, to be subdued and made the home of Anglo-Saxon institutions—institutions so modified and reorganized as to be truly American. In this great work no sluggard, no slave can triumph. On this field all the higher, stronger qualities of the race will be tasked. This ocean must be ploughed with swift ships; these rivers must bear the burden of a new world's productions; these forests must let in the sun; these prairies must echo to the rattle of the swift reaper and the glad shout of the harvest-home; these plains and valleys must shake beneath the wheels of his iron chariots, and over them thought shall fly on the wing of the lightning; these rocky ramparts, that frown him back from the unknown

Pacific, must be scaled. Onward in the march of peaceful conquest he must press, until the handful of corn planted on the shores of the Atlantic, shall ascend all mountain-tops; and every where, from ocean to ocean, and from the ice-mountains of Hudson's Bay to the warm waters of the Gulf, its fruit shall shake like Lebanon.

Now in this process of national culture, you see the development of just those qualities which, when consecrated by the spirit of the gospel, are to constitute the finest missionary race in the world. They are positive qualities; they constitute the energy that impresses—the power that subdues and moulds other minds by a law as certain as that which bids the flowers open, and verdure crown the hills beneath the kiss of the sunshine and the rain. This hardy frame; this restless energy; this indomitable perseverance; this practical tact; this productive invention, not spending itself on minute forms of embellishment, but exerting its genius along the line of those practical combinations which multiply the power of the hand a thousand-fold, and change, as if by magic, the aspect of a country in a single year; this stalwart growth of individual power which makes man the sovereign of nature;—these constitute a race which, informed by religion, is prepared, yea necessitated, to lead the van of Immanuel's army for the conquest of the world.

III. Intimately connected with, and constituting part of the method in which God is forming this people for the aggressive work of missions, are

that individual freedom and the settlement of governmental difficulties and constitutional principles which have given such a peculiar form to our civilization. One fact, not always recognized, but yet of vast significance, meets us whenever we attempt to understand the original forces that have made us what we are. The "Common Law" is our inheritance. It grew up out of the necessities of individuals and small communities. It was the child of those common rights which naturally belong to freemen associated in civil society. No man, therefore, can tell when or where it was born. History recognizes its existence, never its origin. The sense of justice, the dignity and personality of the individual, the practical understanding of those relations of life which society creates, the barriers reared against the concentration of power in single hands to the injury of the many, the facilities for the determination of the right,—these reveal themselves as its vital characteristics. This is not the place to run a comparison between the Civil and the Common Law—to show how one has assisted to consolidate the great monarchies, while the other has wrought to limit and fetter irresponsible power. It is sufficient here to remark, that the principles of the latter, harmonizing with a revived Christianity, have wrought with great power both in this and in the land from which we sprung. They wrested Magna Charta from King John; they fought with the encroachments of absolute power, reign after reign, until their ascendancy was fully established through the great Revolution. Transplanted to this new world, this British oak has

sent its roots into our rich alluvial, has lifted its branches broader and freer into the heavens. Here its limbs have shot forth in peculiar vigor and beauty. Individual freedom ; representation causing the power to ascend from the masses and return again to wait their decision ; written, limited constitutions, with all the checks upon hasty legislation and central consolidation which can be created by a systematic division of the powers of government,—these are the consummate flower and glory of our civilization.

Now you are to mark this thing in this connection. These great results have been reached through protracted struggles. They are not the sudden achievement of a race, all at once casting off the disabilities and burdens of absolute power. They are the outgrowth of centuries. The blood of martyrs ; the tears and prayers of confessors ; revolutions now peaceful, now sanguinary, now moving forward under the impulse of deep religious conviction, then struggling into life as the result of the native love of freedom ; reforms, experiments, crises and eras of vast significance, succeeding each other for nearly two centuries, have consecrated, watered and developed these principles. It is the long process through which a race has been unfolding the noblest energies of humanity. The stern, the strong, the earnest elements of manhood have been most fully nourished. The characteristics that prepare men to impress others, the stimulant, commanding, effective energies, the clear conception of right, the sense of individual worth, loyalty to law rather than persons,

the power and the purpose to choose each his own field of action, the right to do and attain in any direction whatever talent, and industry, and honesty can effect; forces, ideas—habits such as these, have been the product of this peculiar education of the Anglo-American. It is not the refinement of courts, the artificial manners of subjects in presence of superiors, that makes men. The high conception of individual right and duty; the habit of yielding obedience to conscience rather than arbitrary power; the felt assurance of liberty to develop the energies of the soul in all directions,—these give birth to a race mighty for good; these won the revolution that ripened its fruit in 1688; these planted our continent; these wrought out our liberties; these, under the guiding spirit of the gospel and the sovereignty of King Jesus, form a people prepared to traverse all oceans, ascend all mountains, penetrate all forests, face all dangers in the work of impressing this gospel upon the world. And it is in view of just such qualities as these, we see the design of God to make us a missionary race, just as clearly as we see that design in the education of Cyrus, or Luther, as the deliverers of his people and the builders of the broken walls of Zion.

There is one advance we have made upon the Common Law as it exists in most parts of the Father Land, which has a peculiar significance in reference to our future as a missionary race. I refer to the abolition of the law of primogeniture. In a nation like that of Israel, constituted to conserve things as they were until Messiah should come, this law was in place. But when God would

prepare a race to give, to advance, to impress its ideas upon the world, to go forth on the peaceful conquests of the Cross, then it must fall. One of the effects of the pentecostal spirit was the selling of their property and the consecration of it to Christ. It is not for such a people to build palaces, to found great families, to perpetuate the distinctions of birth, to gather vast estates in few hands, around whose possessors the multitude must revolve for generations as dependents and satellites. This race, that is to put the lever of the gospel under the old world, must stand not upon the dead past, but upon the living present. High moral worth, associated with individual energy and independence, must be its title to this distinction. It must have a life of its own, and create its own possessions. It must be renewed every generation by the subsidence of the effete into their original nothingness, and the rise of new, fresh, vigorous manhood into all places of responsibility and power. If this Anglo-American, chosen of God for a higher purpose, in the petty pride of successful accumulation, builds him a palace, he shall do it knowing that no long succession of his sons shall inhabit it.

I know we have been reproached for the facility with which our children leave the old homestead to seek new abodes. But this is God's ordinance for this nation—one of the means by which he trains us to leave father and mother, for the advance of higher interests. I deny not the value and the preciousness of the associations of home. We run back to those early memories which wreath themselves around the place where our childhood was

nurtured, with ever fresh delight. The venerable forms that watched our opening youth, the dear associates that lent so bright a glory to life's young dream, the dwelling consecrated in every part by scenes of joy, the trees we climbed, the grounds that echoed to the joyful shout and quick tread of our playmates,—these never rise before us, gilded with brilliant hues by our warm imagination, without awakening a thrill of joy. But when it is a question whether we shall preserve the material part around which these associations cluster, at the cost of sterility and dependence, or whether we shall pass from it to create new homes, to develop manhood and womanhood in new fields of action, then, we say, let the dead past bury its dead; then we rejoice in the necessity which compels us to go forth and lay the foundations of a new home; we bless God that this Anglo-American is forced to live as a stranger and a pilgrim, since this is the very process by which our sons and daughters can be best trained to count the world their field of labor, and the spot where, in obedience to the call of Jesus, they may pitch their tent for a few years, their home in time. What matters it to the men and women of such a people, when their hearts feel the quickening power of Christ's spirit, whether their bones lie beneath the deep shade of our western forests, on the sad shores of Africa, or on those Pacific isles where the swelling ocean ever sings their requiem? What matter is it to us whether, like Harriet Newell, and Smith, and Scudder, and hundreds of others, these bodies sleep their last sleep on a foreign shore, or whether they be borne,



by kindred hands, to their resting place in Auburn, and Greenwood, and Spring Grove? God educates us to leave the paternal roof for distant homes; and it needs but the living spirit of Him who said, 'Go preach my gospel to every creature,' to make this peculiar training effective in raising a great army of missionaries of the Cross.

IV. Let us advance now to another thought. The providence which has thus been training us, has given us large material possessions, and the power to develop and use them. In the material elements of national wealth, coal, iron, the precious metals, and a soil of great variety and richness, no country surpasses this. In productive power and inventive genius, this nation, by the confession of the ablest foreign writers, has no superior. With such a country, and such a power to develop its resources, what is to hinder us from ascending to a position where we shall command the markets of the world, and give laws to commerce, and possess resources sufficient to sustain more missionaries than we now have population? This, it is true, is regarded by unpractical, dreamy, and romantic minds, as a low view—a view which, on these high occasions of spiritual enjoyment, should be kept in the background. Then, too, we are taunted by foreigners of a certain class, and the taunt has been thoughtlessly re-echoed among ourselves, with our devotion to material interests. But let us be just to ourselves; let us remember that there is a bright as well as a dark side to this subject; let us not forget, that man is material as

well as spiritual. Body and soul are here married together ; and no nation can ever rise to the highest influence, or be prepared to do the largest missionary work, when the interests of both are not fully cared for. Our education begins in the material, and ascends to the immaterial. But, ascend as we may, in this world we never rise wholly above the material. Influences mighty for good spring out of it. What a prodigious force of individual development along the various paths of enterprise is there in the prospect of gaining a competence, of giving to the family an education fitting it for high position in society? What a power is it to restrain from prodigal expenditures in frivolous pleasure, to hold men back from vice, even when it cannot win them to virtue? What is it but this that stirs the heart of this great city, and wakens every morning the hum of its busy population, and pours along its crowded thoroughfares these on-rushing tides of human energy? What but this rouses the latent activities of our people to develop the resources of this continent ; —to build, cultivate, mine and navigate, vexing the land and the ocean with all the instruments of a world-wide production? And this is just as it should be. This very material activity, quickened and guided by moral principle, is absolutely essential to the development of a strong and manly character. We are past the day when courage and force could only grow on the field of battle ; whose choicest instruments of manly culture were the war-horse, the sword, the battle-axe ; when society was divided horizontally into two classes, the serfs

who toiled as cattle, and the soldier who spent his life in alternate war and revelry. We are all soldiers, and our field of battle is the world. The path of true nobility opens to all. The boy who, flung forth like a waif on this restless sea, by honest industry, wins a position, where respect and influence attend him, he is our noble; the artisan, whose invention multiplies the power of the hand over material forces; the youth who, rising from small beginnings, ascends the heights of a profession, originates large enterprises for humanity, and sustains institutions full of blessing to humanity, these are our kings. And in the production of such men on a great scale, this attention to material interests, is a power of vast influence.

All this has a direct, logical connection with our work as a people, who are to propagate the gospel aggressively through the world. It has to do with it, because this process of self-development along the line of material interests is necessary to unfold the attributes which give us power to impress ourselves upon men. It has to do with it, because the product of this devotion to material interests is capital diffused through the masses; and capital is one of the means God uses to convert the world. Is it of no consequence, when we send forth our forces to fight for us, that other forces vastly greater, are here intensely busy in creating the means to supply the instruments and material of successful warfare? What has made the credit of this Board a power in every land? Why, when the greatest commercial houses have been prostrated, and

bankruptcy has unsettled confidence, and men have not known whom to trust, has the paper of a missionary society, without a cent of invested capital, been as good as gold the world over? Why, when debt has accumulated upon us through the diminished resources of our friends, have these secretaries, this committee, never doubted for a moment that the time would come, as this night we bless our God it has come, when every cent of that indebtedness would be canceled, and from a still higher vantage ground, they would address themselves to the work of saving a lost world? You answer, 'Faith in its supporters,' a conviction that this cause had wrought itself so deeply into the hearts of God's people in this land, that in due time they would come to their help. All this is true. But I am not mistaken in affirming that another idea is necessary to complete the answer—this faith had its foundation in the ultimate ability as well as the will of those who sustained it; in the fact that behind it there stood a great multitude determined to *create* that which should fill its coffers;—a multitude of Christian men and women, strong in their individual responsibility, strong in their habits of productive labor, strong in their ability to rise above these temporary depressions in consequence of that energy which they share with their countrymen, and able thus to secure those material interests out of which should flow the gold and the silver to sustain the missionary and support his schools, and give him Bibles and tracts, and compass him round with the felt power of a productive Christian sympathy.

V. It is admitted that if this devotion to material interest stood alone, it would soon exhaust itself ; producing wealth and consequent luxury, it would conduct us speedily to a corrupt and effete civilization. But this is not the case ; it is largely animated and guided by a high literary, as well as religious culture. Education diffused through the masses has become an essential characteristic of this race. On the revival of letters, none of the cognate races embraced this idea more heartily. The establishment of the universities was the first movement, because the first necessity was that of teachers, preachers, and statesmen. But as the right of private judgment consequent on the Reformation, took root among the people, the logical result must in time follow ; the people must be prepared to exercise their rights by a fitting education. When the race colonized this new world, their first step was to establish the college as the truest source of general intelligence. From this went forth men of true learning, under whose plastic influence there sprang into almost full-grown proportions, our noble system of common schools. It is not necessary for me to discuss at large a subject so well understood. It is enough to say that this idea of the practical enlightenment of the people has taken fast hold of the heart of this race ; that every where it has given birth to institutions of learning covering the whole field of science in all its departments ; that the teacher follows hard upon the footsteps of the pioneer, and while the axe still resounds through our grand old forests, the foundations of the school, the

academy and the college are laid in the virgin soil in anticipation of the future millions. I need not say how the original idea of a truly Christian education, lapsing in part through the influence of infidelity and foreign immigration, is gaining its true position, and the Word of God is coming more and more to take its appropriate place as the highest science which man can attain. Nor need I dwell upon the practical character of this education; how while it ascends to the mastery of science in its noblest and profoundest aspects, its great aim is to develop that tact and wisdom which in the conduct of life enable its possessor to avail himself of all known resources to wield the powers of nature to promote the ends of life, and so lifts him above the necessities of time and place which limit and oppress the ignorant.

I wish rather to concentrate your attention upon the preparation which all this gives for the work of missions. The race possessed of such resources has reached a vantage ground of power. Science of this kind, especially when conjoined with vast material resources, constitutes the true sovereignty of the world. Wherever this people go, they hold in their hands the destinies of men; they are bound by an original fitness to impress themselves upon others; the same constitution of things which makes man the lord of the world, makes the educated man the lord of the ignorant and rude. Mind enlightened by true wisdom is designed of God to be the plastic power which is to mould mind unenlightened. This is the secret of the progress and success of the Anglo-Saxon and American; this the

source of that influence which makes the world bring him tribute ; this it is which, wherever he plants himself, makes him the superior and the conqueror ; this gives him empire—not so much the empire of civil law as that higher empire of influence which the half-civilized and barbarous nations cannot resist. And so, wherever the missionaries of this race go, they show themselves to belong to a race fitted to send forth a moulding influence. At once they rear the standard of education as well as religion. Everywhere they are recognized as men of large abilities, of refined manners, of thorough science. They address themselves to the work of renovating nations as men trained in the bosom of a superior intelligence. They are prepared to meet the philosophies of the pagan, and the sophistries of the corrupt Christian. Men like Martyn and Duff, who, on the banks of the Ganges, can argue with the awakened and acute young Brahmin ; like Smith and Thomson, who, on the land where patriarchs and prophets once tabernacled, can pour the light of Christian science on the passionate hearts of the wild Arab ; like Goodell and Hamlin, who, on the shores of the Bosphorus, can lift the vision of a pure Christianity before the eyes of corrupt Greeks and Armenians, and initiate there a reformation as pure, as powerful as that which centuries ago snatched the choicest jewels from the proud tiara of the man of sin. Give me, says the natural philosopher, a place to stand upon, and a lever long enough, and I will move the world. Give me rather, may we say, men like these, backed and sus-

tained by the prayers, the influence and the contributions of a Christian race like this, and with the divine blessing, the world will not only be moved—it will be regenerated.

Nor are we to pass lightly by, in this connection, the language which this race employs for the expression of its intelligence. Of all living tongues, where is there another so copious, versatile, sinewy; another that, like the race it represents, is so composite and cosmopolitan, absorbing into itself the energy and the life of all dead and living tongues? Think of the wealth of science and literature it possesses; think of the affluence of Christian thought it has treasured up! I know that like a strong, deep river, it has its foul eddies, here and there its stagnant side pools, full of all abominable creatures; but its body, its main current, is clear and strong as the river of life. I have read somewhat in other languages; but where in any of them is there to be found so rich, so varied, so wonderful a missionary literature as crowds the literature of this race. Within half a century, its sons have created libraries—libraries filled with the records of their missionary labors, with lives of the good and the great at home and abroad; with travels and descriptions of manners, and opinions, and scenes of every nation and land under the whole heaven—volumes instinct with the power of God, full of the triumphs of that Cross before which of yore the Roman eagle folded its proud wings, and the barbarous Goth laid down the savage weapons of his irresistible power. A race nurtured in such a language, breathing and



creating such a literature, is one out of which men are prepared to go forth panoplied in celestial armor, informed with a divine life for the conquest of the world.

VI. Let us pass to another thought. The *character and position* of the *Protestantism we possess* constitutes our most vital, substantive efficiency. At the very beginning there was a marked distinction between the races from which we sprung and others. Christianity was always foreign to the peculiar life of the Roman and Grecian. Just so far as they received it, their characteristic national spirit was destroyed. The Greek sought to subject it to taste and sentiment, the special form of his culture. The Roman subjected it to law, and made this an authority superior to conscience. And hence it must either wholly destroy these national peculiarities, or be modified to harmonize with them. The disastrous result of this conformity of Christianity to their spirit is broadly revealed in history, and constitutes at this day the most formidable opponent to the progress of the pure, simple gospel. But in the Anglo-Saxon and cognate German races, it had a different reception. Their spirit was less artificial. They had no priestly caste, no splendid sacrificial rites. They deemed it inconsistent with the nature of celestial beings to be confined within walls or images. They had retained the earlier Revelation in vastly greater purity. And so when Christianity entered, it found few of those corruptions to oppose its progress. It entered the heart, it har-

monized with the original spirit, it took full possession of the mind of this people. Its enunciations, its fundamental principles, found in their simple code, both of religion and law, little to resist save that depravity which belongs to all men. And as in the Anglo-Saxon the development of the principles of the Common Law advanced, Christianity went hand and hand with it. Every step towards the establishment of individual freedom was consecrated by the higher principles of religion. When the Reformation came, asserting the right of private judgment, exalting the Bible and conscience above the authority of kings and emperors, the Anglo-Saxon, long trained in the line of civil freedom, at once grasped them and fought for them with wonderful energy. Henceforth the two were indissolubly united. No matter what was the specific object to be attained, whether political or religious, underneath the great struggle, deep in the heart of the Briton, these twin powers were the ever-present, animating forces.

The transfer of the contest to this land was only an advance in the same direction. It was Protestantism, in part accepting and adopting, in part originating as its own, the highest form of both civil and religious freedom. It was the fundamental principle of Protestantism revealing itself in all departments of the life of the Anglo-American. Into science as well as law it infused itself. Instead of basing science on facts, and religion on mere authority, instead of enshrining religion in a casket, like imitation jewels too sacred for the profane touch of the material or metaphysical investigator,

it threw it open to the world; it challenged scrutiny; it held men to a thorough test of its divine origin; it said to the bold spirit of inquiry, Search into these things, pry into all their concealments, detect if you can one worthless stone; go up into the heavens, go down into the earth, penetrate the nature of man, ransack history, and bring forth if you can one indisputable fact, that can stand as a true witness against the divine original of our religion. Now what has been the result of this long contest? It has settled for all time the right of private judgment. "I am ready," says Luther to the Pope, "to give up to all men, and in all things; but as for the word of truth, I neither can nor will let that go." This principle the Anglo-Saxon and American has exalted into a living, conquering spirit. It ramifies all through his political, social, literary life. It moulds his childhood, it influences his manhood, it gives a peculiar character to his genius, a tone to his manners, a nobility to his actions. Look abroad over the world! Where, outside of this race, is this principle thus recognized? Where is there another nation, in which it is not crippled or crushed by some outward force, secular or ecclesiastical? The Protestants of Europe have a mighty conflict yet before them. They cannot propagate the truth abroad over the world, until they have mastered the evil influences that settle down upon their own lands. But we have fought and won this battle. We are the advance guard of Protestantism. Our missionaries go forth educated in law, in science, in religion, recognizing God alone in them all; free from the

disabilities which encumber others. Behind them is a nation in sympathy with their efforts ; a nation full of life, of motion, of influence ; a nation which, from its lofty vantage ground, is bound to give its light, its sacred principles to the millions in darkness.

Nay, more than this is true. Some of those peculiarities of religious life, which have been our chief reproach, contribute not a little to our power as a missionary race. The diversities of belief, the breaking up of the outward form of the church into various denominations, against which Erastianism and the Papacy protest so vehemently, are securities for the perpetuity of the truth, and sources of vast efforts towards the conversion of men. Growing out of the purest and simplest principles of our Protestantism, they are so many independent conservators of the truth and safeguards against the overmastering power of any one great error. The Episcopalian holds in highest esteem the idea of the church and its rites as the chief power in life, supreme over all other forces. It is a noble principle. Let him hold it and guard it, even though I cannot accept all the inferences and minor opinions which he associates with it. The Independent magnifies the opposite principle, the individual as the source of authority. Let him hold and guard it well ; for it is one of the fundamental elements of our Christianity. The Presbyterian exalts constitutional, representative freedom, and a clear, well-defined, strong symbol of faith. Let him stand fast by that standard which Calvin planted on the shores of Lake Lemman, for when it falls a tower of strength crumbles to the ground. The Methodist

insists upon the predominance of an emotional nature in all the actings of a living religion. Let him work on that line; for when religion becomes a mere affair of church rites and creeds and government, then its vitality has fled. The Baptist, sweeping away the ancient dispensation, guards with special care the ordinances of the new. Let them all work together; work on their own line of power. The unity of the church is in its spirit, not in its form. Its power is in the pure life of its members; not in any absolute oneness of view of all minor aspects of Christianity. These diversities are all on the surface; they reach not the fundamental points of faith. The evils they generate are temporary; the good they effect is vast and abiding. In their practical working they largely counteract the tendency to a one-sided religion. They appeal to the different principles that move society; they rouse, they animate men to work for Christ. They give to our Protestantism, what has been the boast of the Papacy, a place where men of every variety of temperament and education can labor in harmony with themselves; they enlist all kinds of good and natural influences; they suit the broad aspect of society; they push themselves into new fields. What is lost from the concentration of a vast organism, is more than gained by the augmented power of individuals. At first the struggle was to live. Then as these branches of the church multiplied, they entered upon aggressive movements for the conquest of the world. Each one became, what God meant it should be, a missionary society, raising up, commissioning its members to preach the

gospel in all the world. The intensity of denominational action, the harmony which characterizes bodies uniting according to the genius of their own system, the innate power of an awakened Christianity, stimulated by the examples of others, all combined to promote their efficiency in spreading the gospel. Out on the broad field, in contact with the superstitions and depravity of the world, the rigidity of their ecclesiastical systems relaxed, while the grand fundamentals of faith rose into clear view. Who cannot see in this marshaling of sects, this onward march of these different branches of the church of Jesus, a new source of hope for the world? Who believes that any one of them called to the throne, intrusted with their combined power, would guard the great truths of religion as well, or advocate them with as deep and effective an energy as the whole moving on the line of their separate denominational preference?

Look over history, and you will find that two of the most effective obstacles to the onward progress of the church, have been the centralization of power in a few hands, and the wild, irregular action of individuals. The first, in its efforts to maintain itself, becomes intolerant; it seeks to enforce a rigid uniformity on all points, whether vital or trivial, and in the effort, it crushes out the vitality of free, spontaneous action; it puts the intellect in chains; it subjects the soul to its own artificial and self-created forms, and reduces it to a machine. The second, struggling for freedom, spends its strength in efforts to resist; it exalts the minor into fundamental beliefs; it lives in opposition rather than in

true progress, and wastes the energies that, consecrated to the work of saving souls, would have brightened the firmament with constellations of glory, in winning transient victories, or suffering useless defeats. But when the church is marshaled in divisions, both these tendencies meet with forces that modify and control their excess. If a few ecclesiastics rise up and say, "We are the only church; put your necks under our iron yoke;" if these men, in virtue of this enormous assumption, claim supremacy over the conscience of the people, the free thought, and free speech, and free action generated by these diverse organizations, rise up and demand the proof. And if the evidence is not sufficient, the ridiculous assumption, destitute of reason and power, serves only to confirm the people in opposition. Meanwhile the mutual action and reaction of these great denominations on each other, compel an appeal, not to an assumed power, but to the practical reason and conscience of the church, enlightened by the Word. And thus the lay element, the body of the church, rises to influence and practical control. On the other hand, as these denominations have taken their form largely from the constitutional and natural differences that exist in humanity itself, they furnish a refuge and field of action for men of all varieties of temperament and prejudice. He who is not at home in one, if he have the true spirit of Christ in him, cannot well fail to find in some others the atmosphere of thought and feeling he loves. The process of development goes on in harmony with the varied characteristics of man. All trees do not grow as well in the same

soil and climate. In one position they shoot up tall and strong; in another they pine and die. A cedar will live on the top of a rock, where an oak would fail to find nourishment. Some men need rigid forms to help them on in the Christian life; some are chafed and soured, unless they can give full play to their emotional nature. And thus God hath so permitted his church to be organized in this land, that there may be the fullest unfolding of the powers of the Anglo-American, with various and strongly marked diversities of character. And this, too, in this stage of the history of the church, with reference to the grand work which this race is to effect in the conversion of the world.

VII. But not to detain you much longer, let me say a word on two other features of that training, by which God has signally set us apart for the work of missions. Whoever shall write the history of the American church, will be obliged to notice the *remarkable character given to it by revivals of religion*. These have not been, as in many other churches, an occasional incident; they have entered into its life; they have given character to its development; they have marked its progress. Since the days of the Apostles, the Christian church, in any one of its branches, has never witnessed displays of God's converting power so wonderful, numerous and extensive, as this church has enjoyed during the last sixty years. More than one hundred years ago, when a barren orthodoxy was preparing the nation for the reign of infidelity, the quickening spirit of a wide-spread awakening infused new life into the



church. When the French war and the terrible scenes of the Revolution, had prepared the soil for the skepticism of the Encyclopædists, and when as a consequence, four-fifths of the intelligent youth of the nation had ceased to have faith in the Word of God, then began a new era of revivals; then the despairing church shook off her fetters, and went forth fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners. When, thirty-five years ago, began that turbid stream of immigration which threatened to submerge the institutions of religion and drown our verdant Zion in a sea of corruption as deadly as that which rolls over the cities of the plain, then was the arm of the Lord revealed for our deliverance. And so, at every period of greatest danger, the sudden, mighty demonstrations of the Divine Spirit have given to the church new life, and lifted her up to a loftier vantage ground of power.

Now it is not necessary I should trace out the connection of this remarkable training with that spirit of missions, which, almost cotemporaneous with its second era, began to animate the church. The first effect, indeed, of a genuine revival, is not seen in the production of the foreign missionary spirit. There is a great internal work of self-development—a work of nurture and education in respect to young converts, which absorbs the minds and occupies the hands of the pastors and older members of the church. But when these young converts have become stable, and strong, then the same elements of life and power, amid which they were born into the kingdom, show themselves in

the energy with which they seek to make the Cross victorious all over the world. Then, the maturing Christian learns to consecrate his possessions more and more to this distant work. Youth, burning with a desire to preach Christ, enter college, and youth already there catch this heavenly spirit, and meet in secret places, beside haystacks, in earnest prayer for divine guidance. Thus the means and the men for God's great work of evangelization are at hand. Thus did Mills, and Judson, and Fisk, and Newell, receive the divine inspiration. Thus the church has found the spirit and the power to enter into this grandest of all enterprises. Nay, more than this. These men, born amidst revivals, partaking of the life and energy which they create, go forth expecting to impress the world: they expect to see similar revivals wherever, on a heathen or a nominally Christian shore, they uprear the standard of the Cross. The church, and the men she sends forth, share in these strong, positive, impressive characteristics which a revival always creates. They expect literally to see nations born in a day; the faith which struggled into life amidst the conversion of half a parish, the consecration which stood up for Christ, surrounded by scores and hundreds of rejoicing young converts, can see no reason why the same power of God, using the same truth, can not and will not convert hundreds of heathen in a day. And so, when they preach Christ in the islands of the sea, or on the plains and valleys of Asia Minor, they expect to see, and God has given it to them to see, his arm made bare for the conversion of thousands of souls.

And thus, by all this discipline of revivals, and this peculiar process of development, and this creation of such positive characteristics, has God clearly shown that we are not to dwell at home; that great as is this field of labor, mighty the obstacles here to be overcome, yet he has given us an overplus of Christian energy, that must seek its object in the conversion of the world. Every revival of religion, every great era of revivals, is the coming of the Lord to victory; the prelude of that grand chorus, when all nations shall join in the Christian's 'Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.'

VIII. One thought still remains, to give completeness to our discussion. For full half a century, God has been organizing the American church for the work of foreign missions, and training it, in actual service, for this great object. Early in our history, the apostolic Eliot, and a century after, the no less devoted Brainerd, illustrated and kept alive the smouldering fire. But the time had not come for the inauguration of this spirit as the all-animating life of the church. The home work overtasked all her energies. She built her houses, and cleared the forests, and reared her sanctuaries with the rifle at her side. Then came the *great contest*. She had to win peace and freedom along the path of trial, and in garments rolled in blood. When freedom came, civil institutions were to be settled; the foundations for the highest civilization of unborn millions must be laid; the temple of liberty, well ordered and symmetrical,

must be reared upon them. Lexington, and Bunker Hill, and Saratoga, and Trenton, and Yorktown, and Philadelphia, were steps essential to the progress of the church, as well as the nation, to that high position, from which her peaceful energies could be exerted for influence over the world. At length we are a nation ; for thirty years the bold experiment of self-government has been tried ; in the career of public and private prosperity, we have advanced with vast strides. For more than half a score of years, the spirit of a pure revival has been deepening the piety and working out the foul formal leaven of the church. And now *the hour* has come ; the trains of influence from various sources converge to a point ; this Society, to be henceforth the living representative of the idea of the world's conversion, to be henceforth a grand agent in giving power and efficiency to that idea in the heart of the church, is born. It is born amid prayers and struggles of faith in the heart of the young, the enthusiastic, the strong. It was too bold and startling an idea to be originated in the cool caution of age. It came forth into life like all the great ideas which have revolutionized society, and moved the world rapidly forward in its career of improvement ; just as the apostolic church received its mightiest impulse toward the conquest of the nations from the youthful Paul ; just as the Reformation of the seventeenth century sprang to life in the student heart and brain of Luther ; just as the great awakening of the last century, and the creation of one of the largest organizations of the church, issued forth

from the halls of Oxford, where the young Wesleys and Whitfield felt the inspiration of a new life.

The conversion of the world was in itself no new idea. It was as old as the grand predictions of the prophets; it flamed forth on the apostolic banner; it had stirred the heart of the church, in every age since Jesus ascended, to achieve her noblest victories; it floated up to heaven on the wings of sacred song; it gave strength to martyrs and confessors when the sword of persecution was unsheathed; it was echoed in basilicas and cathedrals; it was whispered in cells and closets whenever from the lips of God's people went forth the prayer, "Thy kingdom come." But in its relation to us as a nation set to bear a great part in making it a reality, it was new, bold, almost presumptuous. As yet the church was in the gristle of youth, its limited resources seemingly tasked to the uttermost in planting the institutions of religion where the advancing population opened her frontiers to the sun; as yet the nation had hardly won a name, much less influence among the sovereignties of the world; as yet these sovereignties held fast the doors of entrance to their benighted populations, as sternly as the eternal ice closed up the north-west passage:—at such an hour, in such circumstances, the church heard the clarion voice summoning her to gird herself for the conversion of the world. It rang round the mountains that encircle Williamstown—Hoosick and Holyoke answered back to each other—the heights of Andover prolonged the strain—Boston and Salem and Litchfield listened

till the inspiration of this great thought filled their minds: then other clarions rang; from valley to valley, and mountain top to mountain top, along the quiet intervale of the Connecticut, where the spires of New Haven sentinel her grand old University, and the surges of the Atlantic lift their everlasting anthem on the shores of Massachusetts, the battle-cry swelled loud, and clear, as of yore it rose when the cannon on yon hill-top proclaimed the coming conflict to an expectant nation. Yea! beyond the limits of New England, along the highlands and palisades of the Hudson, above the roar of the young Metropolis, lingering around the classic shades of Princeton, startling the quiet of the city of Brotherly Love, it went forth on its glad mission.

I do not affirm that this great thought came forth from any single mind; in the preparation of the church for this, it had been growing into life in hundreds of souls that longed for the coming of Messiah in his glory. But I do affirm that it was given to a few young minds, deeply penetrated with the fervor and the enthusiasm of the great Apostle, to make it living reality—to lead on in the great work, and to consecrate themselves to it, and so compel, the church to sustain them. I am not about to rear their memorial. It is here; it is all over this land; it is on every shore impressed by the footprints of American missionaries. More durable than brass; loftier than yon monument of stone that marks the first great battle of the Revolution; covered all over with letters of living light, growing brighter and brighter

with age, it needs no historian's pen, no chisel of Old Mortality to illustrate its glory, or deepen and freshen its inscriptions, before the eyes of the church can take in its supernal grandeur. Manifest it is that the work they did, issuing in the organization of this Board, was one of the most efficient forces designed and chosen by God to educate this nation to be the standard-bearer of the gospel all over the world. When Mills, consecrated in infancy by a mother's vow to the conversion of the heathen, and Hall and Judson, and Newell and Fisk and Nott, stood up and said to the people of God, send us into the deepest darkness of earth to bear from you to the benighted millions the salvation of Jesus, it was as if the spirit of the apostles and the early martyrs and confessors in the sublime heroism of their faith had become incarnate; nay, it was as if the Spirit of our ascended Lord plead with us through those youthful lips and moved before us in those youthful forms. Dead, thrice dead, plucked up by the roots and withered, must have been the church that could have witnessed unmoved this living resurrection of the faith and love and hope and martyr spirit of the apostolic age. This nation has had its heroic age; its nobles, who laid property, honor and life on the altar of liberty; its martyrs, fallen ere the shout of victory echoed over a continent disenthralled. Every where around me I see their footprints. It was their example, their shed blood, that, thrilling through a nation's heart, roused and animated and encouraged millions to press on till the great object was won. This

church has its heroic age; its martyrs; its nobles who gave to God their young life. It was their Christian heroism in an infinitely holier cause, that roused and animated the desponding hosts of Israel to enter into the work of giving the liberty of Jesus to a world enslaved by sin. That old Salem Tabernacle, in the year of our Lord 1812, on the 6th of February, witnessed a scene of solemn grandeur unsurpassed in the history of the American church—a scene that while this church lives can never be repeated—a scene that has lived in perennial freshness, growing grander in the light of its infinite issues, before the eyes of two generations. For there, amidst the tears of trembling hearts, did the divine Spirit give to the church the first unmistakable token of its true mission; that scene was the dawning of the coming day—a day whose sun, ascending to its meridian, shall soon illumine all nations with its glory.

Then, as they went forth, lo! a new power to educate the church and urge it onward in its work sprang into being. Eager eyes watched their footsteps; ears sensitive to the slightest whisper waited for tidings of victory or defeat. Some stood up, and worked on, amidst the deep darkness; some, broken and bowed, returned; some went to sleep, ere their work was fairly begun. But whether standing, or broken, or asleep, they gave to their native land and the church of their fathers the first pages of a new, a wonderful Christian literature. The descriptions of the countries they visited, the lifelike narratives of heathenism or a corrupt Christianity, the story of their trials and their success,



came back to us from these our sons and daughters. Published in books, sent forth through the pages of the Panoplist and Missionary Herald, circulated in newspapers, read in families and church meetings, they found thousands of eager auditors, they spoke to a vast multitude of the hosts of Israel.

It seemed a dark providence that so early cut down him, confessedly the foremost of this noble band of apostolic youth, ere he could enter fully upon his mission. But from the ocean grave of Samuel J. Mills a voice went forth that thrilled through thousands, and his Memorial roused scores of young men to buckle on his armor and tread in his footsteps. Sadness rested upon the church when the sun of Harriet Newell went down long before it had reached its meridian; but who can estimate the power of her short and simple biography in educating the church, and inspiring a desire for the missionary work in the hearts of her own sex? And thus, as this new-born literature entered into the influences that are moulding the church of Jesus; as it grew in variety and interest; as it came home closer to the hearts of Christians, it became part of their daily food, a living, stimulating force in the bosom of our Zion, under which youth grew up informed on these great topics, and we all became insensibly linked to the cause of the world's conversion.

Nor are we to pass lightly by those missionary lyrics which genius, consecrated to Jesus and inspired by these same influences, has created. Who of us that, in our childhood, learnt to sing that noble lyric beginning,—

Wake ! Isles of the South, your redemption is near,  
 No longer repose on the borders of gloom ;  
 The strength of his Chosen in love will appear,  
 And light shall arise on the verge of the tomb ;—

a lyric sung by hundreds, as the second band of missionaries (for the Sandwich Islands) embarked from Long wharf, now nearly forty years ago—who of us can ever forget the interest that it awakened, or who can tell how many hearts it bound to this work with cords never to be broken? What hymn book is now complete without a large collection of these sacred songs? How many youth are there in the American church that do not know by heart Heber's Missionary Hymn? In what congregation can you not sing it without a book—sing it with the spirit and the understanding, as in swelling volume, the old and the young delight to give it utterance? Who can soberly sit down and measure the force of this newly created literature in giving a peculiar character to the thoughts, the experiences, the prayers, of the American church?

Rapidly I pass over other elements of this missionary culture, which it is not fit wholly to pass by. The appeals of our missionaries, as they have returned from year to year, bronzed or broken by the heat and toil of conflict, have gone down into the heart of the people of God. As they have spoken to great congregations, as they have told their simple story in our Sabbath schools, pastors and people have been roused to new activity in this cause. What an influence in the training of the church; what seed scattered on a mellow soil, yet to fully ripen in a glorious harvest, has gone forth

from Abeel and Scudder, Poor and Smith, and Goodell and Thomson, and their associates,—as they returned to us, after their years of patient labor!

What a power, too, has this Board been in the character of its members, its officers, and its annual gatherings, to inspire confidence, quicken zeal, and spread the flame of missions through the land. To say nothing of Griffin, and Dwight, and Beecher, and Woods, and Spring, and Worcester, what a power of light in their lives, what a legacy of vital influence in their death, were Evarts, and Cornelius, and Wisner, and Armstrong? When men like these lead on the hosts of Israel, the cause they advocate, grander and mightier though it be than all mere instruments, stands forth commended by all that is most pure and noble in our humanity.

What a wonderful reflex influence has *success* exerted in exalting the standard of feeling! The missionaries went forth to the Sandwich Islands, taking their lives in their hands, expecting to wrestle with idolatry in its stronghold, and it may be fall in death before the men who had imbrued their hands in the blood of that great discoverer, Captain Cook;—when lo! as they approach the shore, the idols are fallen, and the simple people welcome their coming. The news of that providential interposition, thrilling through the churches, gave a new interest to the work. And so, as barrier after barrier has been broken down, as governmental opposition has given way, as revival after revival has baptized the missions, as new and un-

expected fields, white for the reaper's sickle, have been opened, the church has seemed to see our king Messiah marching before her, and leading her chosen sons to victory; as of old he baffled the powers of earth, when he planted Israel in Canaan, and reared the Cross above the proud banner of the Roman. Nay, most wonderful has it been, that the times of deepest darkness through which this Board has passed at home, have been signalized by its most rapid and steady advance abroad; and thus God has spoken to our timid and desponding hearts, nerving them to new efforts and sacrifices for the cause he loved.

At the first, this Board stood alone, and led the way in the work for preaching Christ to the heathen. But soon, under its influence, other organizations sprang into being. When one of our young standard-bearers changed his views on the subject of baptism, it seemed an event as disastrous as it was unexpected; but God meant to take a coal from the sacrifice that burned on our altar, to kindle the fire of sacrifice in the heart of a great and an advancing division of his sons and daughters. And as under this culture, the spirit spread, division after division of the church wheeled into line; those who had united with us at first, as they gained strength, began to move independently as new orbs of light, and new powers to educate the nation still more perfectly for its work. These organizations, numbering somewhat less than a score, represent a vast amount of talent, and wealth, and piety. This Board, far from cherishing a narrow-minded jealousy, has ever

rejoiced in their prosperity, and wished them God-speed in their noble work. Like this city, sitting on her hills, surrounded by these growing and beautiful towns and villages, and bound to them by a thousand cords of interest and social life, this Board sits to-day a Queen girt about by these her handmaids, in full sympathy with all their plans for the world's conversion, counting them Christ's teachers and her colleagues in training the whole church for its grandest work.

But I must arrest this discussion ere it reaches completeness. I may not dwell upon the minor influences which are at work all through the churches in creating this missionary spirit;—how the great societies for printing Bibles and tracts, and educating youth, and preaching the gospel to our seamen, enforce their appeal by this grandest argument, the conversion of the world;—how the monthly concert, Sabbath school missionary organizations, and the necessities laid upon pastors to speak on this great theme, are all working together in one direction—the wheels within the great wheel of God's providence, which is moving the church forward to the point where she shall begin to realize the mission which God has given her as a power aggressive upon the thrones of darkness. I know that a vast work has yet to be done before she enters fully into the idea of this discourse. But when I go back to the day when this Board was organized, when I enter that old Tabernacle church at Salem, where, after the toil and baffled hopes of a two years' probation, our first mission-

aries were set apart ;—and then to-night look over this assembly, look out over this land, look beyond to those great works which have been accomplished in the world, I see, as clearly as when the sun shines at midday, a thousand unmistakable signals of God's purpose in planting this nation on this continent ;—his purpose to bless us in making us the dispensers of his Word to the dead millions of our race.

Not in vain has he carried us through a discipline so peculiar, given us an enterprise so restless and aspiring, a dominion so substantial and far-reaching, elements of material and intellectual richness so vast, and lifted from us the civil burdens that oppress other nations ; not in vain has the church come out of the wilderness, leaning on the arm of her Beloved, and flinging from her the crutches of state establishments, gone forth to peaceful conquest in the sole might of the Lord of hosts ; not in vain has this people net-worked the world with those lines of commerce, along which her influence may flash in a day over ten thousand points ; not in vain do the nations open their brazen gates to her citizens, and recognize alike the resistless force of her arms and the superiority of her mental culture ; oh ! not in vain, through storm and sunshine, through martyr-fires and confessors' tears, has the church clung to the divine Word as her primal and all-sufficient light. For this God has baptized her with revivals ; for this he has inaugurated this spirit of missions, and opened the world to her influence ; for this he has sent her eagle flying victorious from sea to sea ; for this he gathers

on this continent millions from other lands, to be absorbed, Americanized, converted by us, and made an element of vast power in the future; for this did the martyred Lyman, and Munson, and Pohlman die; for this did he plant this city of the Puritans, and make it a light-house, whose rays streaming far beyond Massachusetts Bay, should penetrate the darkness of the eastern world; for this our fathers fought their bloody battles; for this our statesmen have fashioned our civil constitutions; for this our merchants have built up so vast a commerce; for this our artisans and inventors have starred the land with our ten thousand workshops; for this our colleges and schools were built; for this, ere the light of the next half-century Jubilee shall dawn upon us, this nation will count her hundred millions, and ten thousand of her sons and daughters laboring for Christ in foreign lands.

I take my stand at that not distant day—a day which some in this house, in a green old age, shall live to see; I behold the preparations of centuries revealing their ultimate purpose and rushing on to the grand conclusion;—nations into whose languages your missionaries have translated this living truth, cast away their idols and receive it to their hearts; the Koran is a relict of the past, while mosque and minaret are consecrated to the Great Prophet; the Shasters are powerless, while the ancient temples of Buddha and Vishnu, purged from their foul and bloody incarnations, resound with the praise of the incarnate Son of God; the Tartar throne, in the kingdom of the children of the sun, is known only to history, while their crowded cities welcome the

children of Him whose light shall lighten the world; Ethiopia ascends from the mephitic darkness of ages, and with her passionate heart steadied, and her feeble intellect enlarged by Christian culture, sends heavenward the song of a rapturous thanksgiving; the nations that have drunk the blood of Christ's martyrs, passing through their baptism of blood, wounded and bruised hasten to the feet of Him whose sceptre is full of mercy, and whose touch alone can heal; the man of sin broken, despairing of conquest, prays only for existence; clinging to the skirts of this vast army of Gentiles, the sons of Abraham,—the dreadful imprecation of their fathers, "His blood be upon us," expiated,—read with purged vision the glowing predictions of their prophets of Jesus the Son of God; while over ten thousand towns and cities floats the peaceful banner of the Anglo-Saxon and American church.

Is this a vision too bright, too wonderful, too glorious for your faith to discern through the short interval of fifty years? Spirits of the departed! ye who saw this Board organized with much travail, and many tears, while the darkness rested so thickly upon the world, that you could scarcely discern the Star of Bethlehem slowly rising amidst its gloom; I summon you from your thrones and your crowns; I call upon you to look on us, to answer us this night; tell me, ye saints in glory, is this scene the angels love to behold within this temple, is this great work of missions already begun, these preparations for conquest so vast and ripe, these thousands of converts in foreign lands, this Bible translated into one hundred and forty languages,



these schools and seminaries to train young converts for the ministry where, when ye lived, the idols reigned supreme, this education and marshaling of our American and British Zion for the evangelization of the world ;—answer me, is this to you less wonderful, less glorious than is the scene I have just unfolded to our vision? I see them come! Mills, with his youthful brow all radiant; Judson, with his gray locks crowned with glory; and Hall and Newell and Fisk, ye come—but oh! ye stay not to answer; back to the throne upon the sea of glass ye fly; your hearts, too full for utterance in mortal ears, break forth in praise to Him who sits upon that throne. “Now is come the kingdom of our Lord; the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Their sun shall no more go down, nor their moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended.”

Friends of the Lord Jesus, friends of the dying heathen, missionaries of Christ returned for a season from your glad toils, fathers and mothers whose sons and daughters are far away preaching the gospel to the benighted or whose dust lies mingled with the dust of nations not yet saved, ministers of Jesus gathered from all parts of this land, young men and maidens with hearts beating with new-born love for the Savior, aged saints whose

eyes have seen the sun which shone on this land before it had sent one missionary to the foreign field, I bid you welcome ; with you I hail the morning, and rejoice that God permits us to see this day, —to live amidst these vast preparations for the coming of his Son to glory. Let us with one heart circle his throne with anthems of praise. ‘ Now unto the King immortal, invisible, the only wise God, and to Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, be honor, and power, and glory, for ever and ever.’ AMEN.

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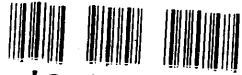
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