

Duty and Policy of Propagating Christianity;

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Church Missionary Society

FOR AFRICA AND THE EAST,

MAY 4, 1813;

BY THE

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EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF BRISTOL, AND FELLOW OF TRINITY
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A
DISCOURSE, &c.

2 COR. v. 14.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST CONSTRAINETH US.

THE records of every age since the promulgation of the Gospel present us with unquestionable instances of Christian zeal and Christian courage. In many cases, it must be acknowledged, these principles have been strangely tarnished and debased: other motives and other feelings than those which divine wisdom would implant, have too often usurped the place of her legitimate attendants. Men have announced the revelation of truth, but not always in the love of it: they have preached the Gospel, but not always with simplicity: and the superficial observer has been led to charge upon our religion itself the errors and the follies of those by whom it was proclaimed. Whatever of enthusiasm can be detected in the conduct even of good men, must be matter of regret: whatever can be pointed out in their demeanour inconsistent with sound sense and a sober judgment, we mean not to defend. But

when the largest concessions shall have been made, it will still be found that the real disciple of Christ possesses an energy of mind, an elevation of intellect, a spirit of benevolent enterprize, which no difficulties can subdue, and no time can destroy. Such was the character of St. Paul. His great anxiety was, by unshaken fidelity and indefatigable exertion, to approve himself the servant of God. Under every circumstance of suffering, *in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses*; under every change of reputation, *by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report*, he still laboured, striving according to the working of Christ Jesus, which wrought in him mightily. When the synagogues no longer received him, he taught publicly and from house to house: if an opportunity of delivering his solemn commission were presented, whether in prison or on ship-board, by the sea-shore or in the schools of philosophy, he embraced it with gladness. Wherever the voice of Providence seemed to call for his ministrations, he hastened to testify the Gospel of the grace of God. For the space of thirty years, this great Apostle was spared to mankind, a burning and a shining light; and the wonderful extension of Christianity during that period, both in the East and in the West, was, under the divine blessing, mainly owing to his ardent charity and inextinguishable zeal.

It might have been presumed, when such an example of sacred and persevering enterprize was

placed full in the view of the Christian converts, that they would have learnt to appreciate its value ; but it is evident from his epistle to the church of Corinth, that by some of the members of that body, the character of St. Paul was very little understood. They saw that in the prosecution of his labours he was impelled by no temporal considerations, and they believed him to be deranged in his understanding. How does he answer the charge ? *“ Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God ; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. It is true that we are zealous in our profession ; that we occasionally seem to abandon the maxims of ordinary men : we count not our lives dear unto us ; but we are stimulated by a noble purpose : our object is nothing less than the glory of God. And if at other times we appear to be governed by motives of prudence, we are not without a reason ; it is for the benefit of those who look up to us for teaching and consolation : our conduct in both cases is rational and consistent—For the love of Christ constraineth us.”* The contemplation of the great love wherewith he loved us, awakens every kindred emotion of our minds. When we observe him in the display of his abundant mercy ; when we consider what he has effected for us “ by his cross and passion, by his precious death and burial, by his glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost,” our faculties are so absorbed in the contemplation, and our hearts so warmed by the heavenly theme,

that we are absolutely constrained from henceforth to live not unto ourselves, *but unto him which died for us and rose again*; to consecrate to his service all our affections and all our powers; to follow him in his great example; *to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*

In proposing the example of St. Paul as a guide to ourselves, every distinction is doubtless to be made, which arises from difference of times, from peculiarity of situation, and from the very nature of the Apostolical commission. But, if we deduce from these reflections an argument for indifference, our reasoning is delusive, and we arrive at a dangerous conclusion. It is an obvious enquiry, In what manner would St. Paul have conducted himself under the circumstances of the present day? And if we advert to the principle by which his whole conduct was directed, the question admits of an easy answer: The love of Christ constrained him. And can any lapse of time change the evidence of that love or diminish its power? Were the incarnation and sufferings of the Son of God a subject of such inexpressible interest in the early ages of the Church, and are they less so now? Have life and immortality been secured to us by the awful sacrifice, and shall we be less animated by the hope set before us, because a few centuries have passed away since the everlasting doors were thrown open to the Gentile World? If there be a mind

which duly appreciates the extent of its own obligation to heavenly mercy, which looks with a just estimate upon the benefits already conferred and upon the blessings in reversion, there also will be the principle of the Apostle, and there we shall recognise its undoubted effects. This is a principle mighty in operation. It will impel every man according to his rank and condition to further the great cause of evangelizing the world. Those who give, will give liberally: those who have nothing to offer but their prayers, have still much to offer, and they will not solicit the Throne of Grace in vain. Under the influence of this motive, the herald of salvation will again be seen, as in the days of old, encountering the perils of the desert and the sea, and traversing with fearless step inhospitable shores and insalubrious climates. In contemplating the excellence of his high vocation, he will catch the spirit of an Apostle, and display the constancy of a martyr: he will learn to esteem all his afflictions as light, and all his privations as unworthy of the name.

Wherever this disposition shall be found to exist, there can be no question that it will be productive of good: but for the purpose of extensive benefit, we must be careful to give it a right direction. If we examine the history of St. Paul, we shall find that he ran not as uncertainly; that he endeavoured in all things to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit; and whether he proceeded from Troas to

Philippi, or remained stationary at Corinth, it was under the assurance and conviction that the Lord had thus called him to preach the Gospel. We presume not to expect that similar intimations will be made to us: the precepts of the Scripture as connected with the dispensations of Providence are our guide, and from them is the will of Heaven to be collected. In pursuing this course, we follow the steps of a higher power; we seem to listen to his command, and rely upon his faithfulness for a blessing on our labours.

The Society for which I have this day the happiness to plead, is not more distinguished, I think, for its Christian zeal, than for the prudence and discretion, which have uniformly marked its progress. Whilst it determined, with considerate caution, *not to build upon another man's foundation*, not to interfere with the pious exertions of other societies, it selected, in the first instance, that portion of the globe to which the finger of God seemed immediately to point the way. The wounds of Africa were still fresh: her injuries were deep and accumulated; and her cry had long ascended up to heaven. For many ages she had seen her coasts depopulated, her nations barbarized, her children dragged from the land of their nativity to perish on a distant shore, unpitied and unwept. The feet of those who had heard the glad tidings of salvation, and who professed to embrace it, were to be traced upon her plains. But they had another errand than to publish

peace: it was a march of desolation. The weapons of their warfare were indeed mighty and effectual; but they were chains and slavery. The only characters in which the effects of Christianity could be read by the miserable sons of Africa, were characters of blood. Their groans, ascending from either side of the Ocean, seemed to mingle over the Atlantic; and, in notes of deep and solemn import, called for vengeance. What good man did not sympathise with their sorrows, and long to impart to them at least the hopes of a future world, the intelligence of their high origin, and of their eternal destinies? What reflecting man did not feel his heart chilled with fear, when he turned to those memorials of former days, which mark the retributive justice of the Most High?—the history of violence repaid by violence?—of aggression visited upon the head of the aggressor?—of national injustice terminating in national ruin? Could the voice of St. Paul have been heard in that night of legalized oppression, that voice would have told you, I am persuaded, in the first place to shew mercy to Africa. He would have intreated you by all that is lovely and of good report, by whatever there is of virtue and of praise, to raise her from the dust. He would have urged you by the terrors of the Lord, to commiserate her sad condition, for the sake of your own land; to propitiate the fierce wrath of Jehovah, lest he should call around him the ministers of vengeance, and visit upon your heads the wrongs of a bleeding continent.

In fixing upon Africa as the first field of its benevolent labours, the Society has done well. May nothing arise to damp its expectations or to wither its energies! But he, who commissioned his disciples to teach all nations, would now, I think, enjoin you to enlarge your prospects; to lift up your eyes, and to look also upon other fields, which are white already to harvest.

The volume of the divine economy is gradually opening before us; and the time seems to be approaching, when the millions of Asia are to listen to the joyful sound of the Gospel! To this subject I would venture especially to direct your attention, as involving a solemn argument of imperious obligation, and of immense importance.

I am not ignorant that the delicacy of this question asks for all the caution which experience can supply; that its magnitude requires not merely the enlargement of conception which knowledge, corrected and matured by age, can alone command; but likewise that sanction of authority which arises solely from rank and distinction in the Church of Christ; and I cannot but regret that it should have devolved upon one, who is so little qualified, in any of these respects, to engage in the discussion. The circumstances of the times, however, scarcely leave him the alternative of silence: and he will therefore propose a few observations, rather with the design of exciting the attention of others, than with any hope of doing justice to the cause.

It might reasonably be expected that any proposition made in a Christian country for the extension of Christianity by prudent and rational means, would meet with a reception universally favourable. But such is the constitution of society, and such the conflict of opinions upon almost every topic, that a measure even of this nature will certainly meet with opposition. It will encounter the prejudices of some, and the apprehensions of others. When argument shall fail, the appeal will be made to our fears; and the religion of order and happiness and peace will be represented as the probable source of incalculable mischief. Upon a subject of this magnitude, comprizing so many interests, and said to be pregnant with such alarming consequences, it is right and expedient to give attention to every scruple, by which reasonable men profess to be influenced, and to ascertain, as far as we are able, its bearing and its force.

It has been contended that our Indian Empire has no need of the religion of Christ; that the natives of the East are of a character remarkably inoffensive, and that it were well if we could discover in Christian countries the same docility of disposition and gentleness of demeanour. The fact will scarcely be denied, that, in every Christian country, numbers are to be found who are Christians only by profession; a scandal to civilized life, and a reproach to the sacred name by which they are called. Yet even these men, unworthy as they are,

derive great and signal advantages from the silent operation of the Gospel. To what cause shall we attribute the general improvement of society? What authority has chased away the barbarous habits of our fathers, and the disgraceful institutions of the ancient world? It is the influence of Christianity. If we have been rescued from the abominations and cruelties of Paganism, from disgusting rites, from human sacrifices, from authorised murder, from the degradation of one half of the human race, and from the unmerciful outrages of the other; it is not to philosophy that we owe the change, but to the meliorating operation of the religion of Christ. And have our fellow-subjects in the East no need of religious civilization? Are the public manners of the natives so faultless, their public institutions so correct and becoming, as to be capable of no improvement from a Divine Revelation whose characteristic is purity, and which breathes peace and good-will to men? Let the history of that empire answer the question. It is a detail of violence and treachery: it records crimes and impieties of the deepest colour; not perpetrated in the shades of retirement, or in defiance of general opinion; but public and notorious, acknowledged without scruple, and avowed as necessary in the ordinary conduct of life. But for an argument which shall be applicable to our own times, we must refer to modern statements. The testimony of our countrymen is before us; and in whatever view we consider it, the story is sufficiently humiliating and afflicting. O what is our

boasted reason when the mind is enslaved by superstition ! If the light that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness ! It would ill suit the dignity of this sacred place, dedicated to the service of the one true God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, to witness the description of those profligate abominations, which distinguish the temples of them that are no gods. It would accord little with the feelings of this Christian Assembly, if we should attempt to lay open the habitations of cruelty, and to detail the disgusting rites of an idolatrous people. A Christian mother will not forget her sucking child : a christian son will not consign his parent to destruction. The voice of natural affection is not stifled HERE, and the principles of religion unite us to our kind. But THERE, it should seem, that some at least of the social feelings are habitually suppressed: atrocities of the most fearful name are not merely sanctioned by the sacred order, but represented as highly meritorious. The morals of the people too much partake of the character of their institutions, and may be directly traced to their ignorance and idolatry. This is the source of the evil. It lies deep in the bosom of a poisoned soil ; and the whole empire has been covered with its infected streams. And shall we be told that India can receive no benefit from the boon of the Gospel ?

We have hitherto spoken only of the general effects : but it is obvious to remark, that those who

argue from the present improved state of the East, against the introduction of Christianity, are in perfect ignorance of the nature of our religion. Its tendency is not merely to reform the general customs of the world, but to renew the heart of the individual; to change the principle of conduct; to cleanse all the springs of action. It elevates the mind: it exalts and purifies the affections. It instructs us, even while we are sojourners in the world, to have *our conversation above*; to travel beyond the glories of this lower sky, the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and to tread that pavement which reflects the beams of inexpressible Majesty. It teaches us to rise upon the wings of holy adoration to the regions of the blessed, unto *the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant*. Its inseparable attendants are faith, and love, and joy: that power of faith, which relies upon the promises of God, and appropriates the benefits of the cross of Christ: that elevation of love, which carries all the affections of the soul to him that hath redeemed and purified it: that joy in the Holy Ghost, which has its infancy on earth, and expects its fullness in the presence of the eternal. These are among the triumphs of the Christian Religion; and their value will be displayed in its brightest

lustre, when all the temples of the East, and all the institutions of the earth, and all the glories of the sky, shall have been swept out of existence.

In proving the great want of better principles and a higher tone of morals among the subjects of our Indian Empire, we have made but a small progress in the argument. For another question immediately arises, "How does it appear that the diffusion of Christianity is practicable?"

Imagine the same question to have been proposed to the Disciples, when they were first commanded to go and teach all nations. Can any undertaking be considered as more fertile in difficulties, and apparently less allied to hope? They went as sheep among wolves; without any countenance from authority or any influence from opinion. Yet even under these circumstances the Word of God grew mightily and prevailed. Churches were planted in many lands; and the voice of prayer and thanksgiving was soon heard in the regions of Asia, and in the farthest extremities of western Europe. No language could impede the progress of Revelation. No institution of superstition, no fortress of vice could withstand its power. The fabrics of Heathenism presented but a feeble barrier. The sacred stream rolled onward like a torrent, and dashed them to the ground. The pride of learning bowed before the simplicity of the Gospel: the barbarian became civilized: the philosopher learnt humility:

the rich and the poor met together, as children of the same parent and as heirs of a common inheritance. The Word of God, simple, unarmed, and unassuming, subdued principalities and powers: it cheered the meanness of the cottage, and illuminated the palaces of kings. The Son of Man was lifted up, and the nations were drawn to behold him.

That the diffusion of Christianity was practicable in those times will not be denied; and why should we doubt that the same awful power which then subdued all things to itself, should operate again with its commanding energy? We need not to be reminded of the peculiar customs of India, of the long period in which they have prevailed, or of the influence which they possess in almost every part of that extensive continent. All this is admitted. Few countries have ever presented greater obstacles to improvement, whether we refer to manners or to creeds. The whole system is formed for duration. It has for its ramparts the first associations of childhood, the prejudices and the passions of ignorance, the prescription of antiquity, and the impressions of every period of life. There are pilgrimages for the devout, mortifications for the ascetic, and licentious festivals for the vicious. Whatever can confirm the austerity of the bigot, or inflame the imagination of the voluptuary; and, above all, that adamant chain of Caste, which binds down to the ground the very minds of men, and fetters all their energies.

But experience is a better guide than conjecture ; and in reasoning about the future, we should do well to look at the past. The history of the last fifty years will demonstrate, that usages which are connected with the superstition of the Hindus, and which have existed from time immemorial, have been abolished ; that the laws of the Mahometans have in many cases been modified ; and that even the sacred character of the Bramin himself no longer shelters him, in the provinces of Bengal, from the severest sentence of the law.

These observations bear strongly upon the question before us ; but we have evidence still more direct. If the attachment of the Hindus to the prevailing superstition were perfectly invincible, how are we to account for the existing state of the empire ? Of the sixty millions of natives who are subject to the authority of Great Britain, it is stated that about fifteen millions are Mahometans. Many of these we readily allow are the descendants of Mahometan invaders ; and there is no doubt but the ancestors of many others were compelled to embrace the faith of the conquerors : but a large body will still remain who deserted the creed of the Hindus, when at perfect liberty to retain it, and when protected by their native sovereigns. And it is not unworthy of remark, that these changes have been produced within the last eight centuries. If the conversion either of the Hindus or Mahometans be impracticable, what shall we say

of that powerful nation in the north of India, which about four hundred years ago was founded by an apostate Hindu, and consists chiefly of converts from the two prevailing creeds? If superstition can thus trample upon superstition, and idolatry submit to both, why may not the faith of the Gospel be planted upon the ruins of them all? Has the proclamation of divine truth never been announced in those lands? Has no incense ever ascended from them to the Father of Mercy? Has no favoured spot in that extensive wilderness ever been visited by the light from Heaven? Who among us has not heard of the Christian Churches of Travancore and Malabar? Who has not reflected with delight upon the wonderful Providence which has preserved for so many centuries, in the midst of universal idolatry, these noble monuments of the true faith? Little did our forefathers imagine when the voice of thanksgiving was heard in the assemblies of the west, that it was answered by corresponding strains in the east. Little could it be supposed when the whole of Europe was sunk in a night of hopeless and almost impenetrable darkness, that the Sun of Righteousness was even then directing his beams upon the plains of India. In that disastrous period of the Church, when the Good Shepherd seemed wholly to have forsaken these regions, and the sheep were scattered abroad; a little flock was to be found on those distant shores, which he led into green pastures and by the waters of comfort. Persecution and oppression, the hand

of violence and the contagion of bad example have assailed these congregations in vain: and they remain at the present hour an incontrovertible proof, that the vine which the Lord hath planted can strike its roots in the most ungenial soil, and can flourish in every clime.

Should it be contended that the example of the Syrian Church, which has existed ever since the primitive ages, does not demonstrate the practicability of extending Christianity AT PRESENT, we may descend to modern times. Has no effect been produced by the Roman Catholic Missions?—The annals of the 16th and 17th centuries are full and decisive upon the question. Whatever estimate we may form of the principles adopted by these converts, this at least is indisputable, that they changed their RELIGION. But the history of our own Societies affords a testimony still more recent, and perfectly unexceptionable. The Missionaries of Tranquebar, under the protection of Denmark, assisted by the Society established in this country for promoting Christian Knowledge, have during the last century, preached the Gospel in the south of India with great success. Idolaters have not only professed to renounce the superstitions of their fathers, but numbers have walked worthy of their profession. The pride of Braminical distinction itself has fallen prostrate before the cross of Christ; and the pious Missionary, with no arms but his Bible, with no earthly protection but his character,

and no recommendation but zeal for his God, has extorted from all classes a degree of respect and admiration of which the world has seen few examples. The memory of the just is blessed: the name of Swartz has been embalmed in the tears of his grateful followers, and idolaters themselves have paid to it the willing homage of respect.

Nor are we left without witness if we turn to Bengal. The Baptist Missionaries in that quarter have established the fact, that the bond of Caste, even there is not invincible: in that province, as well as in the south, Bramins themselves have relinquished their idols, and have turned from dead works to serve the living God.

It is impossible to dwell on measures of this character without adverting, in some degree, to their POLITICAL effect. We are contemplating a great change in the condition of an empire; a change which affects many of the customs of the inhabitants, and all their principles. "Is there no danger in the attempt? is it wise or politic to incur the risk?—Your empire is an empire of opinion: if the natives once entertain the idea that you wish to subvert their faith, their indignant feelings will drive them into rebellion, and they will chase you for ever from their shores." In reference to these and similar objections, I would certainly admit that if those who anticipate political convulsions from the extension of the Christian Religion could establish

their cause by argument, their warnings would be entitled to most serious attention. If insurrection and rebellion are to be the necessary or even the probable result of every judicious attempt to evangelize India, it might then be expedient to consider whether the period ordained in the divine counsels for the accomplishment of this great work, had arrived. The love of Christ, which constraineth us to promote the eternal interests of our perishing brother, is still in its operation consistent with the acknowledged rules of discretion and prudence. But, in reply to much of the reasoning adopted by those who are hostile to the religious improvement of India, it may be proper to observe, that Bishops of the Roman Catholic, Greek, and Armenian Churches, have existed for many ages in that country without exciting the slightest alarm; and that although Protestant Missionaries have been labouring for a century in different parts of the empire, and are engaged in the same work at the present moment, no part of the evils anticipated has ever occurred. If the work of an Evangelist be performed in the right spirit; if the truths of Christianity be proposed with mildness, and prudence, and moderation, without intemperance of language or indecorum of behaviour, no apprehension will be excited; and the terrors of rebellion will exist only in the imagination of those who fear the wrath of man more than the wrath of God.

The authority of Britain is said to be an au-

thority of opinion. Would it not therefore be politic to strengthen that opinion, and to secure the general affection of the natives? Numbers are grateful for the civil privileges which they derive from your bounty: give them stronger motives of gratitude. Many of them have learned to reason and reflect: furnish them with right principles of reasoning. If you would preserve their allegiance to your government, supply them with an interest in its welfare. If you would attach them by the most powerful obligation, secure them by the brotherhood of Christianity, and instruct them in the principles of your faith. Let it be supposed for a moment, that some portion of the natives had, through your means, embraced the profession of the Gospel; would they not look to this country as in an eminent degree their guardian and protector? and might we not turn to them, under any emergence, with the most perfect reliance upon their active co-operation? The ambitious projects of Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sultan, appear to have met with very serious obstruction from the Christians of Travancore, who always espoused the cause of the English. Ten thousand native Christians are reported to have fallen in one war.

The argument is good even in the mere view of worldly expedience. But in expressing my conviction that the stability of our Indian Empire is very intimately connected with the diffusion of Christian Knowledge, I would take my stand on

higher ground ; and, from that eminence, I would look down on the narrow and reptile policy, which would deliberately do evil, that good may come ; which, for the purpose of easier controul, would chain down the immortal spirit in a dungeon of darkness, and exclude it for ever from the light of Heaven. The Christian should act upon a more liberal and a nobler policy ; upon a policy which tends not merely to please men, but God ; not to flatter the passions of an idolater, but to conciliate that overruling Providence, which alone confers empire, and which alone can take it away. Sound policy would direct us to secure the favour of him who made and governs the world. *'If God be for us, who can be against us ?* But if, upon a principle of sordid speculation, we wilfully oppose ourselves to that great purpose of his will, the civilization and conversion of mankind, our days are numbered and our greatness is in swift decay. No earthly wisdom can arrest the right hand of Omnipotence. Our armies may assemble, but they will melt before him. Our fleets may ascend over the wave, but the breath of the Lord will scatter them. If God rebuke them, *they will flee afar off ; they will be chased as the chaff of the morning before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.* The order of the divine dispensations may be learnt from the history of all ages, as illustrated by the Records of Truth : and they who, in questions of empire, would overlook every thing that is noble and exalted, and from mistaken views of earthly

policy would barter the present happiness and eternal welfare of millions of immortal beings, are of all men the most desperate in policy and the most depraved in judgment. They may profess to be alarmed at the inconsiderate rashness of some, who contend, at all hazards, for the extension of Christianity; but I tremble and am amazed at the disastrous boldness of those, who would fix the foundation of their country's greatness upon the displeasure of the Almighty, or demand in their own favour a violation of those eternal rules which direct the usual march of the Providence of God.

Whatever can be effected by a Christian government and a Christian people, consistent with moderation and sound judgment, ought certainly to be achieved: but the attempt should be made in the spirit of perfect toleration, with a reasonable attention to existing prejudices, and with a discretion which will not unnecessarily offend. Independently of the facilities which the legislature may possibly afford by some public sanction and ecclesiastical authority, there are four modes of extending the blessings of the Gospel, all within the means of this Society, and which cannot fail to produce in time a powerful effect.

1. The first is the simple dispersion of the word of God. The quiet distribution of the Scriptures will offend no prejudices and excite no alarm. The Bible will make its way in silence and in peace; and

wherever it is received in a teachable spirit, it will assuredly give light and understanding. The benefits which will result from this measure to the native Christians alone, are incalculable.

2. A second method of extending the knowledge of divine truth has been suggested by the peculiar customs of the East, and it has already received the approbation of this Society. Public readers of the Koran and the Shasters are to be found in many parts of India: the people listen without offence, and no opposition is excited. If the Christian Scriptures should be publicly read in the same manner, by persons appointed expressly for the purpose, it is reasonable to expect a beneficial result. Some of the seed might possibly fall by the way side, and some among thorns or upon stony ground; but other seed would fall on good ground, and spring up and increase, and bring forth, thirty or sixty, or a hundred fold.

3. But the circulation and public reading of the Scriptures in heathen lands, however important, will not fully meet the exigency of the case: and notwithstanding the very high authority for an opposite opinion, the cause of religion will, in India as well as in other countries, be greatly promoted by the zeal of intelligent Missionaries. It has pleased God in every age of the Church, *by the foolishness of preaching, to save them which believe.* The very profession of a Missionary is calculated to engage

regard ; and if he have any portion of that spirit which rested upon the primitive teachers, the superstitions of Heathenism will awaken all his charities, and call forth all his powers. To men of philosophical speculation he will begin by addressing himself with a due respect to their attainments : he will convince them by argument, that neither the principles nor the effects of their false worship are worthy of the Supreme Being ; that the evidence upon which it rests is utterly inconclusive, and that the legends by which it is supported are idle and incongruous. To the ignorant and the poor, he will state at once the simple truths and promises of the Gospel : he will appeal to their consciences : he will shew to them their need of a Redeemer, and lead them to him, who came to seek and to save that which is lost. And to all men he will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in him. Many whom his arguments do not convince, will be gained by his example : they will observe his chastised demeanour and irreproachable conduct, and testify that God is with him of a truth. They will see his good works, and glorify his Father which is in Heaven. Should we refer merely to the Apostolic age, in confirmation of the mighty effects which the preaching of the Gospel is calculated to produce, it might be objected that the Missionaries of our days are destitute of the powers which were conferred in primitive times ; and that the doctrines of the Gospel will excite little attention in Heathen countries, when deprived of miraculous agency. But

did not the great author of our faith, when he commissioned his disciples to teach all nations, impart also the promise that he would never forsake them? *Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world.* The age of miracles soon passed away; but the minister of salvation still continued to preach Christ crucified: Multitudes were astonished at his doctrine, and took upon them the yoke of their Saviour. It was the influence of the Holy Spirit, which, in the first as well as in later ages, imparted *repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.* It was this, which accompanied the preaching of the Gospel, and completed, by its operation upon the heart, that conviction which miracles could produce only upon the understanding. Whether it may please God, on extraordinary occasions, still to display his power by extraordinary means, we presume not to decide; but this we know, that his worship will be one day universal; that *the Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations;* and that the preaching of the cross of Christ is among the chief means, by which he will accomplish that grand purpose of his will.

4. There is yet a fourth mode of communicating the blessings of religion, which, however slow in its operation, is of incalculable moment: I allude to the instruction of children. To this system the Roman Catholics and the Mahometans have alike been indebted for much of their influence. No single

method can be devised more simple, more easy, more unexceptionable, or more certain in its results: and the spirit with which it has been adopted by this Society on the coast of Africa, may warrant the hope that it will not be neglected by us in the East. The anxiety which is said to prevail, not only in the Peninsula *, but at Calcutta, for the acquisition of English literature, must be considered as a circumstance peculiarly favorable. It has been urged as a reproach to Christianity, that its converts are chiefly of the lowest condition; but the establishment of schools for the promotion of English literature would soon do away even the excuse for this disingenuous and unfriendly charge. There is no doubt that children of the highest Castes would be glad to attend them; and can it be believed that their familiarity with the English language and with European literature, would leave their minds in the fetters of superstition and the darkness of Heathenism? It is by the confinement of the intellect that idolatry maintains its sway. If we open to them our fields of science, if we lead them to our schools of philosophy, if we travel with them in our variegated walks of morals and of taste, they will, in due time, find their way to our temples. The influence of the Christian Religion on the higher orders, will be felt through all the inferior classes of

* See the very interesting pamphlet of the Rev. Dr. JOHN, Senior of the Royal Danish Mission at Tranquebar, just published by Rivingtons.

the population. The circulation of the Scriptures and the labours of Missionaries will come powerfully in aid of this progressive improvement, and superstition will be effectually assailed in all her strong-holds.

In recommending the consideration of measures which are to operate with such extensive influence, I would by no means forget that improvement is slow and gradual. The accomplishment of this work may require the lapse of ages. Neither would I forget that the first claim upon your notice is urged by those who acknowledge, though generally in much ignorance, the same Lord and Master with yourselves. Can it be possible that 900,000 native Christians in Ceylon and Hindostan are in want of the Bible? The appeal is irresistible. If you wish to do good unto all men, do it especially unto those who are of the household of faith: raise them from their abject condition: let them see the real nature of their profession and the hope of their calling. Here, at least, you can offer the right hand of fellowship: here you will find hearts expanding for instruction, and spirits struggling to emerge into the liberty of the Gospel. By the renovation of their state, you will cause the glory of the Lord to shine upon these churches again; and *the Gentiles shall come to their light, and Kings to the brightness of their rising*. You will build a city upon a hill which cannot be hid: its symmetry and its magnificence will be seen from afar; and idolaters them-

selves will be compelled to exclaim, *This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven!*

Whoever will employ himself in contemplating, with the feelings of a Christian, the present condition of the world, and the relation which we bear to many countries widely remote from one another, will readily acknowledge, that, since the promulgation of our religion, there never has been opened to the spirit of sacred enterprise a field so glorious as that which is now presented to the United Church. Upon her exertions at this crisis may depend the best interests of many millions of men, who ought to be dear to our affections, and partakers in our happiness. She has passed secure through many a storm; but never had she an opportunity of fixing her greatness upon so broad a basis. Common policy is calculated only for common occasions. Where the duties are arduous we must learn to meet them like men, who are determined to rise to the level of the emergency. The religion which we profess must stamp its characteristic mark upon all our proceedings. While others are doubting whether, in the mere view of earthly objects, it be practicable or politic to obey the commands of Christ, or to imitate the example of his followers, let us shew by our bearing and countenance that *the love of Christ constraineth us*; that we are animated by a principle which will carry us far above the grovelling flight of ordinary apprehension, and

unite us in feeling and in practice with the disciples of elder days. If the love of Christ constrain us to begin this glorious career, it will also enable us to proceed. It is not a momentary passion: it is not an enthusiastic impulse: it is a steady and unchangeable rule of action; which expects difficulty and surmounts it; which calculates upon opposition and meets it; which looks for disappointment and perseveres, *hoping even as against hope*. The reception which St. Paul experienced from the Philippians was stripes and a dungeon: yet he had been admonished by a vision to go over and help them. The malevolence of the faction at Corinth might have shaken the vigour of a less ardent mind: yet had God much people in that city. The discouragements which may befall us, are perhaps intended as a trial of faith and a test of obedience. The Apostle of Christ has need at all times to bear in recollection, that the cause which he maintains is the cause of God; and that the same power, which commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can convert even the most afflicting dispensations of Providence to the furtherance of his holy will. If such reflections be proper at any time, they are peculiarly necessary now. Not many months have elapsed since we were called to lament the loss of one of our Brethren*, who had long borne in the East a faithful testimony for the Church of England, and whose name was associated and almost identified

* The Rev. DAVID BROWN, Senior Chaplain of the Company at Calcutta.

with all those enlarged projects of benevolence, which have recently been extended to that portion of the world. To the zeal, which was required for the origination of great measures, he added the gravity and caution and experience which were wanted to bring them to perfection; and multitudes will have reason to bless the day which carried to their shores that messenger of mercy. Scarcely had we begun to console ourselves with the reflection that, although one Servant of the Cross had been removed, many still remained to witness a good confession before the natives of India, when another message of sorrow arrived. How mysterious is the Providence of God! how unsearchable are his judgments! In adverting to this new source of affliction, I speak of a Christian Minister, well known to many of you, and dear to all that knew him. If it may be permitted to one who formerly walked with him to the house of God, and shared with him the intercourse of private life, to pause for a single moment over the tomb of MARTYN, recollection would dwell with melancholy pleasure upon that candour of mind, that sweetness of disposition, that spirit of love, that constancy of zeal, that simplicity of purpose, that exaltation of heavenly-mindedness, which distinguished him alike in the privacy of retirement, and in the walks of public occupation. If it be asserted, that learning and ability are seldom combined with a supreme regard for religion, let me produce one instance for the credit of literature, where talents of the first order, and attainments of

no vulgar fame, were ennobled by fervent piety, and zealously employed in the best of causes. His days were few; but, if we measure life by the achievements effected rather than by the lapse of years, they will seem neither few nor inglorious. He has bequeathed to his successors great and durable monuments of successful labour: he has left an example, which may guide the ardour of youth, and rouse the dormant energies of age. *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away*: but let us not imagine that Heaven will want means for the accomplishment of its ends, or that the purpose of God shall fail. Some of the last moments of our departed brother seem to have been cheered by the consolation, that the circumstance of his death would in nowise retard the diffusion of the Gospel. In a letter addressed to a friend in England, at a time when there was little hope of recovery, he observes, “If I sink into the grave, my place in India will be supplied a hundred fold.”

And if it be the intention of Divine Providence to carry on this great work in the present day, shall we stand by merely as spectators? I would call on you to look around and observe the zeal and assiduity which prevail among all sects and parties for the extension of Christianity; and then I would say, not in a spirit of jealous rivalry, but of sacred emulation, let no man outstrip you in the race of glory; *let no man take your crown*. The trust, which has been committed to you, is a most awful and sacred depo-

sit. Let the members of the United Church of England and Ireland prove that they feel it to be such, and act with the resolution of men who are determined to discharge it. If we be true to our principles and awake to the occasion, on us more especially will devolve the honour of building a temple, which may open wide its portals for all the kindreds of men, that they may all enter *into its gates with thanksgiving and into its courts with praise.*

Will it be suggested that our zeal is misplaced and that our labours are premature? This has ever been the language of worldly policy; but let us hear the Prophet: *Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying: This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses and this house lie waste?—Go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.—Be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech the High Priest; and be strong all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts.—*And who shall say that this rebuke and this promise are not equally applicable to ourselves? Is it time for you, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth, to accumulate around you the treasures of the world, and shall this house lie

waste? Expect not that the temple will be built without hands: *Be strong, all ye people of the land, and work.* Think not that you shall fail in the enterprise, or that the God of your fathers will forsake you: *I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts; my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.*

My brethren be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. In such a cause, I cannot believe that you will want either patronage or co-adjutors. It is surely impossible that the sacred flame, which is now lighted on the altar of the Established Church, should soon become extinct. It will burn in the hearts of her rulers: it will kindle the nobler feelings of her priesthood and her laity: it will expand and dilate itself, till, like the fire which came down from Heaven and consumed the sacrifice of the Prophet, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the very water in the trench, it shall have caused every obstacle to disappear. A new race of Missionaries shall enter into the labours of those, who have been called to their eternal reward; and whilst they reflect honour upon our own Church, will confer benefit upon the Universal Church of God. That Venerable Establishment, under whose shadow we sit with great delight, will thus become the parent of a numerous progeny. It MAY be, that the light which is now shining upon England shall be withdrawn: it MAY be, that this and all our other sacred fabricks, which now echo the praises of Jehovah, shall be levelled with the dust: but other

spires will attract the eye of the worshipper in distant lands ; and the Church, which may have disappeared in this island, will rise from her ashes, to bless the myriads who live in regions far remote, and generations which are yet to come. A long line of children, whose languages have not yet been consecrated to the service of God, will be seen to press forward to her hallowed courts,—to walk in her light,—to bend in her sanctuary,—to chaunt that solemn ritual, and to present that same sacrifice of adoration and prayer, which we have, with one heart and one voice, united to offer this day. *Be strong then, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work ; for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts : my Spirit remaineth among you : Fear ye not.*