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MARCHING ORDERS.

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THE CHURCH'S

MARCHING ORDERS;

OR,

SUGGESTIVE THOUGHTS

ON THE

Missionary Work.

BY

REV. D. K. FLICKINGER.

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The Church's Marching Orders.

I.

GOD'S REPROOF AND COMMAND TO ISRAEL.

“And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.” (Ex. xiv. 15.)

This language, spoken by the Almighty to Moses, and through him to the Israelites, may be regarded as both a reproof and a command, which the conduct of the children of Israel made necessary. They had just reached the Red Sea on their way from Egypt to Canaan; and with the sea in their front, impassable mountains on either side, and the Egyptians, from whom they were fleeing, immediately in their rear, their destruction seemed inevitable. In this the hour of their peril, instead of trusting God and calmly waiting his interposition as directed by Moses, they gave themselves to fault-finding, charging Moses with bringing them into the wilderness to die. Hence the reproof and command of the text—“Wherefore criest thou unto me? speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

The Israelites had the most positive proof that God was willing and able to save them from their enemies, and that he would bring them to their promised inheritance if they would trust and obey him. They had just witnessed those remarkable miracles which he had wrought in their behalf in Egypt, and had experienced deliverance from the most terrible bondage by his almighty power. To murmur, doubt, and disobey under these circumstances was very wicked. But then, as now, God's people frequently displeased him because of their failure to act their part in the execution of his benevolent designs toward our race.

God had asked the Israelites to do only that which would better their condition, promote the good of others, and glorify himself; and their hearty concurrence was as little as they should have thought of rendering him. So it is still. Christians are called to bear only such responsibilities and perform such work as will better their condition, advance his cause among men, and bring glory to his name. Doing the work which God enjoins upon us will always better our condition, though it may involve privation and suffering for a time. God is able to make up to us all the pleasures we forego for his sake, which he does when it is best. It is a truth that "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord."

Alas, too many Christians, like the Israelites, lack faith in God, and too often indulge in a spirit of fault-finding and murmuring at the work given them by the Master. That which they are especially called to do now is to give the gospel to all men, if it be admitted that Christ's last command is binding upon us. And yet, how much fault-finding and complaining

there is respecting the missionary work. "The cost is so great, and the success so little." "Missionaries and those appointing them, and who have charge of these interests, are not as discerning as they should be," are among the complaints made. And some are ready to say that Christianity must find its way into heathen lands through commerce, or adventure, or by some special Providential interposition, or in some other way less costly and more successful than by sending missionaries to them, as Christ commanded.

It is true that the conquest of earth to Christ is not progressing as rapidly as it ought. And why? Simply because the church does not do its duty. The children of Israel wandered about in the wilderness forty years before entering Canaan, because their unbelief and disobedience kept them from going up and possessing the land which God had promised them. They, and not God, were at fault for being kept from their inheritance so long, just as the church now, and not Christ, is to blame that the heathen are not already its inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth its possession. God has promised this to the church as certainly as he did the land of Canaan to the Israelites; and the work progresses slowly because the church moves slowly.

Over eighteen hundred years ago Christ said to the church, go forward—"Go ye into all the world." And for a little while it did go; and so did the work go forward gloriously. After that many centuries passed through which comparatively little was achieved. Indeed, from the first to the last century little was done to extend Christianity. Even now but feeble efforts are being put forth to accomplish this work.

Did the church put forth twenty-fold more effort it would see corresponding results. Did it bring all its tithes into God's store-house he would pour out a blessing that there would not be room to contain. It is no marvel that so little has been done, but a wonder that so much has been accomplished considering the feeble efforts put forth and the small amount of money expended. One of the greatest inconsistencies of the Israelites was that their professions and their prayers did not correspond with their conduct. They cried unto the Lord for deliverance, but still longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt. Not until reprov'd by the Almighty did they put forth any effort to obtain the salvation they prayed for. So is it with many in regard to the missionary work. They pray that God may send out his light and truth; that his kingdom may come; that idolatry, superstition, and all wickedness may be destroyed, and the world be filled with the glory of God. But alas, they do not pay much to bring about this glorious end. A comparison of their prayers with their contributions to the missionary cause shows a great lack of harmony. Between what they say and what they do there is positive disagreement.

The Lord asked, "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" while you put forth no effort to save yourselves—as though he had said, "Cease your crying and go forward; the thing to be done now is not to cry, but to walk." Did he speak to some Christians now it is probable he would say, "Quit your asking or crying to me until your contributions to my cause correspond with your prayers. Less mouth and more purse work for missions; less pretending and more executing; less crying

to the Lord and more walking in the way of his commandments. Show your faith in the power of the gospel, and your desire to send it to the heathen by giving as freely for this as for other enterprises that receive so much money. A rich man who paid \$900 for a substitute during the war pays annually only \$2 for missions. He still prays the Lord to open the world to the gospel, whereas it ought to be his purse that should be opened.

I do not wish to speak lightly of the prayers of Christians in behalf of missions, for this is a cause all ought to pray for; but when they are used as a substitute for liberality they become solemn mockery before God, and ought to be called by that name. God did not receive the crying of the Israelites at the Red Sea as an equivalent for obedience to his command to go forward. Neither will he accept the prayers of his people now as a substitute for large-hearted liberality and earnest labor in behalf of his cause. So great is the demand for money to plant and sustain missions, and so ample are the means of Christians and the facilities to obtain them, that to give as sparingly as some do, or withhold altogether, is a great sin, and one that ought to be exposed.

Some may regard these statements as harsh, extreme, and unwarranted in God's word. Far be it from me to indulge in misrepresentations or unnecessary severity. But facts are stubborn things, and figures show what facts are respecting giving money to missions. Only one conference in the United Brethren Church gives one dollar missionary money to the member, while the average for the entire Church is about twenty-five cents to the member. More than ten times as much

as this is paid for useless and often injurious luxuries, and by some of the poorest members we have. Ten times twenty-five cents make two dollars and fifty cents, which is much less than many poor people pay for tobacco and for useless and sometimes wicked amusements. A circus or show has frequently taken more money out of Christians' pockets than the cause of missions annually. Surely something should be done to arouse the people from their lethargy, and show them their sins in withholding money from the cause of missions. A very few do their whole duty, while a large majority do not give more than one tenth what they ought, or nothing.

Contrast what we give for missions with what we pay toward the support of the government and other things, and the comparison will be most damaging to us. It falls far below what many heathens and others do for the support of idolatry and false religions, and what they do for Christianity when enlightened and truly converted to God. We even fall far below what the Jews were required to give by law. Did we give what they did for religious purposes, and did the missionary cause receive its proportion, we would have several times as much money for missions as now. It is a reproach to many of the churches of America that they are so penurious. There ought to be a large increase of missionary zeal and liberality generally. The language, "Go forward," is peculiarly applicable to us as a church. The small degree of missionary zeal among us is seen in the fact that after all the appeals made through our church-papers and otherwise for years past to obtain funds to enter new fields, we have been barely able to hold the ground we had

with small re-enforcements. Inviting fields have been and still are open to us. Laborers are offering their services; but alas, we have no money to send them. We ought to be alarmed at this state of things. We must go forward, or God can not long continue to bless our efforts or continue us as instruments in his hands to carry forward his work. God grant that we will heed this call, and be happy and prosperous in the work he has given us to do.

II.

MUCH LAND TO BE POSSESSED.

“There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.” (Josh. xiii. 1.)

This text in its original application refers to the subjugation of those tribes inhabiting the land of Canaan at the time the children of Israel entered it, and which they were commanded to extirpate. They had already subdued thirty-one kings and taken from them their possession. But these occupied only a small portion of the country God had promised them, and hence the work of conquest had barely commenced. Let us apply these words to the moral condition of the world and show that in this respect, also, “There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.”

According to the most accredited census at the close of the year 1877, the population of the earth is about 1,350,000,000. Of this number more than two thirds are heathen, or rejecters of Christ as the Savior of the world. These are mostly without the light of the gospel, and ignorant of the plan of salvation. They have minds and hearts susceptible of intellectual and moral cultivation, but in the absence of a correct knowledge of God and the plan of salvation, teaching them how to use the powers with which they are

endowed, so as to subserve the will of their Creator on earth, and secure happiness in the world to come, they grope their way down to death amid the greatest degradation and ignorance.

Of God and his moral government, the gospel and its blessings, religion and its joys, heaven and its glories, hell and its torments, they know nothing, or but little. It is true that Christ "by the grace of God tasted death for every man," and "life and immortality were brought to light through the gospel," but their ignorance of these glorious truths make them as though they were not, so far as exerting any saving power over their lives. They are not only destitute of all correct knowledge of God, and their duty to him, not only emptied of all that is good, but are filled with all that is wicked. In the language of scripture, "Their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known." Such is heathenism; and such will it be to over one half of our race until the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, yea, the only power that elevates and saves mankind, is given them. Without it all else fails. Civilization, education, and legislation utterly and forever fail to lift men up and save them without the gospel. Here, then, there is much land to be possessed by the church; and the command of Christ to it is, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

But now let us turn aside from this dark picture in heathen countries a short time, to take a glance at the spiritual destitution existing in the most enlightened countries. In our own country, which is second to

none, and far in advance of most others, there are scores of places—in some instances large settlements, especially in the far West and South,—without the stated preaching of the gospel, without Sabbath-schools or any other of the restraining influences of Christianity. The Savior taught that the poor should have the gospel preached unto them, but even in our own favored land thousands of both temporally and spiritually poor hear but little gospel.

It is a fact that many in our midst are altogether ignorant of what constitutes true piety. They have some indistinct ideas of Christian obligation, but the gospel has not been brought to bear upon them so as to impress them with their duty to accept Christ as their only Savior. The agencies for the diffusion of Christianity and salvation of men, both in point of number and efficiency, fall far short of meeting the moral wants of the people in even the most favored portions of earth, while in the less favored, and especially in heathen lands, darkness, superstition, and idolatry reign almost without a rival; so that look where we may, “There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.”

The following statistics will give some idea of the moral condition of the world. There are 1,350,000,000 people on the earth. Of these about 200,000,000 are Roman Catholics, 75,000,000 belong to the Greek Church, 148,000,000 are Mohammedans, 7,000,000 are Jews, and 150,000,000 are Protestants, while 770,000,000 are heathens or pagan proper, and largely made up of Buddhists and other Asiatic religions. Now add the 7,000,000 Jews and the 148,000,000 Mohammedans, making 155,000,000, to the 770,000,000 pa-

gans and we have the startling picture before us that 925,000,000 of the human race either know nothing of or hope nothing in Christ, and that there are but 425,000,000 Christians, which includes all found in Christian lands excepting Jews. Now deduct from this 425,000,000 all non-professors of religion and all unworthy ones found in the so-called Christian lands, and the number of real Christians is small. Not over 80,000,000, or one person in every seventeen, of the entire population of the earth are truly Christians, leaving 1,270,000,000 who are not. What proportion of these die in infancy and in other conditions rendering them absolutely irresponsible,—all of whom will be saved, without a doubt,—we know not; yet the language, “There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed,” is quite appropriate.

The following, clipped from a newspaper after the above was written and which is quite recent, we add just as we found it. It will be perceived that these statistics differ in most particulars from those which have been given: “A German collector of statistics estimates the population of the earth at 1,340,145,000 souls, of whom about 413,000,000 are Christians and 900,000,000 non-Christians. Catholics number 210,000,000, and Protestants 115,000,000. Of the Greek Church there are 80,000,000, and of other Christians 8,000,000. Jews are reckoned at 7,000,000, Mohammedans at 120,000,000, and the heathen of all kinds at 770,000,000.”

The population of the world, as given by Behm and Wagner in their late issue, is put down at 1,423,917,000, and apportioned as follows: Europe, 309,178,300; Asia, 824,548,590; Africa, 199,921,600;

Australia and Polynesia, 4,748,600; America, 85,519,800.

But to understand the magnitude of the work to be done before the church—Christ's tenant upon earth—shall occupy all the land to be possessed, we must consider the obstacles to be removed preparatory to it. These are numerous and formidable, and array themselves against Christianity with great force. Not only are there thousands of persons who single-handed and alone fight against the truth of God for the purpose, mainly, of neutralizing its power on their own hearts and preventing his Spirit from bringing them into subjection to Christ, but there are many powerful organizations, which command great learning, wealth, and influence, and which are mighty engines for evil, opposed to the onward march of true Christianity. Among these are Catholicism, Mormonism, Judaism, Universalism, and many other systems of error too numerous to mention. These teach doctrines and give freedom to conduct which are contrary to God's word, and which suit fallen human nature so well as to entrap many in their meshes. They quiet the consciences and fetter the souls of men by the delusive hopes which they inspire. I do not mean to say that all who adhere to them are wicked and will be lost, but that as organizations they are in their character and tendency opposed to Christianity. In heathen countries there are similar organizations, such as Buddhism, Brahmanism, Mohammedanism, Polytheism, image, beast, purrow, and devil worship, all of which are in direct antagonism to Christianity. These systems of religion are often so interwoven with the political and social institutions of those countries as to

constitute a mighty barrier to the spread of Christianity.

But besides these powerful organizations, found both in heathen and Christian lands, there are many other great evils which, though not organized, are dragging their thousands down to perdition, such as intemperance, slavery, covetousness, pride, and other evils, which are in bitter hostility to the spread of religion, and which must be destroyed among men before this land will be possessed by the church of Christ. Yet this work will be accomplished. These evils and systems of evil will be brought to naught, and Christ will reign King of kings and Lord of lords. I do not wish to teach that all men will become Christians, for some will resist the truth till the last, but that the gospel will be so generally known and so far influence men that it will root out all these evils and put such a check to human depravity as to make it true that Christ "shall reign where'er the sun does his successive journeys run."

But what ought we do to facilitate this much-desired end? With the fact before us that millions are perishing for want of the bread of life, and that the Master commanded us to give the gospel to every creature, and that multiplied thousands of the heathen, yea, millions are passing into eternity every year, amidst the greatest possible degradation and wickedness, what is our duty? Is it not to possess the world for Christ at the earliest possible period? One thing ought to put the blush upon our faces; namely, the advocates of false religion are often more self-sacrificing and untiring in their efforts

to promote their views than many Christians are to promote the cause of missions.

But by what means may we best facilitate this work? By personal piety, or giving the world a consistent Christian life. There is great power in an exemplary life. If all who name the name of Christ would live out fully the principles of the Christian religion this would do much to facilitate the conquest of earth to Christ. Much as the world needs precept and doctrine, it needs example more. A living union with Christ, making the life symmetrical and pure on the part of professors of religion, will overcome the opposition of the irreligious and win many hearts to Christ. Christians who are living epistles, known and read of all men, whose lives show that they have been with Christ and learned of him, wield a power for good that is irresistible; and though some may not be able to do much in other ways, all may through grace give the world good examples.

But we may by personal effort and money do a good deal also to save men. If the love of Christ constrains us we will not only recommend this religion to others, but we will as we have ability contribute of our means to save them. God might have chosen other instrumentalities to make known the gospel to the heathen, and thus have saved his people the labor and expense of doing this work, but for good reasons he has made them the channel through which this is to be done; and this fact alone is all the argument that a Christian ought to ask to move him to earnest labor and large-hearted liberality for the world's evangelization.

III.

WISDOM OF WINNING SOULS.

“And he that winneth souls is wise.” (Prov. xi. 30.)

This text will lead us to consider, (1) the moral condition and circumstances of the soul; (2) the means to be employed to win it to Christ; (3) the wisdom of engaging in the work. The soul, according to the history given by Moses, is the last and noblest work of the Creator, so far as creation relates to our world. It was after God had created the heaven and the earth and all things contained therein that he said, Let us make man, and let us make him in our own image, and after our likeness; and thus was he created in the moral image of God. But Adam, into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life, and he became a living soul, with Eve, his wife, soon fell from the high and holy state in which they were created, and became involved in darkness, bondage, and open rebellion against God.

In this sad condition are their posterity in their unsaved state. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” The soul, therefore, is in darkness; and that it may be won to Christ, light must be thrown into and around it. It is

also in spiritual bondage, and must be liberated therefrom and brought into the liberty of God's people. Then, too, it is in open rebellion against the authority and government of Heaven, and must be induced to ground its weapons of warfare and submit to God. To be saved or won to Christ, it must swear allegiance to his government and obey the laws of his kingdom as these are taught and enjoined in the Holy Scriptures.

This implies faith in God as the creator and governor of the universe, faith in Christ as an all-sufficient and willing Savior, a sorrow for sin that needs not to be repented of, the renunciation of all that God's word forbids, and the hearty submission of all to the service of Christ. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Until men are brought to do the will of God,—which they never will be until they are born into the kingdom of Christ,—they are not won to him. They may be won from much that is wrong and to much that is good, but nothing short of regeneration of heart wins them to Jesus.

The means to be employed to accomplish this end. This is to be done chiefly through the preaching of the gospel. This is God's ordained method by which to communicate his will to men, as the Scriptures abundantly teach. Ministers are commended to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." "And the servant of the Lord must not

strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

The Scriptures should be circulated freely; so also of good religious papers and books. And other means may be and should be employed to enlighten and Christianize the world. Yet nothing can be a substitute for the preaching of the word. The ambassador of Christ, the living teacher divinely called and anointed, with God's living truth in his hands, is to go forth and beseech men to become reconciled to God. In no other way can Christianity be so successfully promoted. The knowledge of the gospel can be conveyed to more people and be impressed more deeply upon their minds in this than in any other way. To say that other ways are better is to set up our judgment against God's. How important that ministers study to show themselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

How greatly the Lord has blessed and still blesses the preaching of the gospel. In apostolic times, during the Reformation, and since then, wherever and by whomsoever it has been faithfully proclaimed, whether in enlightened or heathen countries, souls have been saved. "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please." "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow,

and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." He shall win souls. People will be convinced, convicted, and converted, and their fruit will be "unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

But while this is the chief instrumentality, there are other methods and agencies which may do much to win souls. The officers of the church,—class-leaders, class-stewards, trustees of church-property, Sabbath-school superintendents and teachers,—each in his sphere, may labor successfully to promote Christianity. A devoted class-leader, by his godly counsels and exemplary life, may do much to edify and encourage believers and induce the wicked to seek Christ. Prompt, earnest, liberal class-stewards and trustees of church-property may greatly strengthen the hands and hearts of ministers by furnishing the needful means to make the house of God attractive for worship, for Sabbath-school, and for such other uses as will tend to check vice and promote virtue.

Then what a field for usefulness have Sabbath-school superintendents and teachers. How great their opportunities to win souls to Jesus. If they be studious, earnest Christians, and devoted to their work, bearing the souls of those intrusted to their care on faith's wing to the mercy-seat, and like the beloved John have no greater joy than to hear that their children walk in the truth, many through their labors will be led to Christ and to heaven. Not only may the officers of the church and Sabbath-school successfully labor to win souls to the Savior, but all Christians

may and should do so. By their heart-piety, right living, earnest praying, faithful attendance upon the means of grace, and liberal support of the cause of Christ, others will be saved.

Among the essential qualifications for usefulness, which will apply to ministers and people, a holy life stands pre-eminent. The world needs instruction, but illustration as well; it needs precept, but example more. When we exemplify in our lives the truths of Christianity which we teach, then it is that the truth is sharper than any two-edged sword. Living epistles, known and read of all men, are as essential as those contained in the oracles of God. Said Paul to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." We must do the things we teach and profess if we would exert a wide-spread influence for good in the world.

Wisdom of engaging in this work. That it is wise is shown by the fact that this work associates us with the best men of every age in the history of the world; yea, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and with Christ himself. It was for this that the blessed Savior came to earth, died upon Calvary, and now liveth at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. The Savior, by the labors which he performed, the sufferings he endured, and the power he exerts to win men, attests the wisdom of this work.

It is wise because of the infinite value of the soul and the unspeakable and never-ending blessings it will enjoy if won, as well as the indescribable and endless tortures it will suffer if not won. Christ asked the question, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the

whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" This question carries with it its own answer. It will profit a man nothing to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul; and there is nothing that he can give in exchange for it. To gain the world at the expense of the soul is to give pearls for bubbles, life for death, heaven for hell. The world is worth a great deal,—making dollars and cents the standard,—more than we can compute; but one soul is worth much more. Because it is so valuable it is wise to win it, so wise that to this work we should bring all the ability God has given us.

Look how men exert themselves to win wealth, fame, and position in society. For these they exert every power of their being. Some have labored hard for many years to win an earthly home, others to obtain knowledge, and have done right in doing so; but still, it is more in keeping with wisdom to win souls. Look again how men of the world exert themselves to win a game, or a suit at court. Should not Christians be rebuked by these things for the heartless manner in which they too often exert themselves to win souls? Well did Christ say that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." When a railroad is to be built, or some worldly enterprise to be prosecuted that requires a sacrifice of men and money, they are freely furnished. Hundreds of lives were sacrificed in building the Panama Railroad, thousands in the mines, and tens of thousands were slain in war; yet but comparatively few are sacrificed for winning souls. "He that winneth souls is wise."

IV.

SOLICITUDE FOR THE PROSPERITY OF ZION.

“For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” (Isa. lxii. 1.)

What a blessing it has been to the world that in every age of the church there have been those who would speak for truth and right, and who labored for the prosperity of God’s Zion with a zeal that knew no abatement. But for these enthusiastic and self-sacrificing men Christianity would not have achieved the victories it has, if indeed it would have an existence at all on the earth. Those prophets, apostles, reformers, and missionaries through whose efforts the fires of true religion were kindled and have been kept burning were men of this class. Like Isaiah, they would speak for truth and God, and work for the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan and the upbuilding of righteousness, regardless of consequences.

Should such men cease from the earth,—but they will not, for God must and will have them,—then all aggressive effort for the extension of Christ’s kingdom would soon cease. Pure religion would be banished from the world, and idolatry, superstition, and heathenism would reign supreme. It was through labor, sacrifice, and suffering on the part of Christ that salvation was procured for the race; and it is through

these on the part of the church that its blessings are to be given to the whole world. "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined;" and out of it will he continue to shine until the whole world is given to Christ for his inheritance.

The figure used by the prophet to represent the light and glory of the church is a very beautiful and striking one. The zeal which he also manifested for its prosperity, and the confidence he had in its final triumph, are worthy of our imitation. With him religion meant more than a formal profession; yea, more than mere personal enjoyment. It meant earnest labor for the good of others. God's kingdom set up in our hearts accomplishes in us the same work that we are to promote in others; and just in proportion as our personal righteousness goes forth as brightness, and our salvation glows out as a lamp that burneth, in that same proportion will we feel for the woes of others and labor to save them.

Nothing short of a living Christianity in the hearts of God's Zion will cause her righteousness to go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth. Christ said to his followers, "Ye are the light of the world." "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Truly, very great. What so dark as a backslidden man or church? Such are dark to themselves and dark to others. Their light is under a bushel, or quite gone out, and they the opposite to what God intended they should be. Instead of their righteousness going forth as brightness, their unrighteousness goes forth as a cloud. Like those described by the apostle, "they profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

Christians too often forget that one great end to be accomplished by God's Zion on earth is to give the light of Christianity to those who are yet without it. They are to be to the world what light-houses are to the mariner; they are to let their light shine for the good of others. Suppose the keeper of a light-house were found on a cold, stormy night sitting in his own well-warmed and well-lighted room, but without light in the beacon or watch-tower! Would we not say to him, "Out with your light; let it shine?" Would we not remind him of the fact that the chief end of such a house was not to furnish him comfortable quarters, but to direct mariners, so that they might escape shipwreck and make a safe landing?

So it is with the light given to Zion. It is to be diffused for the good of others rather than to be enjoyed. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Some seem to think that the chief end of a religious life is to furnish themselves with comfortable quarters; that is, to consume what little light they have for their own benefit rather than for the good of others. They say, or at least act it, that if the heathen want the gospel, or the destitute the Bible, houses of worship, or Sabbath-schools, let them get them. We will help ourselves; let others help themselves. Let them kindle their own fires by which to obtain warmth and light, or do without them. Our prayers and contributions and efforts shall all be expended upon ourselves. We will get through life as easily and into heaven as cheaply as possible, and let others look out for themselves.

Thank God not all are such, for there are many (and their number is increasing) who, like Isaiah, speak and

pray and work and pay for the extension of Christianity. But for them and the light-houses established through their instrumentality many who have been saved from idolatry and superstition would yet be in heathenish darkness. But for missionaries and those who furnished them the means to go the gospel would never have been carried to Germany, Holland, the Sandwich Islands, or even to America, to say nothing of Africa, China, and numerous heathen lands in which gospel light is now shining to some extent

But for such the happy homes now found in the jungles of China, amid the burning sands of Africa, and on Greenland's icy mountains, would still be the abodes of cruelty and wretchedness. Then instead of the Bible and the preaching of the gospel, the family altar and the prayer circle, Sabbath-schools and seminaries of learning, asylums, hospitals, and the many social, civil, and religious blessings enjoyed in Christian lands and in portions of heathen countries, all the horrors of heathenism would reign unchecked throughout the world. Great as have been the heroism, sacrifice, and cost to sustain Christian missions, no enterprise has yielded such returns of good to man on earth, to say nothing of the evils averted, or the good secured in the future world.

With the testimony before us that the gospel is of such inestimable worth to the heathen, and with the command of Christ, "Preach my gospel to every creature," unrepealed, and as binding as divine authority can make it, how is it that Christians can be so indifferent to the claims of missions? Such persons either have a misconception of duty, or they are unwilling to perform what they know is required of them. Be it one or the other, their course is a reproach to the

Christian name. They say by such conduct that the gospel is of but little value, and that it matters not whether the millions who have it not shall receive it. We measure the value that men put upon things by what they do for them; and we may safely judge of the estimate they put upon Christianity by what they do for its spread among those who have it not.

Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true that it is still necessary to vindicate the cause of Christian missions among some Christians, and present all the arguments that the subject furnishes to move them to give this enterprise a reasonable support. The devotees and propagandists of false religions are often more zealous to propagate their principles than the true followers of Christ. If all Protestants showed the same zeal and liberality for the diffusion of their principles that Catholics, Mormons, Jews, and Mohammedans often do, it would not be long until the gospel would be given to every nation under the sun. This might be done in the short space of twenty or twenty-five years, and no one be required to bear oppressive burdens or do anything but what would be for their spiritual good.

It is remarkable what men may do when they are fully intent on it. We have a striking illustration of this in our late war. There was a time during that fearful struggle when, because of treachery in high places and our poverty in arms and money, it looked as though the rebellion would triumph. Just then a wonderful change came over the people of the North. They became fully aroused. Their patriotism, which seemed for a time to be dead, sprung into life; and as by magic large and well-equipped armies and fleets

were raised, all the munitions of war were at hand, and in one year afterward the rebellion was so crippled as to insure its speedy death; and in due time it did die.

The same zeal that crushed the rebellion against this nation would in a short time crush the rebellion now waged against God's truth, and give this whole world to Christ. Did Zion put her forces into the field as freely and support them as liberally in proportion to her ability to do so as did our government to put down the rebellion, then would the moral conquest of earth soon be accomplished. Christ's command is, "Teach all nations;" and his promise is, "I am with you alway,"—with you to help you accomplish this work. Who in the face of these commands and promises can doubt its final fulfillment. Isaiah did not, as his language shows. Why should we have so little faith in what our heavenly Father says he will bring to pass, and which he has appointed us to do? Oh, for Isaiah's zeal and faith, and success will abundantly crown our efforts.

V.

LOVE TO GOD AND COVETOUSNESS OPPOSITES.

“For with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” (Ezekiel xxxiii. 31.)

It is no uncommon thing for men to profess to be what they are not. All men profess honesty, truthfulness, and fairness; but facts show that many are unfair, untruthful, and dishonest. It is also true that the conduct of many toward God contradicts their professions. It would be difficult to find a man who will confess that he is God's enemy; and yet the Bible teaches that many are his enemies. In the face of these facts, who would expect to find a person who will acknowledge that he is covetous, especially one who is a professor of religion? And yet that there are many such in the world, and even in the church, there can be no doubt. It is a sad truth that too many who name the name of Christ, like those described in the text, speak one thing but do another, “For with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.”

The prophet here describes the conduct of a genuine hypocrite, a character which has not been hard to find at any time since the fall of Adam. Such were in the Jewish church, and such are still found among Christians. Hypocrisy and covetousness are

not antagonistic, but are often closely allied, and not unfrequently are partners in the same crimes, the one covering up the deformity of the other, and both striving to withhold justice and perpetrate wrong. When found in a professor of religion, their deformity is detestable above endurance. Such men are held by all as most dishonorable and wicked. A hypocritical, covetous person is regarded as a bad citizen and wholly unworthy a place in the Christian church.

The Jews, as we infer from the language of the text, made it a point to speak of their love to God and his cause. It may be they had meetings similar to our speaking or love-feast meetings, when they especially spoke of their love to God. Be this as it may, they showed much love with their mouth while their hearts went after covetousness. And is there not a similarity between them and some professors of religion? Are there not persons to be found in almost any community who are very ready to speak of their love to God and his cause, but who nevertheless show that they think much more of the world than of God and heaven? The very small contributions which they give to Christ's cause show it.

And first, what is covetousness? It is an inordinate desire to obtain what we have not and to retain what we have. That it is a great and damning sin is shown from its fruits as well as God's word. It leads to falsehood, theft, fraud, robbery, murder, and almost every species of crime against God and humanity. It blunts our moral susceptibilities and all the finer feelings of our nature, and makes its possessor hard-hearted and cruel. It was this which caused Judas to betray Christ, for he wanted the thirty pieces of silver; this which caused Ananias and Sapphira his wife to lie to

the Holy Ghost, for they wished to retain a part of their possession, and which led Felix to hold Paul a prisoner, for he hoped that money would be given for his release.

This, too, often leads to war. One country covets territory belonging to another, and under pretense of vindicating its honor, or maintaining its right, war is made not unfrequently. This also leads to slavery. Men covet ease, superiority, and authority, and to secure these they will, when permitted, make slaves of their fellow-men. In short, there is no crime too great for the demon of covetousness. It makes justice void, outrages the rights of others, and closes the soul against the wants of humanity.

That it is a great evil is evident also from the fact that the divine word most severely denounces and punishes it. See how summarily and terribly God punished Achan, and Gehazi, and Ananias and his wife, and others whose history and end are recorded in the Bible. Consider also the fact that this sin is put in the same catalogue with the greatest crimes; and it is said of all who perpetrate them that they shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Now here in this one text both the covetous and extortioners are spoken of, extortion being the result of covetousness; and the most emphatic language is employed to denounce both, and declare that they shall not inherit heaven. If the Bible be true, no crime in all the range of sins will more effectually close heaven against men than this. But terrible as it is, yet many, and even professors of religion, are covetous. In this selfish, dark, damning path they travel, notwithstanding the

ruin they thereby bring upon themselves and others. How to get and how to keep is the burden of their thoughts by day and of their dreams by night. And though the plaintive voices of the needy may ring in their ear, and the benevolent institutions of Christianity may be pining and dying for want of help, yet they close their ears and their hearts against them all, and continue to hoard their pelf. The most touching appeals may be made, and objects of the greatest importance may be pressed upon their sympathies, yet they steel their hearts against all entreaty and shut up the bowels of their compassion from suffering humanity and all benevolent claims to gratify their covetousness.

Describe to such the love of Christ and his benevolence in saving men, the wretchedness of the heathen world without the gospel, and that it alone can elevate them; show from the word of God and the condition of the spiritual destitute that it is their duty to give their money to send forth missionaries; present to them motives high as heaven, and urge them from every consideration possible to lend a helping hand, and what is the result? Why, they tighten their purse-strings and press their gold closer to their hearts than ever. They will gratify their covetousness, and will hold on to their money at the risk of being damned for it. Yea, they will sacrifice a good conscience, the smiles of Christ, and their hope of heaven, rather than part with their money for benevolent purposes.

That such persons can be in favor with God is a moral impossibility. Such a state of heart is just as unlike Christ as it is possible to be. Religion invariably enlarges the heart and fills it with sympathy and good-will for others. The first emotion of a newly-

converted soul is, How may I do good to others? how may I win sinners to Christ? how may I build up the cause of Christianity? how can I do the most good, let the sacrifice be what it may? It is not until men who have been truly converted have lost their first love that they become so selfish and covetous. The text puts love to God and covetousness directly against each other. Both can not dwell in the soul at the same time any more than can the Lord and Satan dwell together. Every true Christian has, in some degree at least, the mind that was in Christ, and hence some of the benevolence that caused him to die for man; and when such a one looks out upon suffering humanity, especially the millions of heathen who are without the gospel, and remembers that Christ said, "Teach all nations," his heart will be moved to tenderness and his money will be given to the extent of his ability to send them the gospel. How strikingly was this illustrated by the early Christians. They sold their possessions, "and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." They counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.

True, covetousness overcame some of them, as in the case of Ananias and his wife, who were so suddenly destroyed for their sin. They, like some people now, wanted the name of being benevolent but were unwilling to give the money to constitute them such, and to conceal their covetousness lied to the Holy Ghost and were killed. If God would deal with covetous men now as he did with these, many would still be struck down. They only withheld a part of their

possessions and told one lie, and for this God killed them. They must have given a considerable portion of it, for the rest were giving all; but many now keep all, or nearly all they have, and tell more than one lie sometimes to cover up their covetousness.

What are our hearts going after? Do we talk love to God, but act contrary to it? The question is not what we say or profess, but what are we doing? If our hearts "go after covetousness," then we do not love God as we ought, nor do we pay for his cause as he has given us ability. We are to pay as the Lord has prospered us. Where much is given much will be required, which is altogether reasonable. Oh, how terrible indeed if we should be so unwise and covetous as to miss heaven at last! May a kind God give us so much of his love as to destroy all selfishness and worldliness, and enable us to love him with our mouths, hearts, and property.

VI.

LIGHT AND BENEFICENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. v. 16.)

This text presupposes two things: (1) That Christians possess light; (2) that they perform good works. In the fourteenth verse it is said, Christians being addressed, “Ye are the light of the world;” and in the text they are told how to use or what to do with their light; namely, let it “so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Christians are to live with special reference to the salvation of others. In other words, they are to so exemplify the excellences of the Christian religion as to arrest the attention, excite the admiration, and win the affections of the irreligious to Christ. They should let the light of kindness, truth, and liberality shine, and thus represent both the life and precepts of the Savior.

Christ is himself called the Light of the world, and the Sun of Righteousness, and very appropriately, for he is to the moral world, in respect to light, what the natural sun is to the physical world. Much of the light which we receive from the sun comes to us in a secondary sense, or in an indirect manner. He shines upon the moon and other planets, and they reflect

their light upon the earth. As the moon may shine brightly with the light which it receives from the sun, though it be but a borrowed light, so also may Christians shine by reflecting the light which they receive from Christ.

The analogy existing between Christ and the Christian, the sun and the moon, is very striking, beautiful, and instructive. When the moon is full, or fully seen by us, how very pleasant and serviceable its light! When the Savior said to his followers, "Ye are the light of the world," "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works," he meant that they should not be quarter moons, or half moons, but full moons; that is, that they be fully in the light themselves and then reflect that light upon all around them. The light of the moon is often obstructed so that it reflects little or none upon us. So also is the light of Christians often so obscured that but little or none is to be seen. Both shining with a borrowed light, they only can impart it in proportion as they receive it. When Christians possess but little light they can reflect but little; and this accounts for the fact that their light often shines so dimly.

The reason they have so little light is not because the Sun of Righteousness does not shine constantly, but it is because they allow his light to be obscured. They permit the things of the world to get between them and Christ; yea, sometimes they are found so far down in the dark ravines of disobedience that the rays of the Sun of Righteousness can not reach them at all. They are so completely hidden away in the thickets of sin and darkness that it is impossible to let their light shine. To all such the call from heaven is,

“Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”

That Christians may discharge the duty enjoined in the text, the life of Christ must pervade their souls and impel them to every good word and work. Genuine godliness must be a living, growing principle within, permeating their whole being, making them “living epistles, known and read of all men.” Without this their profession of religion and routine of Christian duty, however good, will be useless, so far as it relates to their happiness and usefulness. Without this a professor of religion is like a watch without a mainspring. A watch may have a case of pure gold, the wheels and all within may be of the best material and in perfect adjustment, but if there is no mainspring it is a useless piece of property so far as regards accomplishing the end for which it is intended. The object of a watch is to keep time, or to point to where the sun is, so that in cloudy weather and at night we may know our whereabouts.

So Christians should point to Christ, and let their light so shine as to show him to the world amid the darkness which covers it. How beautiful the saying of a certain writer that Christ has taken our natures to heaven to represent us there, and left us his on earth to represent him here. Christians are his representatives in this world, and are expected, like their Master, to let their light so shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven. The godly lives and self-denying acts of Christians often do more to win men to Christ than the most convincing argument. There

is argument in such a life that can not be successfully controverted. The system of salvation through the atoning merits of Christ needs to be taught theoretically, but it is quite as important that it be exemplified or illustrated practically in the lives of Christians.

Good works are positively required in the Holy Scriptures; not as a means by which to procure merit through which we may be saved,—for it is “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,” that our salvation is secured,—but as a means by which to save others; “that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” In this way the superiority of the gospel system over other systems may be shown. No religion impels its followers to the performance of good works for the benefit of others as does the religion of Christ. He “gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” Being made zealous doers of good works is the result of being redeemed from all iniquity, and being redeemed from all iniquity is the result of Christ giving himself for us, and Christ giving himself for us is the result of God’s infinite love toward man.

The positive manner in which good works are enjoined in the New Testament, and the numerous important ends accomplished by them, both in behalf of those by whom and for whom they are performed, show how essential they are in the Christian life. The text plainly shows both the duty and object of good works. It does not say that they may see or hear

your good professions, or prayers, or promises, but see your good works. Good works must exist before they can be seen; yea, they must be of so frequent occurrence, and stand out so prominently as to form a part of every-day life, so that the man's history could not be written without reference to them. There are professors of religion who have been such for twenty or thirty years, whose history could be truthfully written without saying good works once.

We have a striking illustration of the power of good works in the life of Christ. He went about doing good in every way possible to all who needed help; and so blameless was his conduct that he could say to his worst enemies, "Which of you convinceth me of sin," and, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father?" He did good to those who did evil to him. He blessed those who cursed him, and gave his whole life to acts of benevolence for man's good. His was more than passive goodness; it was active and self-sacrificing, impelling him to incessant toil and great privation in behalf of others. But what kind of good works are Christians to perform?

(1.) All such charitable deeds as are necessary to supply the temporal wants of the poor and unfortunate. There is light in fuel to burn, clothes to wear, and food to eat when given to some poor widow or afflicted family who has a hard time to get along in the world; also in advancing the wages of industrious laborers, when it can be done, and assisting them by loaning them money to secure a home. A young man—an habitual drunkard—with a wife and two children was found drunk one cold night by the wayside, and would in all probability have frozen to

death but for the fact that he was helped to his home. The man in whose cabin he lived sent for him the next day, and instead of saying to him, as he expected, "You are a miserable drunkard, and must get out of my house," he said, "John, I sent for you to help you buy a home. You can buy neighbor B.'s farm very cheap now, and I will loan you money to make the first payment. You are to become a sober man, and move to the farm and make the money for the second and third payments, and then you are to pay me back what I loan you with six per cent interest; and thus you can obtain a home." After protesting against such an undertaking for awhile, John did as he was told—bought the farm. He did reform and go to work, and paid for that farm and several others. He raised a large and respectable family; and now at the age of eighty he is quite wealthy, and liberal in supporting the gospel. His benefactor has been dead many years; but though dead, he still lives in the affections of this man and others whom he thus helped and saved from infamy, poverty, and sin.

(2.) Such acts of charity as are necessary to sustain the institutions of Christianity. To support Sabbath-schools with our money and by our presence, and ministers in the same way, helping to build houses of worship, giving aid to the Bible, tract, and temperance cause, ministering to the spiritual wants of the afflicted, and laboring to lead the irreligious to the church and to Christ, are good works that we are to let others see. Where there is a society of professors of religion in which each one is a living, working Christian, taking a lively interest in the prosperity of Zion, there will go out from it a power for good which

will be felt, and that will draw others to its fold. Its good works will be seen and felt in the check which it puts to wickedness, the attractions it gives to religion, and the souls it leads from sin to holiness.

(3.) Such good works as are necessary to enlighten the heathen, and induce them to accept salvation. "Let your light so shine before men," even the heathen, that they may see your good works, and thereby be led to renounce heathenism and espouse Christianity. A young African, who had but a short time before accepted Christ as his Savior, said to the writer, "Massa, we black people in Africa ought to be very good and thankful to God." Asking him why he felt so, he replied, "You people in America do so much for us. You come as missionaries, and pay much money, and you be sick a good deal, and all for our good. We ought to love you, and love the Lord because he sent you." He was quite an ignorant youth of about nineteen years of age, who in less than one year afterward died and gave good evidence of faith in Christ. Spending money, and going to them, and suffering for them, was a light causing him to see good works which led him to glorify God. Millions of heathen remain to be thus led to Christ and to heaven.

VII.

CHRIST'S COMPASSION FOR SINNERS.

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest." (Matt. ix. 36, 37, 38.)

Pity for man was predominant in the heart of Jesus. This was the mightiest impulse and deepest emotion of his life upon earth, as shown by his tears at the grave of Lazarus, and by his exclamation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" It was not merely as a philanthropist that Christ's bosom heaved with emotion and that he shed tears of agony on account of human suffering, but as the Savior of those who had sinned, and upon whom God's wrath was resting. It was man as a sinner, doomed to everlasting destruction, more than as a mere earthly sufferer, that called forth Christ's compassion.

To him a sinner was the most pitiable object in the universe. He understood as no mere human being could the doom which awaited such as received not the forgiving mercy and regenerating grace of God.

Knowing that all human suffering was the result of sin, and understanding the cause as well as the effect of man's guilt before God, he was moved with the most profound pity for him. Man as a sinner might have excited other emotions in the breast of Christ than compassion. His wrath as an outraged Sovereign and his justice as an inexorable Judge might have been called forth; but not so, "he was moved with compassion on them."

This spirit of compassion which caused the Savior to yearn over sinners is what Christians need and must have to enable them to perform the work God has required them to do in enlightening and saving the world. When the church is pervaded and swayed by this impulse for the unconverted, it will embrace every opportunity, as did the Master, to open the eyes of the blind, and to turn men from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then will the church send forth an abundance of laborers into the field to gather the harvest. There are three special ways in which this work may be promoted; namely, praying, paying, and going. And in one or all of these ways every Christian may labor. Woe to any idler in the presence of so vast a harvest.

If we have felt sin to be the terrible thing which it is, and have experienced the fullness of Christ's love in a thorough change from nature to grace, then we can not be destitute of pity for the unsaved. A sense of personal responsibility and service to God and to our fellow-men is one of the first and most impressive thoughts that true religion awakens in the soul. Those who have not experienced this have not obtained that "godliness which is profitable to all things." With

this principle of godliness in lively exercise we will realize that the measure of our responsibility to enlighten and save others is only limited by our ability to accomplish this work.

If this sense of obligation to God and sympathy for man were as general and profound among Christians as it should be, then the cause of missions would receive much more earnest support, and they would not be so cold and sluggish in their prayers, efforts, and contributions to the cause of the world's conversion. Then would the church be more generally pervaded with the feeling expressed by Paul in his request to the Colossians, when he desired that prayer be offered for him, that God would open a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which he was even then in bonds. Though a prisoner in Rome, he longed for an open door of utterance. He felt he ought to be set at liberty more for the sake of the salvation of those in sin than for his own personal enjoyment.

But what is the relation of prayer to the work of the world's evangelization? Prayer constitutes an essential element in the successful prosecution of every work relating to the Christian religion. Other religions may be successfully carried forward without it; but the Christian can not so much as exist, much less prosper, without it. The same is true of Christian missions. They can not prosper, nor will they long exist without prayer. It was by and through prayer that they were inaugurated. At one of the first missionary meetings held under the Christian dispensation the Master breathed upon the apostles and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost also selected the laborers and sent them forth in answer to prayer. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted,

the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." From that day till the present this same potent agency has attended all successful effort in behalf of the salvation of men in answer to the prayers of God's people.

If this be omitted, then missions languish and die; and so far as saving men is concerned they are an utter failure. Our gifts and labors for the cause of missions must be made effective by the power of the Holy Ghost in answer to prayer. The Holy Ghost was poured out on the day of Pentecost while the apostles were praying; and not until this was done were they fitted for the work committed to them. Prayer has in a very important sense planted every successful mission and brought into the kingdom of Christ every heathen convert. With this coming from warm, believing hearts and holy lips there can be no failure; without it, all else avails but little.

The Holy Ghost will move upon the valley of dry bones and bring life out of death in answer to prayer. It will make the truth effectual in the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of the wicked. It will also bring about the result for which we are requested to pray—namely, laborers. We should pray the Lord of the harvest that the right ones be sent, and that enough be found to gather the harvest speedily. God will hear and answer prayer for the speedy conquest of earth to his Son. Has he not said that he would be inquired of by the house of Israel; and is he not able and willing to give this world to Christ for his inher-

itance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, in answer to the prayers of his people?

Christ would have his people undertake great things for him, as well as expect great things from him. He would have them labor hopefully, earnestly, and prayerfully in the great harvest-field of the world, believing that he that reapeth receiveth wages, and that "as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations." "The glory of the Lord shall fill the earth, as the waters do the face of the great deep." Great as is this harvest, it will yet be gathered. Never before did steam-presses print and steam-ships and railroads carry so rapidly God's word; and never before did word come back to us from so many portions of the earth that souls are saved.

In the largest and most elegant hotel in Rome there is a Bible in every room. At the world's exposition in Paris there was an open Bible-stand, where Bibles were sold in every known language, or given away to those who desired them in that way. Once much of the world was closed to us, but now we may go into every heathen land and find willing hearts and souls to hear the gospel. In China, India, Africa, South America, all Europe, and upon most of the islands of the sea, multitudes are stretching out their hands for help. And shall they call in vain?

Are the obstacles to be overcome to get the Bible to them or to make it effective in their salvation greater than those which have been surmounted? Is there sin or antagonism of any kind within the human heart which has not been subdued in the past? Has not the

gospel in other times and countries overcome all the superstition and evils of men to be found in every country? Will not the same truth, by the power of the same Holy Ghost that brought to naught all the devices of men and devils to overthrow Christianity in the apostles' day, do the same work now in answer to prayer? Will not the same conquering Christ still reign "until all enemies are put under his feet," as is predicted? It is ours to labor, and to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into the harvest.

VIII.

TEACHING ALL NATIONS.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.)

The church of Christ is the channel through which God carries forward the work of salvation among men; and hence our welfare, both in time and eternity, is inseparably connected with it. But for it, God could no more endure the present wickedness of earth than he did that of Sodom and Gomorrah because ten righteous persons were not found in it. Viewed from this stand-point, the text has an exceedingly momentous significance. Never were men or angels charged with a commission so important—one affecting so vitally man’s present and eternal welfare—as the one given in the text. To teach all nations, and to teach them all things commanded by the Savior, was and is the high and holy calling of the Christian church.

We shall consider first the things to be taught, which may be classed under the following heads; namely, the theory, experience, and practice of religion. These embrace whatever is essential to proper conceptions of the divine character, his law and moral government, man’s fall through Adam and his redemption through

Christ, as well as the conditions of salvation proffered in the gospel. In short, repentance and reformation, justification and regeneration, holiness of heart and usefulness, the resurrection of the body and the general judgment, the happiness of heaven and the punishment of hell, are all to be taught and deeply impressed upon the minds and hearts of men.

The duty of prayer, trust in God, humility, and self-denial, the promises and precepts, warnings and threatenings, duties and privileges, ordinances and commands of God's word are to be taught, and so far as practicable enforced upon the people. Christ is to be presented as an all-sufficient, yea, as the only Savior of men. He must be held up before the world in all his labors, graces, sufferings, and glory. The work to be done by the Christian church is to know the truth as it is in Jesus, and so to communicate it to others as to make them see its beauty, feel its power, and by it be led to salvation. Said the apostle, "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

The method by which this is to be done is chiefly through the preaching of the gospel. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." The living teacher is to go forth with God's living truth, and by the power of speech impress that truth upon the minds of men everywhere. Speech is man's best gift. It is this which persuades most effectually, and makes dead thoughts quick and powerful. Hence God has commanded that the gospel be proclaimed. The written gospel is so great a blessing that we could not do without it; but it is through the medium of a preached

gospel that the masses are to be instructed and won to Christ. The living teacher, called of God and qualified, is to go forth and preach the gospel to every creature.

It is essential that such have a correct theory, sound Christian experience, and consistent life. Especially is it important that such possess a deep Christian experience. This will give them a clearness in divine things, a love for souls, and to their lives and words a power which can not be obtained otherwise. Nothing will so free men from sectarian bigotry and fill them with Christian forbearance and make the work of the ministry pleasant and successful as a deep, growing Christian experience. With this, and close application to the study of God's word, their preaching will be in demonstration of the Spirit and power, and souls will be converted to God. The faithful preaching of the gospel will as certainly lead to salvation and to heaven as that effect follows cause. Ministers should remember that their business is to teach religion; not to demonstrate scientific problems, but to teach the religion of Christ, and do this from the heart as well as from the head.

“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” It is he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, that shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. This implies deep concern of heart, importunate supplication at a throne of grace, as well as diligent study of the Scriptures, on the part of the minister. He must be well furnished with the precious seed of the gospel, and should so cultivate the soil of his own heart that he may by precept and example

show forth the excellency of the gospel, thereby strengthening believers and constraining sinners to flee the wrath to come. Diligence in prayer, study, and labor alone will enable ministers to obtain, bear, and scatter successfully the precious seed of the gospel.

The extent to which this is to be done is clearly indicated in the language of the text: "Teach all nations." But positively as this is taught in the Scriptures, Christians, and even ministers not a few, fail to realize that it is duty to do this to the extent of their ability. Many seek mostly their own ease and gratification, and do little or nothing for the spread of the gospel into all the world. The injunction, "Teach all nations," does not enter into the plans of the Protestant churches generally as fully as it should. Did ministers and people, with one accord, heartily enter into this work, we would soon witness very different results. Even the labor performed and the money expended would in some instances accomplish vastly more did Christians unite their efforts in promoting Christianity, which they doubtless would do did they more fully feel it to be duty to give the gospel to all the world.

Money and labor are wasted. In many villages we find four and five churches, while two or three would meet every want. In some places five and six ministers are employed to do the work which two or three are fully able to perform. If Christians would lay aside their strait-jackets and sectarian folly and be as willing to hear the truth preached from the lips of others as from those of their own denomination, fewer houses of worship and ministers would be needed in our country; and the money thus saved might be used in sending the gospel to the destitute and heathen.

The Moravian Church comes nearest carrying out the idea that it is our duty, so far as this is possible, of any church in this country, to preach the gospel to every creature. It labors more diligently to give the gospel to the heathen than to increase its numbers at home. The question with it seems to be not how it may multiply its membership most rapidly at home, but how it may enlighten and save the largest number who are without the gospel. Its communicants in Christian lands number about thirty thousand, but in heathen lands nearly one hundred thousand. Did we put forth more effort to give the gospel to the heathen, we would more fully accomplish the work given us by Christ. Not less work at home, but much more abroad, should be our motto.

Encouragements to engage in this work. God has assured us that it should be done, and that he will help to do it. "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please." "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." "For he must reign till all enemies are put under his feet." The predictions and promises of God's word concerning this are so positive as to exclude all doubt respecting his purpose to subdue the world to Christ; and no one will for a moment question his power to bring it to pass. Moreover, the achievements of Christianity in the past are a full warrant that it will continue to achieve conquests until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.

The promise of the text, that Christ will be with those who engage in this work, should greatly encourage us. While it is true that in an important sense

Christ is everywhere present, it is also true that his gracious, comforting, helping presence is especially with his people in their efforts to extend his kingdom. He is with them as Teacher, Guide, Comforter, Intercessor, and Victor; so that with Paul we may say, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." How manifestly was the Master with the apostles during the protracted prayer-meeting at Jerusalem, soon after his ascension to heaven; with them on the day of Pentecost; with them as they went forth to preach the gospel. And he is no less with his faithful ministers and servants now as they seek to promote his kingdom in heathen lands.

During the first French empire Napoleon Bonaparte was France, army, government, and all. He was called the 100,000, because his presence on the battle-field was regarded as being equal to that number of soldiers. When he heard of the destruction of his navy, which was on the same day that the scepter of Prussia was surrendered to him, he remarked, "I can't be everywhere,"—as much as if he had said, "Had I been there this calamity would not have befallen me; I could have prevented such a disaster." Thank God, we have a Leader that can be everywhere, and who can so wisely direct all who fight under him as to lead to certain victory. He is the church in a much higher sense than Napoleon Bonaparte ever was France. His Zion shall look "forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners," until the whole earth is filled with the glory of the Lord.

IX.

PREACHING THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” (Mark xvi. 15.)

Our Lord while upon earth, both by precept and example, showed the importance, yea, the duty of preaching the gospel to every creature. During his three years of public life he traveled over Galilee, visited Jerusalem at three different times, and spent a considerable portion of time at Capernaum, a neighboring town, preaching the gospel. He also went beyond the River Jordan and remained several months, whence he sent out his disciples at different times to extend the work of evangelization. The Savior was in the true sense of the word an itinerant missionary, having as his mission-field a country with a population of several millions of people.

His first ministers largely possessed this same spirit, and sought every opportunity to communicate the good news of salvation to those with whom they came in contact. Andrew told Peter, “We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.” Philip told Nathaniel, “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth.” The woman of Samaria, who met Christ at Jacob’s well, told the people, “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this

the Christ?" When the church at Jerusalem was scattered by persecution, they also went everywhere preaching Jesus and the resurrection.

We have an excellent illustration of the true missionary spirit in the life and labors of St. Paul. He, in twenty-five years, traveled over a large part of Asia and Europe. When at liberty and while a prisoner he most faithfully preached the gospel whenever and wherever this was practicable. At one place he wintered, at another he spent a year and a half, and at a third two years, preaching to all who came within his reach; "so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus." The example of Christ and his early followers, as well as his command, all teach that the first business of Christians after being converted is to give the gospel to the spiritually destitute.

But what is the gospel? It is the result of Christ's work for us while he lived upon earth, his suffering for us when dying upon Calvary, and his intercession for us while sitting at the right hand of God in heaven, as well as his work in us by the Holy Spirit, whereby he enlightens, renews, and sanctifies our natures. It is defined to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." In short, it is health to the sick, life to the dead, and an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all God's people. No marvel that it possessed so much attraction and power in the apostles' day, and ever since when faithfully promulgated.

The word preach, or preaching, is found about sixty times in the New Testament. It means to proclaim, or make known the glad tidings of salvation; or, in other words, it is to publicly announce, discuss, and

reason upon the theme of redemption as wrought out by Christ. As Paul "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." At Troas he "continued his speech until midnight." "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep . . . and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead." Paul went down and restored him to life, and came back "and talked a long while, even till break of day."

Preaching the gospel is truly the most grand and glorious work committed to man; and no marvel that the prophet, when foreseeing the happy results of proclaiming the glorious gospel of the Son of God, exclaimed, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace." It is truly beautiful to show from the testimony of the Scriptures and a truly Christian experience the power of the gospel, as did Peter on the day of Pentecost, and as Paul did when he said, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." To explain and apply the truth of God to the hearts and lives of men so as to reform and save them is indeed a high and holy calling, worthy of the best energies that the best human talent can bring to bear upon this divinely-appointed work.

This is to be done in every age and to every creature. Christians of each generation, redeemed by the same blood, quickened by the same spirit, and acting under the same general commission, have the same duties to perform in this department of work. The soul-saving truth of the gospel is to be proclaimed with proof and argument and authority and the unction of the Holy Spirit. This might be done by the Christians of this century more easily than it was done by those of the

first century; and it is as much our duty to do it as it was theirs. Did all tell the good news of salvation to as many as they could reach, and labor with the ability they have, it would not be twenty-five years until it would be done.

The church is much stronger now than ever before. Its facilities for Christian labor of every kind, as well as its wealth, are at least double what they were even a few years ago. It could put 50,000 missionaries into the field and support them, if it would. Fifty thousand would be less than one per cent of the membership of evangelical churches in Christian lands. Great Britain sent as many men as this to the Crimea to take a single fortress. Ten times this number fell victims to death on each side during our late war. Can not 50,000 redeemed souls be found who will give themselves fully to the work of winning this world back to Christ?

But if they were obtained, could they be supported? Yes; easily, if all gave but a reasonable amount. Fifty thousand at \$500 each would be less than five dollars from each member of the evangelical churches in Europe and America. England spends more than one half of this for intoxicating drinks. Our late war cost us more than would be needed to put missions into every heathen land, and in numbers sufficient to preach the gospel to every creature in a short time. It would not require all the money in the hands of 10,000 of the wealthiest Christians now living to plant the standard of Christ in every land. The command, "Preach the gospel to every creature," is quite within the power of the church to accomplish.

The success of the last fifty years shows this most clearly. The progress made by missionaries within the last half century far exceeds that of the previous

two hundred years; and more has been done to give the Bible to the world during this time than was done the first eight or ten centuries of the Christian era. There are also more conversions in heathen lands, in proportion to the number of laborers employed, than ever before; yea, more proportionately than in Christian lands. It costs more per man to make converts to the Christian faith in England and the United States than in heathen lands. The number of nominal Christians now is three times as large as it ever was before the last century.

One thing is often forgotten in showing the success of Christianity; namely, that each generation of children of Christian parents have to be Christianized. It is not as some other things,—once done, always done,—but each succeeding generation must be won to Christ. All things considered, Christianity has achieved wonderful results. Indeed, it is a source of devout gratitude to God that so much has been done, and that there are so many hopeful signs.

But it is sometimes seriously asked, Would it not be better for the cause if all effort for the evangelization of the world were concentrated upon some favored places until such lands are made all that the gospel is capable of making them? This is not the wisest policy, nor the best method; nor is it the divine order. The command was to commence at Jerusalem, but to go from there into all the world. The Savior and his apostles went everywhere, preaching repentance and faith and reformation. The gospel is in its very nature disseminative, and will prompt all who fully adopt its principles to diffuse it. Not until the last heathen is enlightened can it or ought it be otherwise.

X.

GOOD TIDINGS ANNOUNCED BY THE ANGELS.

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke ii. 10, 11.)

We notice, first, angels and their interest in man; second, the good tidings mentioned in the text; third, the duty of those who have them to those who have them not.

I. The word angel, as used in the Scriptures, does not always mean a denomination of nature, but sometimes of office merely. Ministers of the gospel are called angels; Christ is called the Angel of the Covenant; and those employed by God to execute his judgments are also called angels. That there is a distinct class of beings, high in rank and intelligence, known as angels, and that they were frequently employed by the Almighty in the earlier periods of the world's history, to communicate his will to man, admits of no doubt. The reason why they are no longer employed thus is, there no longer exists a necessity for it. All that is necessary for man to know respecting the character and government of God, his ruin by the fall, and redemption through Christ, as well as the things he must both do and not do to be saved,

are clearly revealed in the Scriptures, and hence angels' visits for this purpose have ceased. God's word closes with a most positive prohibition not to add nor to take away from the record which he has given.

That angels are still deeply concerned for our welfare and look with delight upon Christians, rejoice in their prosperity, and administer to their wants, as far as they are permitted to do this, are truths clearly taught in God's book. "The angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him, and delivereth them." They are ministering spirits to them who shall be heirs of salvation. They watch with intense interest the conflict that is going on between light and darkness, sin and holiness, and are ever ready to do the bidding of the Almighty, to minister to the good of his people and protect them in time of danger. Angels have always shown a deep solicitude for man's welfare. No sooner had he fallen than they wondered who should or who could redeem him; and when they learned that the Lion of the tribe of Judah had prevailed to unseal the book and look upon it, they rejoiced exceedingly. And when it was announced to them that the promised Messiah was born, their joy knew no bounds. "And there was suddenly with the angel a great multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

It is also said that there is more joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety-nine just persons which need no repentance. We are not to infer from this language that angels lack interest in those who are already on their way to heaven, but simply that because of the new trophies

thus won to Christ they have new and increased grounds for rejoicing. A feeling similar to this is experienced by Christians. We, too, rejoice more over one sinner that repents than over many Christians who are on the good way; not that we lack concern for them, but because new conquests are made and trophies won we have new and increased grounds for rejoicing. This same principle may be illustrated by many things in nature. We rejoice more over property saved from conflagration, when greatly endangered, than over many times its value which was not thus exposed; also, over one friend rescued from imminent danger than over many who were not thus imperiled. Now it may be on this same principle that there is more joy among the angels in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety-nine just persons who are already saved.

(2) The good tidings announced by the angels. And what were they? "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." No tidings ever greeted human ears so good as these. It was good tidings to Adam to learn that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to know that in their seed the nations of the earth should be blessed, and to Job that his Redeemer liveth, and to David that the heathen should be given to Christ for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, and to Isaiah to know that a child should be born and a Son given who should bear upon his shoulders the government, and be called the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and to Malachi to know that the Sun of Righteousness should rise with healing in his wings.

The whole Old Testament is full of good tidings. The writings of Moses, the psalms, and the prophecies contain good tidings to man; but these, in comparison to the good tidings of the text, are as the droppings of the cloud before a bountiful shower, or as the shadow to the reality. The Old Testament saints had a Savior in types and promises, but we have him in reality. To them the Sun of Righteousness should arise: to us he has arisen. To them a fountain should be opened for sin and uncleanness: to us that fountain has been opened. Such tidings might well cause joy among angels.

It was good tidings to our revolutionary fathers to learn that Cornwallis had surrendered, and that they had gained their independence. It was good tidings during our late war, to hear that Vicksburg had surrendered, that Richmond had been taken, and that the rebellion was subdued; but tidings so good as those brought to the shepherds by the angel never before saluted human ears. Had there been one who could have saved us from the terrible war through which we passed, great suffering would have been prevented; but this is not to be compared to the suffering prevented by Christ, or to the joys he brought for us.

And how does he save? This he does by having died to redeem us; by giving his word and Spirit to enlighten, convict, and convert us; by giving grace to keep us in the way of his commandments; and by providing for the resurrection of our bodies, and a reunion of soul and body forever in the kingdom of God. Christ is not a Savior in the sense that he raises us above the want of pardon, but in the sense that he made it possible for God to pardon us without conflicting with the claims of justice. His name shall be

called Jesus, for he shall save his people not in their sins but from their sins. To take men into heaven in their sins would be to pollute that holy place, and to leave them the same guilty and unhappy beings they now are.

(3) The duty of those having the good tidings of salvation toward those who have them not. The fact that these good tidings are for all men is evidence that a knowledge of his salvation should be given to all. These glad tidings, said the angel to the shepherds, are for you and for all people. It is just as important for the heathen to know this as it was for the shepherds; and the angel who communicated it to them thought it so important that he came all the way from heaven to tell them. Doubtless the angel did this by the command of God. But the command to Christians, especially ministers, is just as positive to "go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," as it was to the angel to come to earth. This work is committed to the church. God might have commissioned other angels to carry the gospel to the heathen. Yea, he might have written his law on the sky, so that every man might read it there, and have made angels missionaries to preach it, but he saw best to commit this work to man. The command of Christ, the wants of the heathen, and the promptings of true religion, all demand earnest effort, and that by using all the means within our reach. So long as a single soul is without these good tidings, so long is it the duty of Christians to work to give it to them, even if it takes all they have to accomplish it.

XI.

SALVATION BY THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION
OF CHRIST.

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” (Luke xxiv. 46. 47.)

This text contains the first commission which the church received from its risen Lord to engage actively in the work of the world's conversion. Forty days afterward, and just before his ascension to heaven, he repeated it in still more emphatic terms. The first thought on his mind after his resurrection, and the last one before his ascension to heaven, yea, the chief thought of his whole life, was the evangelization of the world. The value and grandeur of this work is strikingly set forth in the language of the text, “Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and the remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

That we may more fully understand this subject, let us go back to the place where his lips, just released from death, uttered these words, and so open our hearts to divine influences as to receive spiritual illumination, without which we shall be unable to discern the relation of Christ's death and resurrection to the

salvation of men; also fail to realize our obligations to do what we can to bring the unenlightened and unsaved to a knowledge of the truth. Not until Christ by his Spirit dwells in our souls, making us like himself, will there be that outflow of love for the welfare of men and the power to overcome the difficulties in the way of their salvation necessary to do successful missionary work.

This alone can disclose the priceless worth of souls and the horrors to which they are exposed while out of Christ. When with the eye of faith we see the miseries of the lost and the happiness of the saved, then, and not till then, will we realize the glories of that scheme which saves from the one and to the other, and which offers life and immortality to all. Christ in the soul begets a deep concern for the welfare of those who are yet in their sins, and causes the spirit of missions to take deep hold upon us. Then will we be like the Savior: "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." It was this which thrilled the souls of apostles and reformers, and which gives sympathy for the unsaved.

Observe, also, that Christ directed the apostles to commence this work at Jerusalem. But why here, where he had encountered such bitter persecution, and where a conspiracy had been formed to take his life? Does he really seek to save his worst enemies, even the men whose hands are still reeking with his blood? Yes, such was his love for them that he prayed for their forgiveness and salvation while he hung upon the cross. Instead of being repelled by their great wickedness, he was moved to pity and earnest effort

for their happiness. It may be also that he commanded them to commence at Jerusalem to prove to them and us that a love and zeal which could succeed in such a wicked place would certainly encompass the whole world.

But next I wish to consider some of the motives that should induce us to engage in this work. (1) Christ commands it. It is not left to our discretion or goodwill, but is made a most binding duty, and that too by the highest authority known, and in language so plain and positive that no ignorance can fail to understand it and no ingenuity pervert its meaning. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," means what it says, and can not be made to mean anything else. The same pretext that evades the force of this command would invalidate everything which the Bible teaches. The duty of faith, prayer, and love to God are no more binding upon us than the duty of giving the gospel to "every creature," so far as this is within our power.

In this Christ does not enjoin labor or sacrifice beyond what he did himself. By a most laborious life and excruciating death he made salvation possible; and now that he had just come forth from the grave, still bearing on his person the scars of the mighty conflict through which he vanquished death and hell, he says to all Christians, "Be ye co-workers with me in saving the world." Christ's farewell command is just as binding upon Christians in the nineteenth century as it was in the first century, and will be as long as a heathen is found on earth.

True, thousands have been enlightened within the last century. In some instances whole countries have been Christianized, and there are more Christians now

than ever before. But the population of the earth has also increased, so that there are also as many without the gospel as ever before. Heathenism still glories in her proud temples, darkens the heavens with the smoke of her cruel sacrifices, and whitens the earth with the bones of her victims. And what lesson should this immense moral waste teach us? Not one of despair or discouragement, but one of rebuke for doing so little to save them. Those who believe in no Savior, no Holy Ghost, no gospel, no convicting or converting power, may doubt the ultimate triumph of Christianity; but true Christians should know nothing of such a feeling. Much, indeed, has been done within the last century. The gospel has been planted in most pagan lands, and thousands have enlisted under the banner of King Jesus. Glorious victories have been achieved, which might have been multiplied many-fold had the labor and faith and prayer of Christians been what they ought to have been.

If Christians generally were constrained by the love of Christ to prosecute this work, as was the primitive church, it would not be over twenty-five years until all would have the gospel. When this love to Christ and souls is not the main impulse to missionary effort, but little is done. Philanthropy may kindle compassion for the heathen and prompt to benevolence for their welfare; but not until the Holy Ghost fills us with the love of Christ will our efforts be effective. This is everything in missionary labor, as it is in Christian experience, and all kinds of Christian work. With this no one can be unfeeling, or covetous, or neglectful of duty. Did all the professed followers of Christ have it in rich measure, then the many who perish annually in heathen lands would soon hear the joyful sound of salvation.

It is a great error, as well as a great evil, to regard the spirit of missions as a peculiar kind of piety not to be expected of Christians generally. The spirit of missions is simply the Spirit of Christ, which we must have to be his true followers. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." It is a contradiction in terms to love the Lord with all the heart and our neighbors as ourselves and be without the missionary spirit. To be without love and pity for the souls of the heathen is equivalent to having none for any souls. It is a misconception of Christianity, and such a one as shows defective Christian experience and ignorance of the requirements of God's word.

Essential to the success of this work is the supply of funds for its prosecution. When a man gives himself to Christ in the true sense of the word he gives his property, as well as all else that he possesses, to be used as the Master directs. Alms-giving is enjoined by him, and that to an extent which implies self-denial and sacrifice. To give to benevolent objects only what we can well spare falls below the standard given us in God's word. To realize the fulfillment of the promise, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," we must give until we feel the loss of that which is given. The more we deny ourselves for Christ's sake the richer will be the blessing. The question ought to be not how little, but how much can be spared for missions?

It is a fearful thought that money which God intended for his cause will condemn those who use it for selfish ends. Every dollar thus perverted will be a swift witness against them in the day of judgment. Ah, could Christians who deal out a few dollars for benevolent purposes instead of giving hundreds and

thousands see their possessions spotted with the blood of souls, they would realize the guilt of disobeying the command, "Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him," for the upbuilding of his cause. The tendency with the large majority of Christians is to give too little. Especially is this true of the rich, of whom the Saviour said it is hard for them to enter into the kingdom of heaven; not because they are rich, but because they do not use their riches properly.

XII.

RELATION OF THE HOLY GHOST TO MISSIONS.

“As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.” (Acts xiii. 2, 3.)

The book of the Acts of the Apostles, as its name indicates, records action, and that, too, of a remarkable character, as is shown by the scenes and events which it so graphically portrays. In short, it contains the history of the primitive church, and especially its ministers, who, in obedience to their Lord's command, “Preach the gospel to every creature,” labored so zealously to accomplish this work. Such missionary labors, sufferings, and successes as are here chronicled are not to be found elsewhere. Preaching the gospel was to the apostles so grand and glorious a work, and one fraught with interests so important to others, that it filled their heads and hearts, and prompted them to labor hard and suffer much.

The chapter from which the text is taken, and the succeeding one, give an account of the appointment of Barnabas and Saul to the missionary work by the church at Antioch; the services by which they were set apart to it; the places they visited and labors they performed while on their first missionary tour; the reception given them by their brethren at Antioch

when they returned. It will be borne in mind that it was by the direction of the Holy Ghost that Barnabas and Saul were set apart to this work, and that it was by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands that they were inaugurated into it. With such a call, and from such services, did they go forth to "preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." After they had visited numerous places, and passed through many perils, proclaiming Christ and his salvation, they again stood before their brethren at Antioch and rehearsed "all that God had done with them."

And now look at the reception given by their brethren. The whole church came together to extend to them their Christian greetings and hear their reports. The whole church had participated in the services, setting them apart to this work, and now they wished to know the result. Being filled with love to God and the unsaved, they were there to hear what God had done through the labors of their representatives, Barnabas and Saul, and what further they could do to save men. Their sense of obligation to God and to the heathen made them eager to know their duty and to do it. Next to their own salvation, that of others was to them the most important work of life. Such was their appreciation of the gospel that they felt it should be given to all men in the shortest time possible.

Let us consider the relation of the Holy Ghost to the missionary work, and the means we must employ to secure it. Every agency chosen of God to promote his cause has its sphere of action, and infinite wisdom employs none but what is essential. The circulation of the Scriptures and to teach people to understand them, the preaching of the gospel, and

the use of all the appointed means of grace are indispensable; but after all, without the influence of the Holy Spirit they will fail to awaken and reform mankind. The Holy Spirit must be present with teacher and learner, preacher and people, to enlighten, renew, and to guide into all truth, or souls will not be won to Christ. Saving men is emphatically a work of the Holy Spirit, and without its influence it is impossible "to turn men from darkness to light."

Without this, the best mere human effort will fail to discover to sinners the depravity of their hearts and give them proper conceptions of the gospel and its adaptation to meet their wants in this life and that which is to come. Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." If this is true of men generally in their unrenewed state, as this passage and others teach, then how difficult to give the heathen clear conceptions of the truth of God, and make that truth effective in their salvation without the help of the Holy Spirit. As the things of science can only be scientifically understood, so the things of the Spirit can only be spiritually understood.

It is the Holy Spirit that reproveth of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come, and that makes the gospel the power of God unto salvation. It is this which commences the work of salvation by enlightening the understanding, that carries it forward by renewing the heart, that perfects it by guiding into all truth, and which makes the path of the righteous shine brighter and brighter, even unto the perfect day. Said Jesus to the apostles, "I will send the

promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." No amount of learning, zeal, or good works can become a substitute for the directing and helping power of the Holy Spirit. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which can not be uttered." We know as little of other religious duties as this without the Spirit, and hence its need to guide us into all truth. But how, when, and under what circumstances will the Spirit be given to God's people? and what may they do to secure it? This is clearly indicated by the language, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Ministering means serving, or waiting on the Lord in the use of the appointed means of grace. Dr. Clarke says it was common for pious Jews to meet on week-days for prayer and supplication; and on these days they fasted. It may have been on an occasion of this kind that the Holy Ghost indicated the divine will in respect to Barnabas and Saul. Long before this time God had said to them, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh;" but he also said, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them."

There must be ministering to the Lord and conformity to his will in our hearts and lives which embraces the duty of earnest importunate prayer, in answer to which our obligations to the spiritually destitute will be made plain. Prayer lays hold of Omnipotent power, and brings pardon and salvation. In answer to it the Holy Ghost will be poured out upon all laud-

able efforts to Christianize the world. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." If this is true of one, how much more of many who with strong faith pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Were we as importunate for the salvation of the heathen as the woman was before the unjust judge it would not be long till they would be brought to Christ.

Let the church still, as it did at Antioch, send forth its brightest jewels, its strong men, such as will be able to convince the gainsayer and confound the skeptic, and whose love of Christ constrains them to preach salvation to the perishing, and let it liberally sustain those it does send forth; but let it not forget that it has an important duty to perform at a throne of divine grace. Queen Mary showed her faith in the prayer of the righteous when she said she feared the prayers of John Knox more than all the fleets and armies of her enemies. Wicked as she was, she believed in the power of prayer, especially when offered by John Knox. She knew that his prayers were opposed to her wicked schemes, and that they must prevail. Prayer has accomplished what armies, fleets, arguments, and eloquence can not do. These can only affect men, but prayer moves the hand that moves the world, securing strength for the weak, wisdom for the ignorant, joy for the disconsolate, and salvation for the guilty. The church at Antioch prayed for those it sent forth, and by being present at the missionary meeting which commissioned them to go, and at the one which received them back, showed a heart-interest in this work. They believed that the command, "Go teach all nations," was as binding as other commands found in the Bible, and that it ought to be obeyed by

all Christians. How unlike some of the present day, who at most give a small annual contribution, an occasional prayer, and with these dismiss the whole subject of the world's evangelization from their minds. Indeed, some do not this much. They neither pray, pay, nor in any way labor for the cause.

The most alarming feature in their case is that they do this with seemingly little or no compunction of conscience. They treat the claims of God and the heathen as though it were asking too much to give the gospel to the spiritually destitute. Indeed, not a few act as though the cost of sustaining the gospel at home is a good deal to ask for the mere privilege of getting to heaven. They, like shipping-merchants, are constantly asking for cheaper rates; and if they could be certain of barely squeezing into heaven by paying still less they would do it. Christ's last commission has not that binding force upon their consciences which it ought to have. It is a most painful fact that some seem to give to missions only to escape censure, or to get the whole subject out of the way.

Why, the mere announcement of a missionary meeting puts some professors of religion into agony; and to ask them for money for this interest utterly destroys their enjoyment. A member of the United Brethren Church who left the congregation as soon as she heard the text, and went home to get dinner for the preachers, said by way of apology, "I never enjoy missionary meetings, and hence came away before meeting had fairly begun." She regarded such a meeting as a kind of necessary evil—something to be endured, not enjoyed. She is not alone in her views on this subject. To receive good and not do good is the highest idea of religious work and worship some have.

XIII.

PAUL'S INDEBTEDNESS TO HIS FELLOW-MEN.

“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.” (Rom. i. 14, 15.)

It is a most disagreeable thing to an honest man to be deeply in debt. Yet Paul frankly acknowledged that he was debtor “both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise,” which four classes embraced the entire world. But how did he become so extensively in debt? Was he a money-borrower, or a merchant, or a banker with whom the balance of mankind made deposits? Or by what process did he become so generally in debt? Not in any of these ways, for he had little to do with finances or business of any kind after his call to the ministry.

This will be more fully explained after some things are stated respecting the gospel which he was so ready to preach. The gospel is a revelation of the grace of God to man through a Mediator. It is that system of faith and practice through which guilty man may be saved by virtue of Christ’s life, death, resurrection, and intercession. It is God’s appointed instrumentality by which to enlighten and save the world. “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repent-

ance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

This gospel shows man that he is "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;" that he is "dead in trespasses and sins;" that he is "condemned already;" that "the wrath of God abideth upon him." It also tells him how he may escape that wrath; how he may be made alive to God and be clothed with the robe of righteousness; how he may be made rich in faith and good works in this life, and in the life to come an heir to an "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." As the apostle affirms, it is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth," and the only power that can elevate and save the race.

With such views of man's wretched state and of the gospel and its benefits did the apostle go forth to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. Is it any wonder that he said, even in the face of imprisonment and death itself, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ?" Seeing and feeling the value of this gospel, he could not be indifferent in regard to its promulgation to others. He was ready to preach it to the Romans and to all men. He could truly say, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." So highly did he appreciate it that he felt that no privation or sacrifice of ease or wealth was too great to be made for the sake of imparting it to others.

Grounds of his obligation to thus preach the gospel.

- (1) He felt he ought to proclaim the glad tidings to all because of the mercy God had shown him in his conversion; also because of the great dangers to which

the wicked are exposed. Paul had himself been a great sinner, saved in a miraculous manner; and being so mercifully saved himself, he felt he ought to do all he possibly could to save others. He had not forgotten how blind and guilty he had been, nor the wonderful power that had arrested him on his way to Damascus, which caused the scales to fall from his eyes, made him a new creature in Christ Jesus, and gave him a well-grounded hope of immortality and eternal life. Paul looked at things very differently after his conversion from what he did before. He saw much more to admire in God and much more to deplore in man than he ever had before,—God's goodness in so abundantly providing for man's spiritual wants, and man's blindness and indifference in rejecting the only means of his salvation. The life-boat of salvation had picked him up while the waves of iniquity were carrying him with fearful velocity toward ruin; and seeing the large majority of the race in the same sad plight from which he had been saved, he felt he ought, yea, must do all that lay in his power "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith."

(2) He felt that he was debtor to all men because God had given him valuable treasures for them, and made him his special agent to distribute them to all within his reach. God made him a depositary of the most valuable gifts, as is true of every gospel minister by virtue of his call to this work, and hence under the most solemn pledge to impart to all, so far as this was possible, a knowledge of the gospel of Christ. He confessed that a dispensation of the gospel was com-

mitted to him; and having been put in trust with a boon so valuable for others, he felt that he could not, as an honest man, withhold it from them. Had he received thousands of dollars to be conveyed to others and failed to give it to them, that would have been regarded dishonest; and in his estimation it was no less so to withhold from them the gospel, which is more valuable than millions of money.

Paul was quite different from some who say they are called to preach, but who are nevertheless indifferent as to whether they ever do this, much less to all within their reach. He was so intent on discharging his obligations to preach the gospel that all other things were made secondary to this. He acknowledged that he was in debt. He did not deny this to get rid of paying debts, as some do now, but confessed it, and then used the greatest effort possible to pay them. True, he met with great opposition. They even went so far as to imprison him to prevent him from doing so; but pay his debts he would. In some instances men have been imprisoned because they did not pay debts. Paul was because he did. From this he would not be turned aside.

Paul was an honest, ready man, willing to do whatever God bid him, even unto death, that he might finish his course with joy. He commenced his Christian career by asking, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and then did the will of God at all hazards. So intent was he on paying debts—preaching Jesus—that no opportunity was omitted. When he was a prisoner before Agrippa and permitted to speak in defense of himself, the king remarked, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Paul replied, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day,

were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." When he was before Felix he "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." Though there for the express purpose of pleading for his release, yet he had rather remain in bonds than to omit a single privilege to preach Jesus and the resurrection.

Paul's idea of life was not so much enjoyment as usefulness. Were the former the end for which men are to live, God would evidently take Christians to heaven as soon as converted. That low, selfish idea never entered Paul's mind. Angels in heaven do not sit indolently down and selfishly enjoy life. They are ministering spirits, and so ought Christians to be to others. Paul practiced the same gospel he preached, and bore the same cross in which he gloried. Religion with him was work as well as enjoyment, or his enjoyment was largely the result of work. This gospel which he was so ready to preach revealed truths so momentous and proffered a salvation so glorious, and an immortality so desirable, that he felt it ought to be given to all if possible.

He had completely lost sight of his earthly interests. The question of life or death, health or sickness, liberty or bondage, he had submitted to God who called him to preach. It was his business to preach, and God's work to care for him and give such results as he might think wise and good. His time, talent, life, and health, all belonged to God; and as he had inquired of him what to do, with the full purpose to be obedient to the Heavenly calling, it was his one business on earth to become all things to all men that he might win souls to Christ.

(3) The same obligations resting upon him to dif-

fuse Christianity are upon all Christians. Was he debtor to all men because of God's mercy shown him in his salvation? So are we. Was he debtor because God had made him a depository of valuable treasures, and was it his duty to give them to others? So are we. As co-laborers with God in the work of redeeming this world, that compassion which brought Christ from heaven to be a ransom for man ought to fill our hearts. With the mind of Christ we will show his sympathy for the lost and cease not to do what we can to save them.

XIV.

LIVING FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS.

“For none of us liveth to himself.” (Rom. xiv. 7.)

The gospel requires us to live largely for the good of others and for Christ's glory, and to make our own happiness a secondary consideration. The obligation to do this, even when it requires privation and sacrifice, is clearly taught in the sacred Scriptures. Self-renunciation for Christ's sake and the good of others promotes the happiness of those who practice it, for the reason that this develops those feelings and affections upon which happiness depends. The fundamental law of the gospel kingdom is love,—love to God and love to man. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.” “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” In another portion of God's word it is said, “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Many reasons might be assigned why we should love our neighbors as ourselves and do good to others. This will promote mutual love and good-will, and thus conduce to the happiness of both parties. Special acts of kindness toward others increase our interest in them

and their good-will toward us, and increase our sympathy for all mankind. No one thus employed can have a contracted, unsympathizing heart. A cold-hearted, unfeeling, selfish Christian is a contradiction in terms, wholly at variance with the spirit of the religion of the Bible. This religion fills the soul with godlike aspirations and affections, and makes its possessor not only willing, but anxious to contribute to the happiness of others.

This view may be objected to on the ground that it sets up a standard so high that none, or but few, attain to it. But then, is not this the Bible standard? Is not grace proffered to enable Christians to attain to it? Is it not true that some have attained to it? Are there not some in every religious community whom all acknowledge to be Bible Christians, and who largely live for the good of others? But God's law does not depend upon the will or conduct of men. It is founded on truth and right, and will abide, even though none meet its obligations. We say of this as did the apostle concerning another subject, "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings."

It is a great misfortune, as it is a great wrong, that Christians do not more generally live up to the standard given in the word of God. Were this done, there would be fewer skeptics. The arguments of a good life are often more convincing to this class of persons than the best logic and reasoning. Those who are naturally skeptical are more likely to be saved from infidelity by the exemplary lives of Christians than by any other means. A life that is "hid with Christ in

God" will most favorably recommend the religion of the Bible, and often lead sinners to a knowledge of the truth. To have all selfishness rooted out of our hearts, and to truly love others as we do ourselves, is the way the Bible would have us live.

To be truly happy ourselves we must make others happy, and do this upon God's plan, which is that we exercise supreme love to him and universal love to man. He is pledged to take care of the happiness of those who for his sake and for the welfare of their fellow-men are striving to make the world better. As Christians, we too often forget that all our interests for time and eternity are safer in the hands of God than anywhere else. "The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness; indignation and wrath."

The Bible rule by which we are to live in behalf of our fellow-men is, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Alas, our dwarfish piety prevents us from coming up to this rule; and instead of doing to others as we would have others do to us, and laboring earnestly in behalf of the happiness and salvation of others, we do little or nothing. If God should deal out blessings to us as we often do to our fellow-men and to his cause, what leanness of both soul and body there would be in our case. He gives us temporal and spiritual gifts freely and abundantly, and

with them the injunction, "Having freely received, freely give."

Such consecration as this to God and to the cause of humanity will bring genuine happiness to those who possess it, and also such spiritual power as is necessary to be progressive and victorious Christians. This power is referred to by the apostle when he said, "My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." To possess and wield such power to the edification of Christians, the conversion of sinners, and the spread of the gospel into all destitute portions of the earth, should be the aim of every earnest Christian. To be without this power as the rule of life is a sin, and proves unfaithfulness to God, just as the absence of true religious enjoyment as the rule of life proves a defective Christian character.

When we consider that this power is absolutely necessary to a growing Christian experience and life, as well as to enable us to labor successfully for the good of others, and that thus laboring and living is the only certain way of obtaining an increase of this power, or even retaining what is already possessed, the appropriateness of the apostle's prayer in the following language is clearly seen: "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."

It is not enticing words of man's wisdom—not ex-

cellency of speech, oratorical flourishes, philosophical disquisitions, or anything that is merely human—that lift men to a higher, holier, and happier life; but the power of God or saving grace alone can do this. That power vouchsafed to man through the redemption of Christ can lift him from the low estate into which sin has placed the race and prepare him for heaven. This power is essential to every stage or condition of Christian life. Without it, there can be no true enlightenment, conviction, conversion, regeneration, growth in grace, or successful work for the salvation of others. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts;” that is, it is not by human might or human power that his kingdom is established in the hearts of men and they thereby made co-workers with him in recovering this world to himself, but by the Spirit of God.

“For none of us liveth to himself;” that is to say, Christians must act according to the will of God, and not follow their own wills. His glory in their salvation, and the salvation of those whom they may induce to become his servants, is the chief end for which they should exert themselves. A true Christian can no more live to himself and for himself exclusively in a spiritual sense than he can live physically without food to eat or air to breathe. And what is true of an individual is also true of a church. To prosper, it must show sympathy and extend help to the destitute and unsaved. It can not refuse these and shut itself up to its own wants altogether and retain a living state of spirituality. The feeling that work for God’s cause and suffering humanity must be performed will come up wherever true religion exists. The example of

Christ, the teachings of his word, the dictates of reason, and human impulse demand it.

It is greatly to be regretted that the obligation to do this does not exert a more authoritative and commanding, yea, binding power over our consciences and lives. This work is regarded by most Christians in the light of charity rather than absolute duty, which accounts for the uncertain, spasmodic policy of many professors of religion whose influence is for or against great benevolent institutions, and whose money is given or withheld from them, wholly as a matter of choice, without any respect to what God commands and Christian obligation requires. They do not seem to believe that the institutions of Christianity and humanity, so far as they aim at and have for their special object the happiness of others and the intellectual and moral improvement of generations to come, have a divinely-imposed claim upon them.

This accounts for the reason that many of these benevolent enterprises are dependent for support upon popular excitement, or good feeling, or generous impulses, at the time their claims are presented, much more than upon fixed religious principle. Instead of Christians regarding their support as a part of their work and duty, they are looked upon as objects of mere charity, which may or may not be sustained, wholly at their option or caprice. Until the principle be deeply fixed in the hearts of Christians that Providence demands that they should not live to themselves, their gifts toward the support of such institutions, as well as their personal efforts to alleviate human suffering wherever found, will fall far below the obligation imposed upon them in God's holy word.

XV

COST OF REDEMPTION.

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (I. Cor. vi. 20.)

To the accomplishment of great ends, several things, and usually the three following, are necessary; namely, time, effort, and money, or their equivalent. No great city or railroad can be built, or any other large undertaking accomplished, without them. The great pyramid of Egypt was from twenty to thirty years in course of construction, with one hundred thousand men employed all these years, who were exchanged at the end of every three months for fresh laborers. Our late war furnishes another illustration of this proposition. The rebellion was subdued; but it required time, effort, and money, a large amount of each, as well as a great sacrifice of human life.

But especially is it true that great moral enterprises, such as contemplate the reformation, elevation, and salvation of man, require time, effort, and money. Dr. Judson labored six long years in Burmah before he witnessed a single conversion from heathenism to Christianity. In Siam the missionaries labored twelve years before a single conversion took place. Rev. Mr. Williams was seventeen years on one of the South Sea islands before he was permitted to see any fruit of his labor. The Church Missionary Society of Great

Britain was nine or ten years, with about an equal number of laborers in the field all this time, and at an expense of from \$90,000 to \$100,000 to establish its first mission-station in Western Africa. These, with many similar instances, fully establish the fact that saving men from sin is a difficult undertaking. There is in man a strong proclivity to forsake God and to do evil, as the whole history of our race shows. Even those who have been initiated into his kingdom and made the subjects of special favor often forget God and sin grievously against him. How strikingly is this illustrated in the history of the Israelites while they sojourned in the wilderness. God displayed miraculous power in delivering them from their enemies in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and at numerous other times. They saw how graciously he would preserve and bless his people, and how terribly he would punish those who rebelled against him; and yet how soon after all this they committed high-handed crime against him; for when Moses came down from the mountain they had made, and were worshiping, a golden calf. We would suppose after what they had seen of God's dealings with sin and his goodness to his people they would never forsake him again.

But now I wish to apply the proposition that all great undertakings require time, effort, and money to the work of redemption as wrought out for man by Jesus Christ. And first, the time. Soon after the creation of our first parents they fell, and involved themselves and the whole human race in sin; for "by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." Four thou-

sand years before the advent of Christ to earth the promise was made to Adam that he should come. And the question arises, Why did he delay so long? Why not come at once and redeem the world? Why wait four thousand years? Why not give the millions who lived and died between the giving of the promise of a Savior and his appearance on earth, the benefits of his teachings, example, and the ten thousand blessings he bought for us. As an all-benèvolent Father, who does the best he can for all his creatures, why did the Almighty delay this work so long? The answer is, all this time was necessary to prepare the world for redemption. Men are slow to receive religious truth, and especially that which teaches that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and are utterly undone without an interest in Christ's blood.

Had Christ come soon after the fall, infidels would have said, as indeed some do say now, that man could and would have fully retrieved his losses had he been left alone. He could by his own effort have thrown off the evils brought upon him by Adam's transgression and lifted himself up to the high and holy position from which he fell. Now to show that man was so depraved, that unaided by divine grace he could not do this, and to illustrate the holiness of God's law, his forbearance toward the erring, and yet his justice in punishing sin, and to give us such knowledge respecting his character, government, and our need of redemption as was indispensable to prepare us for it, all the time was taken that was necessary.

(2) The labor necessary to accomplish this work. How great the concern of our heavenly Father, and how numerous the instrumentalities, human, angelic,

and divine, which he employed to prepare the world for redemption. How many angels' visits to earth to communicate God's messages to man, and how numerous the men employed for this same purpose in the earlier periods of the world's history. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and scores of others who officiated as prophets, priests, and kings preparatory to this end. A long catalogue among the most illustrious names that earth has ever produced devoted their lives to this great and good object.

The building of Noah's ark, and the preservation of himself and family during the flood; Abraham's sojourn in a strange land; the miraculous birth of Isaac; the remarkable history of Jacob; the captivity of Joseph and his promotion from prison to the royal palace of Egypt; the bondage of the Israelites in that land, and their miraculous deliverance from it; their passage over the Red Sea, and forty years' sojourn in the wilderness; their final entrance into Canaan, and driving the inhabitants out of it; their many defeats and victories; their unparalleled prosperity and sad reverses while there; their captivity in Babylon and return to Canaan again; their religious ceremonies and sacrifices; their services of the tabernacle and of the temple; all these, and more than time or space will allow to speak of, stand directly connected with the work of human redemption.

Look also at the labors and privations of Christ while he was upon earth. Who before or since his day labored so assiduously as he? He was an itinerating missionary in the true sense of the word, and among friends and foes, in village and in country, by day and by night, he was engaged in his high and

holy vocation. By prayer, preaching his own gospel, healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, comforting the bereaved, instructing the ignorant, encouraging the virtuous and warning the vicious, and especially by teaching his apostles the things pertaining to his future kingdom, so that they might be qualified for their work after his return to heaven, he labored incessantly for three years. Now all this work of Christ, men, and angels, reaching through a period of four thousand years, was necessary to prepare the world for redemption and redemption for the world.

(2.) Redemption costs money, or its equivalent. The daily sacrifices of animals, birds, and precious ointment required under the Mosaic dispensation cost a great deal, to say nothing of the very costly offerings required on special occasions, which were frequent. These were all necessary to give the people just conceptions of sin and the means requisite to atone for it. The shedding of the blood of animals typified the shedding of Christ's blood, and the atonement made by them prefigured the atonement made by him. In this way men were taught that sin was a most terrible thing, and that without the shedding of blood there was no remission. Cumbersome as was the Mosaic law, and greatly as the time and means of the people were taxed by its requirements, all was necessary as a school-master to lead the world to Christ.

Consider also the cost of the tabernacle and temple, especially the latter, the most magnificent edifice the world ever saw. Think of the gold and silver and costly material in it. God built but one church on earth that we know of, and that was a grand one. This temple was a type of the church which Christ

should establish in this world, and also of the heavenly Jerusalem, and indispensable to give proper conceptions of the purity and grandeur of the Christian's life here and in heaven. The priests that were employed, with the numerous and costly services of the temple, show that this preparatory work of redemption was exceedingly costly. To compute the cost of redemption in the sense in which it is here presented would be impossible. And yet all this is but a small consideration in comparison to the giving of the life of the Son of God, of which we will not now speak. The redemption of the world was an exceedingly costly work, and yet the salvation proffered by virtue of it is free to all. Truly we are bought with a price and should therefore glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his. This we should do by living true Christian lives and laboring zealously to give the blessings of redemption to all men. It will cost time, labor, and money to give the gospel to the heathen; but in view of the great price paid for our redemption we should not complain of any demand made upon us within our power to send the gospel to all men. If it is true, as the Savior teaches, it will profit nothing to gain the whole world and lose the soul, then it is also true that the salvation of the soul through the redemption of Christ is the greatest achievement possible to man.

XVI.

THE GRACE OF LIBERALITY

“See that ye abound in this grace also.” (II. Cor. viii. 7.)

The grace referred to in the text is Christian liberality. The frequent and positive manner in which it is enjoined in the New Testament shows that it is highly essential; essential to meet the wants of the poor, the benevolent enterprises of the church, and to the full development of Christian character. One reason why the apostles speak so much upon this subject is that Christians are more apt to neglect it than some other religious duties. Then, too, it requires more religion to perform it than some others. A man may pray, or even preach, and succeed reasonably well, so far as thought and delivery are concerned, with but little grace; but to give as he ought, and to do this in the spirit and from the motive he should, and to continue in it, requires God's grace.

Now, much as the Bible says of prayer, that daily and universally binding duty; of faith, without which no man can please God; and of holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord, it nowhere has two whole chapters devoted exclusively to their enforcement. But in this second book of Corinthians, in the eighth and ninth chapters, there is nothing discussed but Christian liberality. And it will be re-

membered that Paul was writing to a people who were already reasonably liberal—at least they were far in advance of many Christians of the present time. Had he addressed his letter to some of the churches of this day, he might have said much more. At all events, were he now living, and were he to urge the duty of giving as he does in this epistle, some would complain and say of him as they do about other ministers, “Wish he would preach the gospel, and let money alone; we are tired of hearing money sermons.”

It was once said in certain portions of our country, “Wish the minister would preach the gospel, and let slavery alone.” But how could he let slavery alone, when his text reads, “Let the oppressed go free?” And how is he to let the subject of money alone, when his text says, “See that ye abound in this grace also?” It would be like preaching on the text, “Have faith in God,” and saying nothing of faith or God. Preach the gospel, and let our sins alone, is what some people desire; and that is just what ought not to be done. What kind of a gospel would it be if all were omitted that people object to? Paul was preaching the gospel when he discoursed to the Corinthians on the importance and duty of giving money, as much as when he said to them, “Dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” That he did make the money question an important item in the gospel he communicated to the Corinthians, will be seen by the manner in which he introduced the subject. The same skill and argument so characteristic of this eminent apostle’s epistles, are seen here: “Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.” Here he calls

the spirit of liberality which the Macedonians exhibited the grace of God, meaning, doubtless, but for this grace of God in their conversion they would not have possessed this spirit. Then he says, "To their power and beyond their power they were willing of themselves to give;" that is, deprive themselves of some of the blessings of life that others might have its necessities. As a matter of course, all superfluity in food and raiment was dispensed with under these circumstances. Their religion taught them to put their money to making things better below as well as to set their affections on things above; for, as the context shows, they "first gave their own selves to the Lord," and having made a full surrender of time, talents, and money, they promptly and faithfully met all the obligations which such a relation imposed. They felt and acted as though they were bought with a price; and that the end of life was to glorify God in their bodies and spirits, which embraced their money too. As soon as they knew of others in want they gave without being asked, and gave to their power, "and beyond." How different now in most instances. Christians often have to be asked and pleaded with, yea, urged and pressed to give to objects they know to be needy and important, and then often give but little instead of giving to their power, and beyond, as did the Macedonians. In them and in those Christians who sold their possessions and placed the entire proceeds upon the altar we have what very seldom happens now.

The commendation pronounced upon the Macedonian Christians by Paul was for the twofold purpose of doing justice to those who did their duty and stirring up those who did not. It is said that we should provoke one another to good works—not to evil, as is

often done, but to good works. Paul, by the example of the Macedonians, strove to provoke the Corinthians to greater generosity in behalf of the poor. We may infer from this that it is not so wicked after all, as some think, to use outside pressure to get people to be liberal. Paul used it, and that in a most telling manner. He felt that the Corinthians needed more of this spirit; and he proved it, both by the example of others and by the word of God. One thing is remarkable, namely, while he acknowledged that the Macedonians had given to and beyond their power, he does not stop to caution against such a course. I suppose he thought, better give too much once in awhile than never enough, as the majority do. A most excellent opportunity was offered the apostle to show up the evils of giving too much; and had he believed that the world needed caution on that side of the question he ought to have given it. Christ had also a very striking example of large-hearted liberality in the case of the poor woman when he saw her cast in all she had; and yet he did not chide her or point out the evils of giving so freely. Look at this case a moment. Christ was seated over against the treasury, and he saw the people casting their contributions into it—the rich of their abundance and this woman of her penury. He spoke of it, and had it recorded in the Bible; and why? Why stop to notice so small an affair as this, and why give this woman such a commendation? Was it not to sanction liberal giving, and to rebuke those rich men who with thousands at their command give so sparingly? Those who want the gospel preached so as to miss people's sins might complain of Christ's course.

With such examples as Paul furnishes in his ac-

count of the Macedonians and as Christ sets forth in the case of the poor woman, and the fact that though they gave so largely and yet were not rebuked or cautioned against doing so by the apostle or the Redeemer, we need have no fears that any arguments or entreaties that we may present will induce the people to give too much. We need not refrain from using the most convincing, yea, overwhelming arguments for large-hearted liberality. Unless it can be shown that Paul was fanatical, and that he ought to have sent back a part of the contribution the Macedonians gave, and that Christ did wrong in commending the poor woman for having given her all, then the fact is established that Christians should give, though it does deprive them of some of the blessings of life.

But Paul used an example of greater power than that of the Macedonians to impress upon the Corinthians the duty of liberality. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." Ye Corinthians know—not as a mere historical fact, but by happy experience, by your freedom from the lashings of a guilty conscience, by the joy of pardoning love and the hope of immortality,—the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, which grace is so undeserved upon your part and so full and free upon his part, so universal in its extent and so impartial in its application. Therefore, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Like your Master, spend and be spent in doing good.

How forcible and conclusive are the apostle's arguments in favor of large-hearted liberality; and how Christians with the love of Christ in the soul and such arguments and examples before them as are given in

the New Testament can give so little to the cause of Christianity in general, and to missions in particular, is indeed a mystery. Many give less than they do to gratify their tobacco appetites; and others waste hundreds in other ways, but give little to missions. One of two things is certain: either Christ and the apostles did too much, or we often do too little. They overestimated, or we undervalue the worth of souls. They gave too much, or we give too little to save men.

But suppose a few millions of those penny-squeezers should get to heaven, what kind of heaven would it be? The first thing would be to take the gold in the streets,—for they are pure gold,—and start mints, and banks, and, as of old, have tables of money-changers; and if they were required to pay one mill to the hundred dollars to stay in heaven they would leave it if they could carry their wealth with them and find a place where there was less to pay. How different from the apostles and primitive Christians, who suffered all things, lest the gospel be hindered. They suffered the loss of ease, earthly honor, and money, rather than be the occasion of hindering the gospel. Ah! how many respectable church-members would rather that the gospel be hindered than they from having thousands of dollars at large interest and hoarding it for their gratification or the ruin of their children, or both, as so often is the case.

Christianity is a system of benevolence. It originated in the benevolence of God, was inaugurated among men through the benevolence of Christ, and is to be perpetuated and promulgated in all the earth by the benevolence of Christians. Its quintessence is benevolence, and how men can possess it and yet be penurious is a great puzzle. Such persons are either

deceived themselves or they try to deceive others. They frequently object to missions or other good objects on the ground of their cost, when this could all be easily met were they to give no more than the Jews did in Old-Testament times, or pay for these purposes as much as they do for taxes to the government. These they pay because they must; but they are not compelled by law to pay to the cause of Christianity, and Christ is put off with a mere tithe of what they give to Cæsar. "See that ye abound in this grace also."

XVII.

DOING GOOD AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY.

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good.” (Gal. vi. 10.)

When Christianity, by the power of the Holy Ghost, so takes hold upon men as to become a living, operative principle of their souls, influencing the affections of their hearts, the faculties of their minds, and the powers of their wills, it makes them Christians, or, as the Savior said, the light of the world and salt of the earth. The spirit of usefulness, or doing good, is an essential element of true religion. It is not a mere appendage to it,—something which its possessor may or may not do without affecting his piety,—but is itself a fundamental principle of it. To constitute one a true Christian, this spirit must be supreme upon the throne, enlisting all his faculties and powers, and impelling him to every good word and work.

To give assent to the truth of God's word, make a public profession of religion, and strive to lead an upright life is only a part of religion. Not until the gospel enters the soul of man, searching out and casting out every selfish principle, and producing in it the moral image of God, making it godlike in character and purpose, may it be said of any one that he is a true follower of Christ. God's benevolence flows without cessation. His goodness is seen in creation,

redemption, providence, and in all "his wonderful works to the children of men." When Moses prayed, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory," he answered, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee." This was the highest and most sublime exhibition of his glory he could make to Moses or to us. "The Lord, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," is God's definition of himself and the exhibition of his glory on earth.

He is still abundant in goodness, and constantly causes it to pass before the succeeding generations of men; not always in the same way as before Moses, but no less certainly. It is seen on the land, on the ocean, in the starry heavens, and in the bountiful provision made by him for man and beast; yea, it shines in the sun, waves in the fields and forests, and is felt in every pulsation of life. It is this which more than anything else excites the admiration and wins the affections of men. No display of power or grandeur of his being which God could make to us would so favorably impress us as this. When Moses saw it "he made haste to bow his head toward the earth, and worshiped;" and so should all men. There is point to Paul's question, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

How strikingly also was the divine benevolence or goodness shown in the life and works of Christ. "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;" and in him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom." "Never man spake like this man." He brought to light many wonderful truths, showing what was in man, thus exciting the admiration and astonishment

of all who heard him. Yet the distinguishing glory, the crowning excellency of his life consisted in the fact that "he went about doing good." His daily life revealed a religion which silenced all criticism, and commended itself to all men. By healing the sick, feeding the hungry, teaching the ignorant, and doing good to the souls and bodies of men, he exemplified the truths he taught and effectually foreshadowed his coming kingdom, which should bring peace on earth and good-will to men.

What lesson is also taught us by following the Master to the garden of Gethsemane, to Pilate's bar, and to Calvary's cross. Why such ignominy, suffering, and death on the part of one so innocent, lovely, and mighty? He could have easily escaped them all, and in a moment crushed to nonentity those who brought them upon him. Surely he would not have endured the agony which caused his sweat to become as great drops of blood, and which extorted from his lips the language, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" had there not been some great lesson to be taught, some important end to be accomplished thereby. John explains it all when he says, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Paul also explains in this language, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

Christ's followers are expected to be zealous doers of good works, in imitation of their Lord; and not until they become such is the end for which Christ gave himself fully accomplished in them. In professing Christianity we place ourselves under obligations

to unite religious development or growth in grace to Christian activity in doing good. In this way we strengthen our capacities both for usefulness and enjoyment. Alleviating human sorrow and saving men from their sins imparts a peace to our souls, and kindles in us an enthusiasm essential to a successful Christian life. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The benefactor receives the largest share of the good accruing therefrom. Helping others is the surest way to be helped, and doing good the certain way to get good.

But are we required to make sacrifices to do good? If so, to what extent? Said the Savior, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." Again: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Christian self-denial is certainly taught in these passages and other portions of God's word; and yet, when really done for Christ's sake, it is simply giving up a small good for a large one, or letting go of transient and temporal good for permanent and heavenly blessedness.

Giving up this world for Christ's sake is taking fuller possession of it than can otherwise be obtained, as well as securing a perpetual inheritance in the heavenly world. In short, it is taking a lien upon all that is good in both worlds. "All are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." This world and all worlds belong to God; and in his presence the Chris-

tian is at home, though he be far from friends and earthly possessions. He is more at home in the line of duty in heathen lands suffering for Christ's sake than it is possible to be out of the line of duty, though in the possession of all earthly good. Doing the good our heavenly Father bids us do, though at the cost of every earthly treasure, brings a rich reward, and should be regarded as a high prerogative rather than a great sacrifice. Would that Christians realized this grand truth. Then would Zion put on her strength and Jerusalem her beautiful garments. Then would the heathen soon receive the gospel, and the church abound with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Who are the men that have been most happy, have made the most lasting impressions upon society, and have guided the nations? Are they the military heroes who have led armies to conquest, or the explorers who have discovered new worlds, or the inventors who have lessened labor and promoted the material wealth of the world by their ingenuity and skill, or the scholars who have added so much to scientific knowledge and mental culture? Yes, these to some extent; but more than they, Christian philanthropists who gave their lives to schemes of benevolence for the good of others. These are the great lights of the world. They have enthroned themselves upon the memories and in the affections of men. Doing good on Bible principles secures both human and divine honors. Worldly fame, human ambition, or selfish motives do not enter into this as they may into the exploits of warriors, explorers, scientists, and other great men who live and labor merely for earthly considerations.

Moses, Paul, Luther, Wesley, Knox, Brainard, Judson, Howard, Livingstone, and many others, will never

be forgotten on earth; nor in heaven, for many will there rise up and call them blessed. Could we have an adequate idea of the exercises of their souls, all ablaze with benevolent feelings and activities, and could we show how through these spiritual light and peace flowed into their own souls as a result of their labors to benefit and save others,—how, while causing the streams of salvation and earthly good to flow into the souls of others, they brought Heaven's richest blessing to their own,—then would we furnish the grandest argument that can be presented in favor of doing good, and one that would carry conviction to every heart.

Thousands now in heaven thank God that he gave them a disposition and the opportunity to do good; yea, that he opened their spiritual eyes, instilled into their souls the principle of doing good, and gave them to experience the precious truth that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." Said a dying Christian, "What I have spent is gone; what I have lost is beyond my grasp; but what I gave away for Christ's sake I carry with me." "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." The periods of the greatest prosperity of the church, as in apostolic times, have been when its zeal and liberality were most active. This spirit gave them a moral courage, a spiritual power, and a religious joy which they could never have obtained otherwise.

It is remarkable what an amount of good may be done in a short life-time by a single individual fully imbued with this spirit. Who can measure the results of the labors of Messrs. Moody and Müller? But

men need not be ministers to be useful. True, this position gives them great opportunities to do good; but laymen may do good, great good. Neither need they be rich to do good. Some very poor people have done great good. The widow's mite has multiplied into millions, and will continue to do so as long as time endures. But to do good truly they must have hearts warmed with the love of Christ, wills sanctified by his Spirit, and lives consecrated to his service. In short, all their intellectual, spiritual, and material resources must be brought into his service. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good." Opportunity we will have, and ability we may have in greatly increased measure if we are fully the Lord's.

XVIII.

PREACHING THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

“That I should preach among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” (Eph. iii. 8.)

The theme of this text is the gospel and its promulgation among the heathen, or, as stated by its author, preaching “among the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.” The language is strong and exceedingly expressive, but not too much so to represent the value of the gospel. Such riches of grace, knowledge, saving power, love, and mercy as are contained in the gospel may well be called “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Had Paul lived and continued to preach and write until the present time, he could not have fully shown the value of the gospel of Christ. It is possible to compute the wealth of the mightiest nations, and perhaps of the whole world; but in the gospel there is a mine of wealth which no mathematical calculation can show.

By a comparison of its value with the riches of earth we may learn something, yea, much of its worth; and the more carefully this is done the more fully will it appear to be “unsearchable riches.” Said the author of this text in one of his other epistles, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways

past finding out!" Said the psalmist, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I can not attain unto it." That the gospel does exert a wonderful power for good over individuals and nations may be seen by a comparison of those countries where it is with those where it is not. Look at the complexion which it gives to their civil institutions, the order and prosperity it gives to business, the protection it gives to life and property, and the provision it makes for the insane, blind, dumb, and unfortunate of every kind. No such provision is made for them in heathen lands; but they are left to perish, or are killed outright.

Contrast, also, the knowledge of the sciences, mechanical arts, and the many useful discoveries—the power of the press, steam, electricity, and the numerous institutions, human and divine, which do so much to alleviate human suffering and promote happiness—found in Christian lands with that which exists elsewhere, and the gospel will indeed appear to be, as it is, "unsearchable riches." The riches of earth are esteemed valuable by men, as is proved by the struggles they put forth to obtain them. Yet they can only supply material wants, and those to a limited extent, but can do nothing toward meeting our greatest need. The wants of the soul far exceed those of the body and the unsearchable riches of Christ alone can supply them. If the wants of the body are not met, there will be suffering; but it can not be very long, as death will put an end to it in a comparatively short time. But if the wants of the soul are not provided for endless suffering will be the result.

Man is a sinner, and as such is guilty before God. And whatever other wants press upon him there is one

which far exceeds them all, and which the gospel alone can meet and must supply in this life, or he can not be happy here or hereafter. That want is pardon. Let me illustrate this. Suppose a man is guilty of a capital offense, and by the law adjudged to be deserving of death. The Court pronounces the sentence of death upon him, and he is remanded back to prison to await the day of execution. Now what does he regard as his greatest want? What would he say to the proffer of gold, or earthly riches of any kind? Would he not answer, "Keep your treasure, but, if possible, procure a pardon for me?" Pardon is his great, yea, his only want. At least without this all else would do him but little good, and do that good but for a little while; but with it he would feel rich, however great his poverty in material things. This alone would bring him comfort.

Such is man in his unsaved state. He is under the condemnatory sentence of God's law, and by it doomed to death. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. And all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Without pardon the sentence of death will be executed. Hence man's first great want is pardon. Without this he can not be happy, either in time or in eternity. And it is in the unsearchable riches of Christ alone that pardon is offered to all. "God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" and the invitation is, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." How full, how free, and how glorious the

provision made for us by Christ, who "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Well may the apostle exclaim, "For we which have believed do enter into rest." Faith in Jesus, such as sweetly works by love and purifies the soul, alone can give the troubled spirit rest; and without this there is an aching void which this world can never fill. We may multiply earthly riches, gain great fame among men, possess all the good that earth can give, and yet the soul will be unsatisfied without Christ, the hope of glory formed within. With this, poverty may pinch, the world may frown, and Satan may rage, but still the Christian has the sweet assurance that all things work together for good to them that love God. Well may he sing, as he often does :

'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live,
'Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die."

And anticipating the future he continues to sing :

"After death its joys shall be
Lasting as eternity ;
Be the living God my friend,
Then my bliss shall never end."

One of the most blessed things in connection with a Christian life is the fact that just at those periods of its existence when earthly treasures utterly fail to afford happiness, as in times of great misfortune, affliction, and death, then the unsearchable riches of Christ meet every want of our circumstances. No condition of life can deprive the Christian of the consolations of religion on earth, or rob him of his inheritance in heaven, so long as Christ and the riches which he pur-

chased for him are his. Said the apostle, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The riches of earth may be taken from the Christian, and often are; but the riches of grace in Christ Jesus can not be taken away without his consent.

To estimate properly the value of the gospel, however, we must do more than show the good it does on earth. We must also know the number of the saved and the value of their inheritance in heaven, which is simply impossible. True, the Scriptures speak of a "great multitude which no man could number," and that the saved shall have "a crown of life" and "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." But as to the number of the one and the value of the other we are left to conjecture, and will be until we reach heaven. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." It is enough for us to know that great multitudes will be saved; and they shall be perfectly happy, beyond the possibility of their being otherwise, or of losing their heavenly inheritance.

Now in view of the value of the gospel, its many and most precious blessings, both in this life and that which is to come, need we marvel that Paul went forth so gladly to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the gentiles? Had he been able to make every man, woman, and child in the world as wealthy as the Rothschilds, and as learned and great as earth's greatest, it would have been a very small gift in comparison

to giving them the "unsearchable riches of Christ." So he believed and acted, and so do all believe and act who have that high appreciation of the benefits of the gospel which it deserves. To give the gospel to all men, so far as this was possible, was the chief work of his life, and the only thing he thought worthy of his effort. Hence his language, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" that is, I will not know wealth, nor ease, nor honor among men; I will know and do nothing but preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Were Paul now living, with our increased facilities for promulgating the gospel and the pressing demands for such labors, he doubtless would be still more enthusiastic to give the gospel to every creature than he was when he wrote the text. Never was there a time when there were so many inviting fields and such pressing demands for Christian activity in this department of labor as now. How closely or near to each other are the ends of the world now brought by the use of steam and electricity. Distance is no longer a hinderance to the free and constant intercourse with all the nations of earth. We can now quickly go to every heathen people, and they can readily come to us; and coming they are, as the 100,000 Chinamen on the Pacific coast show.

God is rolling events together with amazing rapidity. What was formerly the work of a day in travel and business is now reduced to that of an hour; and equally rapid are the communications of thought. Look at what has been done within the last few years. In our own country slavery has been abolished, telegraph lines have been stretched across the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Railroad has been built, and other

enterprises equally great are rapidly approaching completion. By these and other methods God is opening the way for the rapid diffusion of the gospel, and for removing obstacles which heretofore have been in its way. With such opportunities to give the gospel to all, and the vast resources we have for doing this, the church ought to rush forward to achieve the speedy conquest of earth to Christ.

The same faith and consecration that the apostles had would give the gospel to all men before this generation passes away. And did the Almighty ask us why we had less, what would be our answer? Why, with the same missionary spirit that they had our excuses for doing so little would be as hateful to us as they are to God. With the zeal they had for the salvation of souls, how gladly would we go to the heathen, and how our people would pour in their money, and push us off by scores into heathen lands, among the Chinese of California, and elsewhere. Then, instead of paying about twenty-five cents to the member it would be nearer twenty-five dollars upon an average. And then those dull pastors who drag their slow length to their regular appointments to preach dull sermons for a whole year without a single discourse upon missions, such as warms the soul and opens the pocket-book, would have to become more zealous and efficient, or get out of the way for men who would be somewhat apostolic in their labors.

XIX.

CARING FOR THE WELFARE OF OTHERS.

‘Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.’ (Phil. ii. 4.)

To obtain the full meaning of the text, the word “only” should be supplied, which would make the reading thus: Look not every man only on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Paul did not intend to teach that it was wrong for Christians to look after their own interests and wants, but that it was wrong for them to be indifferent to the welfare of others. It is right, yea, our duty to look after our own things, and provide for our own wants. “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” That professor of religion who does not use all reasonable industry and economy to secure for himself and those under his care whatever is necessary to their health and comfort gives evidence that he is not a true disciple of Christ.

Self-preservation is said to be the first law of nature, and self-salvation may well be called the first law of grace. Self-preservation from temporal want, danger, and injury, and self-salvation from sin, its guilt, pollution, and dominion are the first duties that we should perform, or laws that we should obey. And there is

no conflict whatever between these two—that is to say, no necessary worldly interest needs to be neglected to be a Christian, nor need any religious duty be omitted to be a worldling so far as this is necessary to secure that which is requisite. By the observance of these laws, we secure present and future happiness, and the neglect of them brings certain disgrace and suffering. He that does not provide for his physical wants will suffer with hunger and cold, and ought to; he that does not provide for his intellectual wants will suffer as an ignoramus, and ought to; and he that does not provide for his spiritual wants will suffer as a sinner, and ought to.

God has inseparably connected our happiness with looking after our own things. But while we should do this, we are also under obligations to look after the things of others. God has made our obligations so personal that each one is in duty bound to look after his own things, and also so general that no one is exempt from looking after the welfare of others. No condition in life can raise us above or place us below this obligation, unless it be unavoidable incapacity. "Let us not be weary of well-doing: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." In well-doing for ourselves and others, we shall reap happiness in this life and in the world to come. But in what respects and to what extent is it our duty to look after the things of others? The Bible never enjoins a duty, or points to a path in which to travel, without clearly telling us how we may find that path and perform that duty. In the following passage we have full directions: "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them." In doing to others as we would have them do to us, we will not

take advantage of them in a business transaction, or misrepresent them in character, or influence them to what would be detrimental to their interests. If men would always talk of, and exert their influence over, and deal with their fellows as they would have others speak of, act toward, and deal with themselves, what a different world this would be.

It is just as easy for some men to beat others in striking a bargain as it is for some to do this with their fists, and just as honorable to do the last as the first. Because one man has more financial tact or money-sense than another, this does not make it right for him to use it to the injury of the weaker man. Yea, it only places the stronger one under greater obligations to help him. He should the more scrupulously look after his things, consider his wants, and have respect for his rights. Instead of looking after his things to get them from him he should look after them to prevent their loss. It is not right to take always all that can be got in a bargain, the general belief and practice of the world to the contrary notwithstanding. To take advantage of the necessities of others, and rob them rather than to help them, is crime against our fellow-men and sin against God.

The Bible rule is that the more favored and successful are to assist those who can not so well take care of themselves. The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. Where much is given much is required; and if one man has tenfold greater gifts and ability than has another to acquire property, or to aid in building up the cause of Christianity, either by his talents or money, or both, he will be required to do ten times as much. Did Christians more fully recognize and act out the truth that they are not their own, but that

they belong to Christ and his kingdom, and that they should glorify God in their bodies and spirits, and work for him with heads, hearts, and purses, the obligations resting upon them to look after the things of others would receive a heartier response than now.

It is true that in this and other Christian lands this Bible principle is being recognized and acted upon both by civil and ecclesiastical legislators. Our common-school system is based upon it. It makes the rich man's money help educate the poor man's children. Our legislators also provide asylums for the blind, deaf and dumb, and insane. We also have alms-houses and hospitals for the afflicted and helpless poor. In other countries, especially in pagan lands, no such provision is made. Hence there is but little or no correct education; and the unavoidably poor, and the unfortunate, and afflicted, of whom there are thousands, are left to grow up in utter ignorance or are killed outright, to avoid the annoyance and trouble of taking care of them. Christianity alone teaches the duty of looking after the things of others.

With this principle inculcated into our religious system, and acted upon by our legislators and the managers of humane institutions, it is but reasonable that the Christian church would organize missionary, tract, and Bible societies for the specific object of looking after the spiritual welfare of others. The great marvel is, with the Bible as their guide, that it has not done this more generally and successfully. Christ's last work upon earth was to organize his followers into a missionary society, and his last command was that they should go into all the world and "disciple" all nations. And the apostles and their followers clearly understood that the great work of their lives, next to work-

ing out their own salvation, was to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth, and thus imitate Christ in looking after the welfare of others.

When Paul said that he counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, and that he was ready not only to go into bonds but to death for the cause of Christ, he expressed the view which he and the early Christians had of their duty to their fellow-men. When we contrast the hearty, heroic, and untiring labors of the primitive church with the weak and spasmodic efforts of many now, we are constrained to say, How are the mighty fallen! We are glad, however, to know that there is a waking up, and that within the last half century a number have shown some of the zeal and earnest endeavor that existed in the apostolic churches to save the heathen.

That we may properly look after the religious wants of others, we must ourselves be spiritual. A living union with Christ is an absolute necessity to give us the disposition and ability to properly look after the things of the spiritually destitute. We can not successfully teach others to travel heavenward without doing this ourselves. It is said that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." As the things of science are scientifically discerned, so the things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned. That we may be mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan we must be spiritual. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his, and as a matter of course can not be a co-worker with him in leading others to salvation.

“The love of Christ constraineth us,” said the apostle; and said Jeremiah, “Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!” Isaiah, in the deep solicitude of his soul for the extension of the kingdom of God, says, “For Zion’s sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth.” These quotations indicate the true missionary spirit. Those who have such love and concern for souls as to move them to heart-sympathy and incessant labor will prayerfully look after their spiritual welfare.

Why, if the Christian church had the spirit of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Paul, it would not be over a quarter of a century until every place needing gospel laborers would be brought under the influence of Christianity. With our educational facilities to furnish the necessary qualifications, the press to print Bibles and other necessary text-books, our facilities to travel into all the world, millions of money controlled by members of church, and a gospel that will arouse men to a sense of their duty and danger when fully and faithfully preached, what could hinder the speedy conquest of earth to Christ, were all to do what they could to carry forward this work?

XX:

PROVOKING ONE ANOTHER TO GOOD WORKS.

‘And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.’ (Hebrews x. 24.)

We wish in this closing chapter to indicate the means to be employed “to provoke,” or as these words mean, to arouse or excite, “one another” to zeal and liberality in behalf of missions. (1) Ministers should give their people a clear perception of their duty in the work of winning the world back to Christ. A deep conviction that the Lord requires this, and that they should be prompted by religious principle to earnestly engage in this work will do much to secure their hearty co-operation. Without this their zeal for missions, at least, will be spasmodic and their contributions unreliable. (2) There must be system in collecting missionary money. As such collections are purely voluntary, coming from many contributors, and mostly in small sums, a well-devised plan, easily carried into effect, and which will bring the claims of missions to the consideration of every member of the church, and others friendly to this cause, ought to be adopted. Such a plan is contained in our church Discipline, and was devised by the General Conference. It has proved to be successful when faithfully carried out, and ought to be in general use among our ministers and

Sunday-school officers. It says the preacher "shall hold a general missionary meeting at some convenient place on his work. He shall also preach a missionary sermon, and appoint a soliciting committee at every appointment, whose duty it shall be, in conjunction with himself, to canvass the class and community, personally, to solicit funds for the missionary society. He shall also keep a list of the names of contributors, so far as possible, and report the same to conference for publication with the minutes. * * * * He shall also establish monthly missionary prayer-meetings wherever practical in the societies of his charge. * * * Each of our Sabbath-schools is hereby constituted an auxiliary to the branch society within whose limits it is located; and the superintendent, secretary, and treasurer of the Sabbath-school shall be president, secretary, and treasurer of the said auxiliary, and shall report annually, through the preacher in charge, to the branch society; and it shall be the duty of every auxiliary society to hold a quarterly missionary meeting, and take up missionary collections."

This plan provides for a general missionary meeting, to be held at some convenient place on the field of labor, so that the members belonging to it may all be present if possible. This meeting shall continue as long as a quarterly meeting usually does, have as much ministerial help, and be of a positive missionary character in all its exercises. Especially should the speakers have strong perceptions of the great facts and truths of the missionary work, and be able to furnish such intelligence respecting it as will effectually "provoke unto love and to good works." The wants of the world, both in heathen and Christian lands, the work to be done to give it to Christ for his in-

heritance, and the duty of Christians to labor zealously to accomplish this object should be clearly shown.

In addition to this the minister in charge "shall preach a missionary sermon and appoint a soliciting committee at every appointment." This sermon should also be full of impressive truths, illustrated by stirring statistics and facts, and so delivered as to make lasting impressions. The minister should preach as though he believed what the Bible says upon the subject of missions, and that it is so binding a duty to contribute to their support that to refuse to do this when possible is absolutely wicked.

This plan also provides for monthly missionary prayer-meetings wherever this is practicable. The minister in charge should appoint, and, as often as this is possible, conduct these meetings, and by his short, telling addresses, well laid upon the hearts of the people, and his earnest petition at a throne of grace, thoroughly arouse and heartily engage them in the duty of praying and praying for the cause of missions. When Christians sincerely ask the Lord to let his kingdom come, and his "will be done in earth as it is in heaven," the duty of paying money to bring about these desirable ends will forcibly impress itself upon them. They will not pray and sing the sentiment,

"Salvation let the echo fly,
The spacious earth around,
Till all the armies of the sky
Conspire to raise the sound,"

From month to month for a whole year without feeling that they must give something to help it fly.

Another important thing to be done by the preacher

in charge is to appoint solicitors who in conjunction with himself will solicit contributions for missions. To select the right persons, and properly instruct them so as to secure a thorough and successful canvass, not only among the members of church, but others friendly to missions, is a matter of great importance. The object should be to obtain a liberal contribution from every one. A few will contribute all they should be asked most cheerfully, others will soon consent to do something yet not as much as they should, but a large number will give absolutely nothing unless they are induced to do so in the way indicated in the text. All should be prevailed upon to contribute something, if this is possible. The larger the number of regular contributors the more uniform and reliable will be the collections from year to year. It is much more assuring for the future support of the missionary work to have fifty persons give one dollar each than for one man to pay fifty dollars, for the reason that if the one man should cease to contribute nothing would be received, but if one of the fifty would fail to give there would still be forty-nine left, and the loss would be but one dollar instead of fifty dollars. All large contributions should be gratefully received, but solicitors should see to it that the smaller ones be given annually, even if the amount usually collected is occasionally given by a few rich persons.

The Wesleyans of great Britain are the most successful people in the world to obtain missionary collections. This is because their ministers make the cause of missions their own, and have such a plan for soliciting money as effectually reaches all classes—the poor and rich, the young and old. They not unfrequently preach three missionary sermons in one day

to the same congregation, and take a collection each time. Their people hear them gladly, because their discourses are full of missionary intelligence and their hearts full of love for the unenlightened and unsaved. They provoke their people unto love and good works most effectually, as the large annual contributions which they receive from them show. They do not, as we have known Americans to do, preach to their congregations a whole year and at its close, for the first and only time, make a few remarks respecting missions, and then in an apologetic way say, "It is made our duty to ask you for a collection for missions, and hence this will now be attended to; and whatever you can give will be thankfully received." They give prominence to missions constantly, and solicit money for them in such a way as to make their people feel that not to give when giving is within their power is a sin.

How a Christian minister or any true Christian can contemplate the sad condition of the world because of sin, with the knowledge that the gospel is the only remedy for the ruin brought upon it, and that money by the millions is needed to send it to the heathen, and yet be indifferent as to whether little or much be received for this good object is a great mystery. Plenty of money is expended for useless, not to say wicked, purposes. Millions of money are given for war, railroads, steam-ships, telegraph lines, tobacco, and numerous other things which could in many instances be dispensed with, but for missions and other religious objects there is very little contributed. Mr. Joseph Cook says, "The drink bill of the United States is \$700,000,000 a year; and its church-property, all told, is worth only \$354,000,000. The financial loss sustained by the sale of drinks amounts every fifteen years to a value

equal to that of the property destroyed in the five years of our civil war." This war cost our government, from April, 1861, to September, 1866, the sum of \$1,094,000,000, as pay of officers and men alone, while a much greater amount was expended for other purposes in its successful prosecution. This sum would, at the present rate of carrying forward the missionary work throughout the world, meet all expenses for hundreds of years. President Grant said of one of our Indian massacres, "A war ensued which cost the nation \$30,000,000." This war resulted in the death of about twenty Indians, at a cost of over one million of dollars apiece. The Modoc war cost the United States more than three times as much as was contributed in this country that same year for all evangelistic work.

Another part of the disciplinary plan is intended to and will in almost every instance, when it is faithfully carried out, secure the hearty co-operation of the Sunday-schools of the church. These are, by virtue of this plan, all organized into missionary societies; and were the officers and preacher in charge to hold the quarterly missionary meetings provided for, and take collections, as they are required to do, thousands of dollars would be received from our Sabbath-schools annually. More money ought and could be collected from them than is now given by the entire church were they fully enlisted in this work. And this might easily be done. This much-neglected and hopeful field, from which much fruit might be gathered, should no longer remain uncultivated. Were the 173,683 persons attending our Sabbath-schools each to give but five cents a quarter,—and that this could be obtained there is no doubt,—it would put into the missionary

treasury annually \$30,736.60. This is almost as much as the entire Church gave last year. We sincerely hope and pray that the Woman's Missionary Association, the preachers in charge of fields of labor, and Sabbath-school officers in the Church will see to it that all our Sabbath-schools, as often as once a quarter, be invited to meet for the express purpose of singing missionary hymns, hearing missionary prayers and addresses, and paying missionary money.

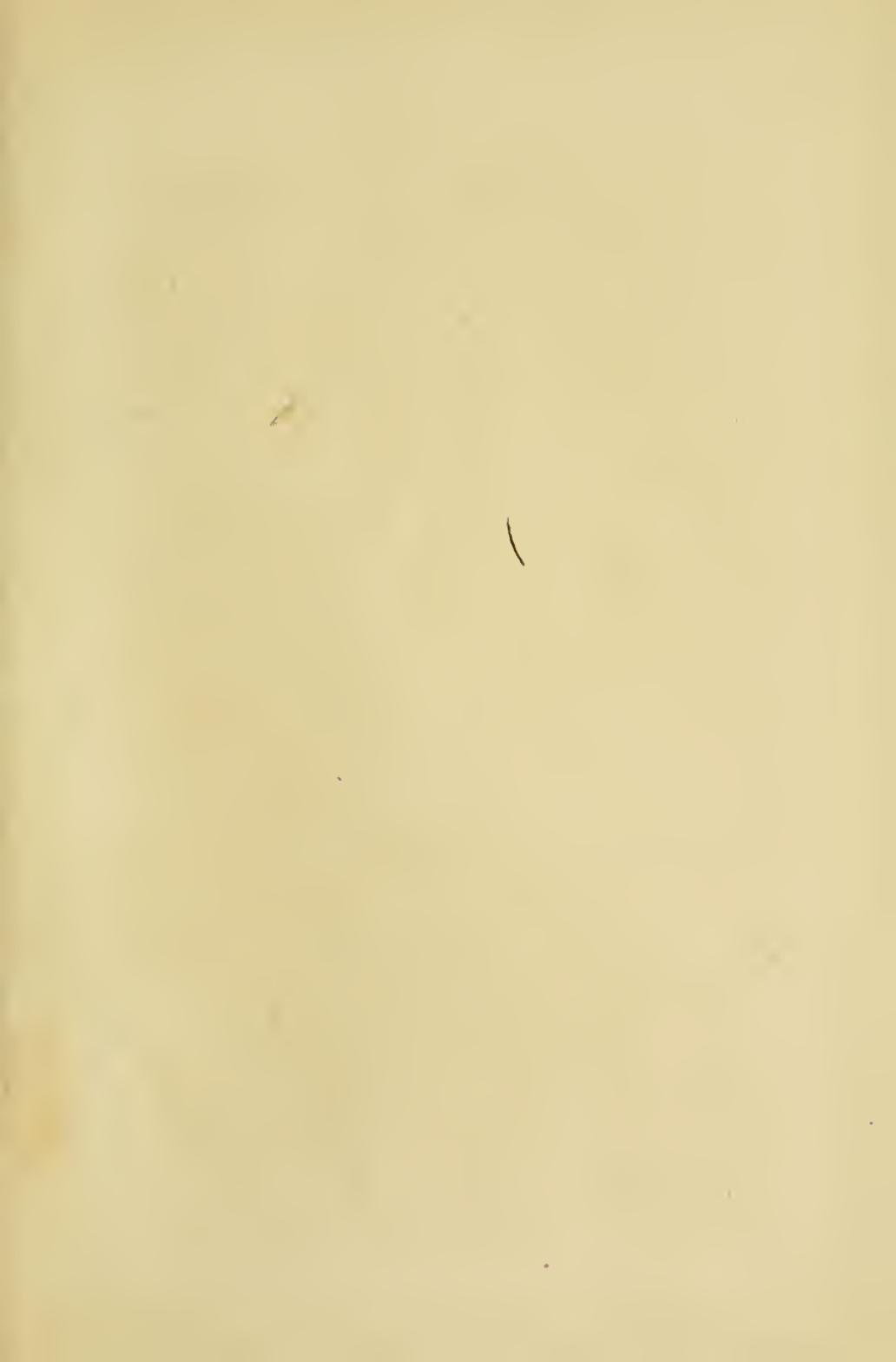
In addition to the large sums of money which might be thus obtained, the children and youth of the Church would in this way be trained for systematic and liberal giving to all its benevolent enterprises. Ever since it has been our custom to preach missionary sermons and take collections annually the liberality of our people has steadily increased in behalf of the cause of education, building houses of worship, and supporting their ministers. It is owing largely to the culture given to the Church by the earnest efforts put forth for the support of missions during the last quarter of a century that has given us our financial growth in other benevolent enterprises. After our people had been trained to give from \$10 to \$100, and occasionally \$1,000, annually to missions, giving from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to building a college or house of worship became possible. Their leaving large sums of money to our benevolent institutions by bequest is also contemporary with the adoption of systematic effort for securing money for missions.

Soon after the Board of Missions was organized, in 1853, earnest effort was put forth to impress the truth upon the minds of our people that the missionary enterprise of the Church was a great and important work, and demanded large contributions. It is a great

error into which some have fallen, to represent that it is one of the small enterprises of the Church, and needs but small contributions. To enlighten and win the world to Christ is a very great undertaking, and demands liberal gifts.

The many inviting fields open to us, the excellent success we have had for the small amount of money expended, the large financial resources of the Church still undeveloped, and the positive command of Christ "to preach the gospel to every creature," demand much greater effort than we are putting forth to collect money. We already have a large force in the field for the means at our command for their support. No less than three hundred and sixty-seven missionaries are now in the field, which is near one third of the entire ministerial force actively employed in the church. To wholly discontinue our annual collections for missions would cause most of these to cease laboring. To double the amount thus secured would proportionately increase the number found laboring among the spiritually destitute. With a membership of 152,231, we ought to have 1,000 missionaries in the field, and furnish them an ample support. Since the organization of the Board in 1853, 78,271 persons have been brought into the Church through the labors of our missionaries, at an average cost of seven dollars and sixty-eight cents per member; that is, for every seven dollars and sixty-eight cents of missionary money contributed by our people, one member has been added to the Church. This wonderful success in the past ought "to provoke unto love and to good works" every member of the Church in a larger degree, and to an extent hitherto not attained by the most devoted.





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