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LETTERS ON MISSIONS,

BY WILLIAM SWAN,

MISSIONARY IN SIBERIA.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY PREFACE,

BY THE LATE WILLIAM ORME,

FOREIGN SECRETARY TO THE LONDON MISSIONARY
SOCIETY.

BOSTON:

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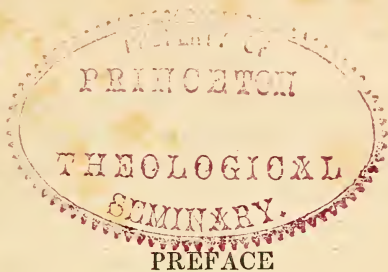
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TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

THE intelligent writer of the **LETTERS ON MISSIONS**, which compose the principal part of this volume, is under the direction of the London Missionary Society, and is already known to the American reader as the author of an interesting work, entitled, 'Memoir of the late Mrs. Paterson, wife of the Rev. Dr. Paterson, of St. Petersburg,'—from the press of the publishers of this volume. He spent a part of the years 1818 and 1819, in the family of Dr. Paterson, at St. Petersburg, acquiring the Russ language. He then proceeded with his associate, Mr. Yuille, to the field of their missionary labors in Siberia. The Russian government, with a liberal policy, granted a full sanction of their

object, with an assurance of its special protection, and with commendatory letters to the local authorities, and a free passport for horses and postillions through the whole of their long journey. They were more than two months on the road. Making the seat of their mission at Selenginsk, among the worshippers of the Grand Lama, they immediately began to translate the Scriptures into the Buriat-Mongolian tongue, which they completed in the year 1828, with the help of Mr. Stallybrass, who had joined them some time before.

The three brethren then resolved, with commendable disinterestedness, to occupy each a separate post, in order more effectually to promote the object of their mission. Mr. Yuille remained at Selenginsk; Mr. Stallybrass removed to a place called Khodon, in the territory inhabited by the Chorin-Buriats; and Mr. Swan, the author of these letters, commenced a residence on the river Ona, where he is supposed still to remain. The letters, however, must have been written before his removal from Selenginsk.


The Directors of the London Missionary Society thus speak of Mr. Swan's letters, in

their Report for the year ending May, 1829 :—
“ Mr. Swan sent to England for publication, some time ago, a small volume of Letters on Missions, which has been carried through the press by the Secretary, and which, on account of its tendency to promote the cause of missions, the Directors beg most cordially to recommend to the attention of the Society, and of all the friends of missions.”

Mr. Swan's style is simple, perspicuous, and earnest; and he has performed a work which was greatly needed, in a very satisfactory manner. Native good sense, enlightened by experience, reflection, and piety, is seen in every one of his pages, and his work is commended to the serious perusal of students in theology, of preachers of the Gospel, and indeed of all the professed disciples of Jesus Christ. If read with a proper spirit, it will not fail to throw new light on the path of their duty; and it is one of the few books, concerning which we may venture to say, that aspirants for the sacred ministry ought by all means to read it, before they determine to spend their lives among the churches, or even the waste-places, of their own country.

As the "New Model for Christian Missions" has been republished in the United States, Mr. Orme's Introduction has a greater importance, than would otherwise be attached to it. Yet it will be found interesting and instructive, and well deserving of an attentive perusal, even by those who have not read the Essay, which it is chiefly designed to controvert. The mind of Mr. Orme was vigorous and well regulated; and though the church of Christ has been called to lament his decease since the publication of this volume, he will long continue to speak, in England and America, by means of his "Life and Times of Richard Baxter."

Boston, Mass., March 4, 1831.



INTRODUCTORY PREFACE.

MISSIONS for the Propagation of Christianity among the Heathen can no longer be regarded as doubtful experiments. The grounds of attack and defence, therefore, have undergone an entire change. Thirty or forty years ago, such undertakings were represented by those who opposed them, as fanatical and utopian; as begun under the influence of a misguided zeal, and never likely to answer the purpose, or reward the benevolent exertions and sacrifices of their projectors.

The friends who espoused the cause, knew too well the nature of the work in which they had embarked, to be put down or discouraged by this mode of assailing them. Their enterprise was founded on a correct knowledge of the nature of Christianity, as a message from God to man, and as adapted to all the diversified evils which belong to his fallen nature. They were fully persuaded that it was the will of God the gospel should be preached to every creature; and that, though they might err in the selection

of instruments, or in the choice of spheres of action, God would regard with approbation the effort to promote his glory, and sooner or later smile upon it with success. Success, come when it might, however, they never alleged as the proper ground of their engaging in the work. They knew that it was the prerogative of God alone to give it in answer to prayer, and in connection with effort, while it was their duty in faith and patience to wait for it.

I grant that if success in such a cause were indefinitely delayed, it would lead to some important considerations. It would induce suspicions as to the nature of the work attempted; as to the construction put upon the revelation of the will of God; and, finally, as to the divine origin and design of Christianity itself. For if any part of the communication from heaven be clearer than another, it is the intimation, that the blessings of the gospel, as they are adapted to all, so they are destined by God to be enjoyed by all, the nations of the earth. If therefore all attempts to propagate the gospel should fail, it would follow either that we are incapable of understanding its revelation, or that something of a very mysterious nature belongs to the designs of God respecting it.

So far from being under the necessity of looking at the subject in this light, we have been furnished with evidence of the most satisfactory kind, that the experiment has succeeded to the full extent, if not of the wishes, at least of the

expectations of those who have tried it ; that in every instance where the attempt has been judiciously made by proper instruments, and sufficiently persevered in, success to a greater or less extent has taken place ; and that on the whole, the results have been so satisfactory, as to present a complete answer to every objection, and the fullest encouragement to proceed.

I am aware that the opinion now expressed is not in entire accordance with the views of all who think and write on missionary subjects. I have just cast my eye on the following paragraph :—

“ It cannot but be a question to every mind—why is it that with such large and varied means our success is so trifling? Why is it that while so many societies are at work, and so much money expended, the results bear no adequate proportion to the cost and labor? The fact is notorious, both at home and abroad. We labor in vain, and spend our strength almost for nought ; at least, all are ready to acknowledge that our success is not commensurate to our means, and that a vast machinery is employed to produce an insignificant result. It would be wrong to be satisfied with such a state of things. The error doubtless attaches to us. We are not straitened in God but in ourselves. In such circumstances, we are bound to suspect our motives and principles. Were we *co-workers with God*—were we laboring in the spirit of our Master, it would be a mockery to suppose our present success the adequate result of our labors.”*

I entirely dissent from the writer of this paragraph, in the view which he takes of the result of missionary labors. The statement, I con-

* New Baptist Miscellany [Eng.] for October, 1829, p. 422.

ceive, to be unfounded in fact, to arise from an inadequate view of the operations which are at present going on, and to be as injurious and discouraging in its tendency, as it is incorrect in its assumption. I am unconscious of having any disposition to exaggerate the success which has attended the labors of Christian missionaries, or to form an extravagant idea of that success; but when it is spoken of as nothing, and as bearing no proportion to the cost and labor bestowed; and is maintained that all this is notorious, both at home and abroad;—it is proper to refuse assent to such sweeping assertions.

There is such a thing as being impatient of labor, or of waiting for its results; of entertaining too magnificent ideas of the amount of our own doings; and of assuming the attitude of menace and reproach, because every thing is not according to our mind. It is possible too to forget, that when a gigantic superstructure is to be raised, a platform or foundation of proportionate extent must be laid. It seems to be expected by many, that the cupola should be rising into view, before there has been time to accomplish the work underground. It is overlooked, that a very large portion of the work which has been done by missionary societies and missionaries, during the last thirty or forty years, has been chiefly preparatory in its nature. Much labor has been employed to overcome difficulties and obstacles which stood in the way of the work at home, or of its introduction into various coun-

tries abroad. The efforts required to subdue positive hostility to missionary undertakings have been great, and required much wisdom and perseverance. To have succeeded thus far in commanding public confidence and approbation, is alone of vast moment to the future interests of the work. It is but within a few years that the cause has acquired the appearance of magnitude, or that the operations have been conducted on a scale at all worthy of it, or of the persons who espouse it. Yet we are already told that our success is nothing, compared with our means.

Many of our most valuable and efficient missionaries have been employed rather as pioneers, than as regular soldiers; their time and talents have been chiefly devoted to the compilation of grammars and dictionaries of new and difficult languages; to the translation of the Scriptures, and of other valuable works, into those languages; to the forming of systems, and conducting seminaries and schools for education; in short, to the construction of a vast apparatus of means for attack and defence, which may be more extensively and effectually employed by others than by themselves. What has absorbed the chief part of the time, strength, and talents of the Baptist missionaries at Serampore?—translations, dictionaries, schools, and school books. The same remark will apply to many of the missionaries belonging to the London Missionary Society, in India, China, and the Chinese Archipelago. In Madagascar, in the

Mediterranean, and in Siberia, a great part of their employment has been of this description. The same observation will apply to the missionaries of other societies. If I am asked what has the Siberian mission accomplished, to which the writer of the following Letters is attached, I am not at liberty to say all in answer to this question that I could say; but I can confidently answer, that the missionaries have been busily and successfully employed; their translation of the entire Scriptures into the Mongolian, beside other works, will, I doubt not, cause the generations to come to bless their name.

To have overcome the difficulties which were in the way of these preliminary objects, ought not to be regarded as a small matter. I am aware I shall be told that these are, after all, but means, however important they may be in themselves. I answer they are ends as well as means. They are legitimate objects of Christian labor; many of them will not require to be done again; and the man who has accomplished them ought not to be considered by his brethren as having lived in vain.

Is it nothing, considering the vast fabric of superstition, idolatry, and oppression, which we have begun to assail, that a slight vibration only begins to be perceptible? Our success ought not to be estimated merely by the cost and labor employed, but in connection with the opposition which we have to encounter. In this point of view our means are really insignificant. With

our feeble energies directed against hundreds of millions, is it nothing that a few outposts have been carried? that some alarm has been created? that the sound of war has penetrated the lines, and been heard even in the centre of the camp? All this it seems is nothing, because we have not carried the main fortress; or at least overcome a large portion of the enemy.

It is not correct, that there has been little success even in the work of conversion, where the proper means have been employed. Are the conversions of the South Sea islanders already forgotten? Both in regard to numbers, and to the effects of the gospel on the individuals, these conversions have no parallel, except in those of apostolic times. But not to look exclusively at the work in this quarter, I am not afraid to assert, that, with few exceptions, wherever fit men have been employed in directly addressing the heathen on the subject of Christianity, they have not labored in vain; and that the success which has followed laborious and persevering exertion will bear a fair comparison, all things considered, with what takes place among ourselves. I challenge inquiry on this subject; and refer for the truth and accuracy of my statement to many parts of India, and Africa; and to the West Indian Missions, belonging to the Moravians, the Wesleyan Methodists, and the Baptists.

Instead therefore of pouring forth complaint and discouragement, it becomes us to adopt the language of thanksgiving, and to humble our-

selves before God for our own unbelief and unprofitableness. The failure has been on our part, not on God's; and when we are prepared "to consecrate ourselves to the Lord, and our gain to the God of the whole earth," we shall be strengthened by him "to beat in pieces many people, and gather them as sheaves into the floor."*

Before the writer of this Introduction had any idea of occupying the important office which he now fills in the London Missionary Society, he wrote the following remarks :

"Considering the period during which exertion has been made to propagate Christianity among the heathen, and the number of persons who are employed in the work, both at home and abroad, it is surprising that some work on what might be called the philosophy of missions, has not yet appeared. The only things approaching to this character are, the 'Hints on Missions,' by Mr. Douglas, of Cavers; and the work on 'The Advancement of Society,' by the same highly gifted individual. But the former of these productions too accurately corresponds with its title to answer the purpose to which I refer; and in the other, the subject is only noticed as one among many. From these works, however, the germ of a highly valuable essay on the subject of Christian missions to the heathen might be obtained.

"What we want is, not an increase of reports of yearly proceedings, and of arguments derived from the Scriptures, to persuade us that it is our duty to engage in this good work; but a condensed view of the knowledge and experience which have been acquired during the last thirty or forty years. What appear to be the best fields of labor?—what the most successful mode of cultivating

* Micah iv. 12, 13.

them?—what the kind of agency which has been most efficient and least productive of disappointment?—what the best method of training at home, for the labors and self-denial to be encountered abroad?—whether are detached and separate missions, or groups of missions and dépôts of missionaries, the more desirable? These and many other questions, require a mature and deliberate answer. The materials for such an answer exist. And can none of the officers whose time is wholly devoted to the management of our missionary societies, furnish such a digest? Are they so entirely occupied with the details of business, as to have no time or inclination left for looking at general principles? Were more attention paid to the ascertaining of such principles, and more vigor and consistency manifested in prosecuting them, there might be less of glare and noise; but, assuredly, there would be a prodigious saving of labor, property, and life; and in the end, a greater degree of satisfaction and real success.”*

Little did I imagine, when the above paragraphs were written, that the observations contained in them might, at a future day, be applicable to myself, and that I might be called upon to account for neglecting to do that, which I had previously intimated persons holding certain situations ought to do. It is easier, however, to express expectations, and to form plans for others, than to execute ourselves. I have found it much easier to devise schemes of my own, than to accomplish them; and that the details of business are not always favorable to patient investigation, and enlightened deductions. But I cannot help frankly avowing, that it was my intention to attempt something of the kind

* *Memoirs of Urquhart, Vol. I. pp. 91, 92.*

described by myself, as soon as I had the means and opportunity for so doing. While pondering the plan it might be proper to adopt, the Letters now presented to the public came into my hands, and, after considerable delays, I have been enabled to carry them through the press.

These Letters embrace some of the important topics to which I have adverted, and on the points which they embrace, supersede the necessity of any further discussion. They are the production, not of a theorist, but of a practitioner; not of a speculator, but of an active operator in the fields which he describes; of one who has followed the path which he recommends to others, and calls for no sacrifice which he has not himself made. Such a man demands to be heard on grounds peculiar to himself, and his testimony ought not to be lightly treated. On every thing relating to the qualifications, both moral and intellectual, of missionaries, their peculiar temptations and difficulties, the nature of their labors, and the sources of their anxiety, their encouragements and discouragements, the reader will find most important and experimental instruction. On these points, and on the duty of Christians to devote themselves and their property to the cause of Christ, I have nothing to add to the forcible reasoning of the Letters. Should they fail to convince, I am satisfied it must be from want of inclination, and not from deficiency of argument, which would not be improved by any thing I could state.

Another important department of the subject of Christian Missions has recently been brought before the public, by an able writer, in what he calls a "New Model of Christian Missions to Popish, Mohammedan, and Pagan Nations." The author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm" was not likely to publish on this important subject, what had not occupied a considerable portion of careful and matured thought; and the thoughts of such an individual cannot fail to be deserving of the thoughts of others. It would not be matter of surprise, however, if a mind, capable of producing beautiful illustrations of enthusiasm, and of analyzing, with admirable skill, the infinitely diversified forms of mental delusion, should fail in an attempt to new model systems already in practical operation, and to recast the whole frame-work of our Christian institutions. The power of detecting evils and errors may exist in a very uncommon degree, without the ability to plan with wisdom, and to create efficiency. Perspicacity is one thing, practical judgment another. There may be profound philosophical discrimination, with a very ordinary portion of sagacity in common things. Newton and Locke had no compeers among the philosophers of their day, but were ordinary men in regard to the common affairs of life.

I am mistaken if this will not be found applicable to the author of the "New Model," who I apprehend has failed as an architect, while he

has succeeded as a philosopher. In this latter capacity he has succeeded, I should suppose, to the full extent of his wishes; in the former his success is yet to be proved. He can afford to lose a little, should he be disappointed; though I much mistake his feelings, if he would not be more gratified by the accomplishment of his projected plan of union of counsel, and division of labor, than by all the fame he is destined to enjoy as a Christian essayist.

His celebrity in that capacity is in danger of producing an impression in favor of his representations and reasonings on the subject of Christian Missions, to which, in themselves, they are not entitled, and which, independently of this association, they would not effect. The author must be aware of this, and will not, therefore, be surprised, that his views should be examined with great jealousy, on the part of those who are engaged in existing operations. If they should think that his pamphlet is calculated to diminish confidence in plans which have long been prosecuted—to cherish despondency respecting the success of exertions which are now made—to generate coldness and disaffection to them, and, consequently, to paralyze zeal in their support—while it affords no ground to expect that the new and better way is likely to be adopted;—he will readily admit, that it is their duty to recommend adherence to what has been tried, and not yet found wanting, instead of adopting other plans, however plausible,

which are not adapted to the present circumstances of the church.

While I make these remarks with the utmost freedom, I should be sorry to meet the author of the "New Model" in an unfriendly manner, or to intimate that I have the slightest idea he is influenced by hostile feelings towards the institutions which are now endeavoring to spread the gospel through the world. The tendency of some of his statements and reasonings may be very injurious, while his object and aim are of the most Christian and benevolent nature. Giving him full credit for the latter, I trust he will give me credit also for a sincere and anxious desire to promote the same object which he has in view, in the few remarks I am about to make on some of his positions.

Before offering these remarks, which I do with great deference to the author, I beg to express my decided approbation of the temper and spirit in which he has conducted the discussion. He has presented a model, if not of Christian Missions, of the Christian state of mind with which the whole subject ought to be viewed by those who approach it, with a view to improve the plan on which they are conducted. He is right in inviting an investigation. Truth can suffer nothing from fair and free inquiry, conducted in the way he has exemplified. We are too ready to be satisfied with things as they are, to conclude that whatever *is*, is best; and to be exceedingly fretted if any suspicions are enter-

tained that all we have done, or are doing, is right. The love of novelty, it is true, is dangerous; but there is danger also in a blind adherence to the traditions of our fathers. If, therefore, we cannot show that plans already adopted are scriptural and efficient, by all means let us listen to any individual who proposes to show us a more excellent way.

On the subject of division of labor, the author has said many excellent things. It has been too little attended to, though not entirely neglected. Most of the Missionary Societies now existing, embrace too many objects, or occupy too many different stations and fields of labor. There is much truth in the following representation:—

“It is perfectly well known that, except on peculiar occasions, the actual business of every charitable institution is transacted by a very small number of zealous individuals, who perhaps are as often thwarted and embarrassed, as aided by their colleagues. Of necessity, therefore, it must be that when a Society occupies an extensive and various field of labor, *the few efficient individuals* are compelled, often at the expense of health and peace of mind, to give their distracted attention, in rapid succession, now to the home concerns of the society, and now to its foreign operations; and these foreign operations are of the most dissimilar character. Placed in circumstances so perplexing, what can be expected, even from the most accomplished talent, and the most unwearied assiduity, but a vague, inappropriate, and almost imbecile suffusion of mental strength over the immense surface of affairs. And what can be expected from zeal so disadvantaged, but a waste of resources upon projects which, though they might have succeeded had they enjoyed the benefit of undiverted counsels, could not but

fail when they shared the attention with a multitude of dissimilar concerns?

“ And let us turn into another street, and enter another ‘upper-chamber’ of Christian business; and there see another little knot of zealous men, distracting themselves by an almost fruitless attention to the very same extended circle of multifarious objects. Again we may visit another, and yet another committee—not each concentrating its forces upon a single specific object—not each constituted of individuals personally qualified for the tasks they severally undertake; but each promiscuously gathered from the narrow circle of a particular party, and each burdened, and over-burdened by the well-meant ambition of effecting something at all points, and something of all kinds. And does this missionary system approve itself to reason? or is it not rather a most ruinous chaos, in which, though pure motives may be very conspicuous, manly wisdom is not at all seen?” pp. 46—48.*

The case is here powerfully put, and the state of matters thus described demands the most serious consideration of our Missionary Societies and Committees. The chaos, however, is not so ruinous as is alleged; nor is the case beyond cure, without entirely new modeling our institutions. There are two obvious departments in every Missionary Society: the raising of funds, and the foreign application of them. They do not so necessarily involve each other, as that all the parties engaged in the one, ought to be equally engaged in the other. On the contrary, they require different kinds of talent and of information; and the less they are mixed up with each other, the more effectually is the common end

* The reference is to the American Edition.

of both likely to be attained. Were this the case, there would be a vast saving both of time and of labor. It is perfectly absurd to find thirty or forty persons as gravely engaged in discussing the payment of a twenty pound bill, or the appointment of a porter, as in the direction and arrangement of a score of missionaries, on the other side of the globe. It is desirable that missionary directors should be men of information, talents, and influence; but it is not necessary that they should be all equally capable of doing all things. The present constitution of these societies does not necessarily involve this absurdity of management; I do not see, therefore, that it ought to be persevered in.

I very much like the idea which is suggested in this pamphlet, that the management of every Mission should be confined to a small number of individuals, known to be thoroughly qualified for conducting the undertaking—persons deeply read in the history and circumstances of the people to whom the Mission is sent; and capable of giving such a direction to all the means in their power, as by the Divine blessing may be productive of the greatest effect. I would not confine the following observations to Mohammedan Missions; I would extend the principle to all Missions. The parties who conduct them ought fully to understand every thing which relates to the field of labor which is occupied, and ought to be able to give a large portion of undistracted attention to it.

“ In conducting a Mission to Mohammedan nations, is it enough that men should be zealous, prayerful, kind-hearted? Is it enough that they should be expert in managing those details of business which are common to a Missionary Society with every other charitable institution? Or is it enough that they should be competent to read sound theological lectures to candidates for the work, or that, in sending out their missionaries, they should be able to address to them powerful and pathetic harangues? Is it, in a word, enough, that they should be just qualified to do that which should be done if we had only to send out a company of preachers to officiate in the chapels of an English colony? All this is not enough. The projectors and managers of such an attack upon Mohammedanism as the present moment invites, should be the four or five individuals who might be picked out from the fourteen millions of our population. And these four or five gifted men should be solemnly called forth by the voice of the Christian public, and should be placed in a condition in which they might feely devote the undistracted attention of their remaining years to the great work. And let the agency of these individuals be as much blended as you please with influence of a more popular kind; and let public opinion bear with its whole force upon whatever they do. We want no snug or sleeping secrecy; but we absolutely need qualified and permanent agents for the achievement of difficult tasks.” pp. 38, 39.

While I agree in a great measure with the author of this paragraph in the sentiment of the above passage, I frankly own that there is not only much difficulty likely to be experienced in finding these four or five gifted individuals; but in the present state of the religious world, if they were found, they would not probably feel disposed to take upon them so solemn and irksome a responsibility, unless in conjunction with others. A very small number of persons would

be regarded with great jealousy by the mass ; while on their own part the consciousness of being the object of this jealousy, and apprehension of public dissatisfaction, would embarrass and enfeeble their measures. As things are, though these richly qualified men are rare, it is quite practicable to make an appropriate selection of individuals for the several kinds of work which must be performed ; and perhaps more is done in this way already than the author of the " New Model " is aware of.

On the general division of missionary fields, were the work to be commenced *de novo*, I think the suggestions of the author would well deserve consideration. But perhaps the substance of his views may be reduced to practice without any violent change in our existing societies. The Jews' Society is already sufficiently distinct ; the Continental Society has only to direct its energies and resources more powerfully to the Catholic, and to the scarcely less ignorant and irreligious Protestant states of Europe. Had the Scottish Missionary Society not abandoned its operations in the Crimea, and in Russian Tartary, it might have employed all its funds and agents among the Mohammedan nations. What hinders that it should give this direction yet to its missionaries in the East ; or if it cannot, why, if we have the means, not form a society with an exclusive view to the benefit of the followers of the false prophet ?

All the rest of the world, unless we would

have a distinct society for every nation under heaven, is divided into two parts, the civilized and the uncivilized. This, is in fact, the great and the most important division among the nations. In regard to the civilized nations of the earth, such, I mean, as India, China, and, generally speaking, the countries of the Eastern hemisphere, one description of means substantially will apply to them all—well educated men and suitable books. We must, and ought to have a large body of well instructed, energetic, tried, and enterprising men, for every part of this quarter of the globe; he who would thus be found qualified for one portion of it, *cæteris paribus*, would not be disqualified for any other. The man who can suggest the most likely method of finding such persons, would confer great obligation on the friends of missions. Whatever be our plan of operation, *every thing, under God, depends on our having the right sort of men.* I do not say we have not yet found them. Blessed be God, not a few such persons have been found, of which the writer of the following letters is an instance. But we require more of this description;—not merely men of piety and of zeal; but men of wisdom and prudence; of enlarged and well cultivated minds; fertile in resource; patient as well as indefatigable in labor—capable of rousing a country by their energy, their fearlessness, and their devoted piety.

The barbarous or uncivilized parts of the world require a peculiar kind of labor, which de-

mands scarcely less talent and wisdom, though not, perhaps, such eminent attainments as the other. The Christianizing of these countries is but one part of the work which must be done for them. It was taken almost for granted, at the beginning, that as soon as the gospel should be received by persons in such circumstances, they would become civilized. This is so far true. They are brought under the power of principles on which the whole structure of civilization may be reared. But unless we are prepared to assist the work of evangelization, after it has begun in a savage country, by all the means which the new state of society, and the new wants of the people will require, we only do the work in half. It will either, in the course of time, lose ground, or it will require all the resources of our societies merely to preserve the mission stations, which have been formed, in existence.

Whether Missionary Societies have adopted the wisest plan in bestowing so large a portion of their means and attention on barbarous, or semi-barbarous nations, while so large a portion of the civilized world remains unoccupied, this is neither the time nor place to discuss. But of one thing I feel deeply convinced, that we are in want of some additional means for carrying forward the work both of civilization and of conversion in those savage countries, which appear to have benefited from our labors. I do not hesitate to say that the London Missionary Society

does not possess, nor is it likely to possess, sufficient means for the Christianizing and the civilizing of the South Sea islands, and South Africa alone. All its funds would be more than absorbed in the temporal improvement of these regions, so as to put their Christian inhabitants in a permanent state of improvement and security. Nor is a Missionary Society the best instrument for effecting much that such a state of things requires. When it has introduced the gospel to the people, it has really done all it is properly competent to, or that it has undertaken. For when the people must be taught the arts and sciences, formed into a regular political community, guided in the enactment and execution of laws, and aided in the embryo efforts of commerce and merchandize—a thousand things arise which a mere Missionary Society cannot attempt or interfere with.

Whether the present state of our country does not suggest an additional means of promoting the interests of the gospel among the heathen, I beg to submit to the candid consideration of the Christian reader. After the day of Pentecost it does not appear that the early disciples were sufficiently disposed to carry into execution the commission of their Master—they tarried in Jerusalem, not only till they were endued with power from on high, but long after. They were pleased with their privileges, and were satisfied to dwell among their own people. It deserves to be noticed, that it was in consequence of the

persecution which arose about Stephen, that they were dispersed, and went every where preaching the Word. Without the aid of such dispersions, which carried the seed of the Word to quarters which would not have been voluntarily visited, I doubt whether the apostles, aided with all their supernatural powers, would have been able to establish the kingdom of God in so many countries, in so short a space.

We are not persecuted by men, but our population is greatly afflicted by the providence of God. The difficulty of providing for families every day increases, and is not likely to diminish. In these circumstances ought not Christians to consider what is the voice of Providence? Is not the world all before them? Do they not profess to be strangers and pilgrims on earth? Why that cleaving to a native land, if it is a land of dearth or of barrenness, though of spiritual good, while they might in another region, as near to the heavenly world, and to its glories, as Britain, provide for themselves and their families, and materially promote the interests of the cause of God? Emigration on Christian principles, and for Christian objects, has not yet been properly tried. Look at America, towering already in greatness, and with a giant's step advancing to pre-eminence among the nations. Who cut down its forests, and drained its marshes, and planted its towns, and laid the foundation of its free and enlightened government? The pilgrim fathers who left, or rather were driven from our

shores, to find a refuge or a grave on a foreign strand. There God has greatly blessed them, yea, and they shall be blessed.

It is by some such means, I apprehend, the gospel must be planted and watered in other countries, if the work is effectually to be done. I am glad to find that attention is beginning to be given to this subject. In the "Congregational Magazine" for this month, is an important letter on it; and as that work may not be in the hands of some who may peruse this volume, I shall here present it entire. I shall only say further, that the writer is an intelligent Christian minister known to me; and one who will not be found unwilling to act upon his own plan, should an opportunity be presented.

"It seems to be the opinion of the best informed persons in the political world, that the state of England calls imperatively for extensive emigration, and many thoughtful individuals, though possessed of a little property, look with much anxiety on families growing up, from the increasing difficulty found in so fixing young persons as to enable them to marry and provide for themselves and their children.

"In the religious world an idea begins also to prevail, that the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom might be greatly promoted by forming Christian settlements in heathen lands.

"I have therefore to propose, that a number of persons of piety and good character, members of Christian societies, (suppose fifty or a hundred families,) should emigrate in a body, at their own expense, with the two-fold object of providing for the temporal and spiritual good of their own offspring, and of extending the kingdom of Christ in the world. Serious persons, from the laboring

classes, might be taken out as appendages, for a time, to those in better circumstances.

“By wise and prudent measures, a tract of good land, in some healthy climate, might easily be procured, at a trifling expense. Matters might be so arranged, that the settlement thus about to be formed, should be subject to such scriptural regulations as at once to secure the fullest liberty of conscience, and yet to exclude immorality.

“A body of serious persons thus going out together, and fixing near each other, would possess advantages of various kinds, too obvious to be enumerated in your columns. Religious worship, education, friendly intercourse, &c. would easily be brought within the reach of all, and most of the circumstances which make emigration formidable might thus be provided against. Some experienced individuals might go out first to select the situation, and arrange every thing against the arrival of the body of settlers, so that every facility might be in readiness to forward them to their place of destination immediately on landing.

“Were such a plan undertaken wisely, and in the fear of God, the good to be anticipated seems incalculable. If the design is thought to deserve encouragement, let it be put into execution without an hour’s unnecessary delay. Let a few persons of piety, experience, character, and some property, form themselves into a committee, either with a view to their own emigration, or the encouragement and direction of others. Such a committee might collect information from the Secretary of State for the British Colonies, from the conductors and histories of Moravian and other settlements of a religious character. Cotton Mather’s account of the first settlers in New England, would furnish many valuable hints, if culled out from the strange mass of matter he has furnished. The minds of many are at this moment simultaneously directed to the object proposed. The thing need only to be begun in a truly humble, prayerful spirit, and it will, I trust, go on and prosper beyond expectation. The writer is willing to communicate, through the Editors, with those who think with himself, that the project deserves attention.”

I trust I shall not be regarded as wandering from the object of these remarks on the "New Model," by the introduction of this topic. In discussing the division of labor in the management of Christian Missions, I think it right to show the kind of division which may be most advantageously prosecuted; and to call the attention of the Christian public to some means which it has yet in its power to employ, and which the providence of God seems to demand.

The following passage in the "New Model" I think objectionable, and calculated to convey far too strong a view of the inadequacy or unsuitableness of the means which we are at present employing. After commending the well meant zeal and philanthropy of the conductors of Missions, the author remarks:—

"Nevertheless it may still be true that the modern system of missionary exertion, taken as a whole, is fundamentally defective, and such as can never, unless miracle comes to its aid, achieve an extensive conquest for Christianity. Nothing less than the exalted virtues and admirable temper of the founders and principal supporters of the modern Missionary Societies could have hidden so long from our eyes the capital error on which we have been acting. We have been putting contempt, not only upon the requirements of Christianity, but upon those universal maxims which the experience of mankind has proved to be indispensable to success wherever human agency is concerned. Our error is so great, and the good sense of the age so efficacious, when once set in movement, that reform cannot be distant. The elements of Christian zeal must presently be dissolved, and recomposed upon a new model." p. 9.

If the system we are pursuing be indeed *fundamentally defective*, then, of course, little good is to be expected from it, and the sooner it is overthrown the better. Miracles themselves, I conceive, would do little to remedy a fundamentally defective system of operation. They were not intended to remedy or supplement such deficiencies at first, and, of course, could not do so were they now restored. But I submit that only one of two things can render a system of missionary operation fundamentally defective—a deficient or erroneous system of Christianity, as the thing propagated, or the employment of unchristian or unworthy instruments in its propagation. Other errors may affect the degree of success abroad, or the degree of efficiency and comfort in the administration at home; but these evils alone can affect the whole plan, and render it finally abortive. The impression which the cited paragraph is calculated to make, therefore, is mischievous; though, I am sure, the author had no mischievous intention in framing it. For, suppose that he does not succeed in “dissolving the present elements of Christian zeal,” and in recomposing them upon the “New Model”—which it does not require prophetic augury to foresee that he will not—it will then follow that the whole Christian world is engaged in the fruitless prosecution of a scheme which is radically and fundamentally wrong. A more discouraging view of matters, or one more likely to paralyze exertion, it is not possible to present.

Such a new modeling as the author proposes, I believe to be *impracticable*, to be *undesirable*, and to be *unnecessary*. It is impracticable without creating a degree of confusion, and involving an extent of mischief, which, I am sure, even the author of the "New Model" would find it difficult to prevent, and impossible to contemplate without dismay. He must be aware of the difficulty of convincing the thousands of persons at home, of the necessity of such a reformation as he proposes, without whose concurrence it could not be carried into effect. He must also know that we cannot re-model the hundreds of agents abroad, at our will and pleasure, many of whom would plead conscience (the most unmanageable of all things by human legislation), in bar of our proceedings, and who, if it were resolved to enforce them, would move heaven and earth by their outcries against our unjust and irreligious proceedings. The author will perceive that I am now referring particularly to one part, and that a leading one, of his plan. To begin a new scheme is one thing, to melt down and re-cast what already exists, and which is the more difficult to touch the longer it is in operation, is a very different affair.

I think such an attempt exceedingly *undesirable*. Its success is very doubtful—its failure would be certain ruin. Experiments, where there is great hazard, are generally inexpedient, as the probable gain may scarcely balance the loss actually sustained. Frequent or extensive

changes are never deemed expedient in the management either of families or of communities. It is not possible to foresee all the consequences which may arise from such revolutions; and hence in general, though I grant it is often more the love of ease than the consideration of utility that operates, men prefer the ills they know, to fleeing to others which they know not. It would not be difficult to pull out the pins, and break the main-springs of our moral machinery; but it might be found impracticable to bring it soon again into efficient operation. It is easy to cut down and to destroy, compared with the labor of building and planting.

For similar reasons, I do not think such an extensive re-modeling *requisite*. I think the faults of the present system greatly exaggerated; the good effected by it understated or overlooked, and the anticipated advantages of the more excellent way too highly colored. Various plans at present in operation require amendment, and they are susceptible of it, without admitting that they are fundamentally defective, or requiring that the whole frame-work should be taken to pieces. To this extent, I think, some of the author's views call for attentive consideration, and will not, I trust, be entirely lost, though his main object should fail.

I apprehend this ingenious writer attaches rather more importance than is correct, to what he calls *a peculiarity of means*, which he seems to think must be nicely studied in every case in

which we send the gospel to a people. Now, without disputing the general principle, that the means must be adapted to the end, I conceive that we may be greatly misled by it, if we adopt human views of adaptation as a main principle in our attempts to evangelize the world. It would bring the doctrine of expediency into operation to a far greater extent than has ever yet been the case. It would reduce the advancement of the kingdom of God very much to a thing of human calculation. I cannot think that the appropriateness of the agent, or of the means, have been hitherto altogether neglected. Every man has not been thought qualified for every place, or for every kind of employment. The work has not been carried on so much at random as our author supposes; errors and faults have been committed, but all has not been error and absurdity. The wisdom which selected and sent forth Henry Martyn, or William Carey, or Robert Morrison, and all missionary wisdom has not been entirely expended upon them, should not be forgotten in the glare or splendor of a favorite scheme, or in the zeal to censure that which is far from perfect.

On another point also, I venture to suggest my conviction, that the author has far too lofty ideas of what may be effected by an extensive plan, whose wisdom and energy would be demonstrable to all the world. He seems to think, that if there were no fundamental lack of this nature, that no doubt could be entertained of its

certain and universal success. I trust I shall never be an advocate for evil or imperfection, or stand in the way of adopting any plan which comes recommended by Scripture, or by its obvious utility. Yet I must avow my belief, that the genius and design of Christianity are not favorable to this view of its propagation. In general, the more of man that appears in the work, the less there is of God. The whole history of its diffusion, hitherto, has not reflected great honor on the instruments or means employed. Its success in any country, hitherto, will not justify the Christian church in saying, "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent." Here, as in other departments of his great dispensation, the Lord of Hosts seems to have purposed to stain the pride of all human glorying, and to bring into contempt the things which are most esteemed among men. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, have been employed in calling others to the knowledge of the truth. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh may glory in his presence."

I am fully aware that this mode of reasoning is liable to abuse, and that we are not to defend

our folly or imprudence, by reference to the means which God sometimes makes use of. But when Christian means for the diffusion of the gospel are represented as fundamentally defective, because they are imperfect, or have been unwisely employed ; and when it is proposed to supersede them by a magnificent scheme of human framing, it is proper to revert to the nature and genius of that system which we are engaged in propagating.

One great object of the pamphlet which has called forth these remarks, is to establish the importance and necessity of placing all the exertions and institutions of a missionary character, under one great episcopal confederacy ; the benefits of which, the author conceives, are almost demonstrable. Yet I have not observed that he has any where stated the precise nature of the plan which should in such a case be adopted, unless the following paragraph can be considered as containing it :—

“ We assume the supposition that, with some few and small exceptions, the forms and ritual of the English Church are fixed upon as those which, with least inconvenience, might be sent abroad by a United Missionary Society. It remains then to ask the several classes of Dissenters how much of compromise or concession would actually be required of them in giving their support to such a plan.” p. 115.

Now surely such a person as the writer of the “ New Model ” cannot want to be informed, that the difference between the Church and the

Dissenters, does not merely respect the forms and ritual of the English Church. The mere adoption of these, he cannot imagine, would go a great way to convert the heathen, or even to prove that there is a substantial union among the friends of Christianity. If he proposes to carry the union further—that all missionaries must be ordained by the Bishops of the Church of England, profess their assent and consent to all that is contained in the Articles and Liturgy of the Church, and that the societies generally shall be subject to episcopal rule and government; he cannot be serious in expecting that we are prepared for such a state of things as this, or that there is any human probability the time will ever come, when the Christian church will submit to it. Yet any thing less than this would not answer, as far as I can conjecture, the author's views. He speaks, but with amazing tenderness for the scruples and feelings of church-men, of their “setting an example of forbearance, by admitting a few modifications, or retrenchments, into the forms abroad;” and of their doing this, “not so much to satisfy their dissenting brethren, as attending to hints and acknowledgments advanced by pious church-men.” He appeals to them, whether they ought to contend thus far for “*an indifferent particle, a worthless particle,*” to gratify “the wishes or weaknesses of their brethren.” Truly, if there is no contest among us, except about indifferent and worthless particles, the controversy must be

a very indifferent and worthless affair altogether, and the sooner that it is ended the better.

If he would carry his "New Model" of episcopacy a little farther than he has thought it right to express; if it is not, after all, the entire system of the Church of England he would send abroad, but some improvement or modification of it, then I submit, the scheme, so far from producing unity, would create another division; a new party would be formed, neither church nor dissent, having in all probability some of the imperfections, as well as some of the good qualities of both. Instead, therefore, of this new model producing extensive and combined union and co-operation, presenting a glorious mass of harmonious principle and united exertion, it would only add another section to the already divided, and as the author imagines, conflicting hosts.

The grounds on which this claim is put forth on behalf of the church, are not the more scriptural nature of its forms or discipline; but from its constituting the majority in this country, and possessing various other advantages, he argues the point should be conceded to it. On this subject the following passage occurs:—

"The sound members of the Established Church, the men—clergy and laity, who profess the doctrine of the martyrs, the saints, the sages of the English reformation, stand certainly distinguished among the professors of the same faith, if not by number, yet by several signal pre-eminences. To them (generally) belongs the visible advantage of *secular* precedency. With them are rank and

fortune ; gifts which acceptably may be laid at the feet of the King of kings. Theirs are the benefits, inestimable, of thorough education—an advantage which the Lord has in every age vouchsafed to make use of when he has had eminent public services in hand. By them, almost exclusively, is enjoyed the honor of enduring something more like a real persecution from the world, than has been suffered in England a long while by any class of Christians. And may it not be added, that the pious members of the Established Church enjoy at the present moment, by *eminence*, that influence of the Holy Spirit from which spring seriousness of temper, simplicity of faith, and purity of morals ; and which moreover is ordinarily conferred upon those who are in training for peculiar sufferings or services ?

“ These distinctions give to the body of enlightened Churchmen a visible claim to the honor of taking the lead in any new and important measures in which the interests of Christianity at large may be involved. An alternative not to be evaded is before these persons ;—they must either take up the part which heaven assigns them, or lose rank in front of the church universal.” pp. 149, 150.

On this paragraph, were I writing, like the author of the “ New Model,” under a mask, I should be tempted to offer some strictures ; I consider it objectionable in principle, and incorrect in fact. Comparisons of such a description are odious ; they either savor of pride, or they provoke to its exercise, and are by no means calculated to promote either the cause of religion, or of Christian union. If the author expects that union will be accomplished by the admission of such statements, I am afraid he has little acquaintance with the parties who are expected to make the sacrifices. To make sacrifice to principle, and to a sense of duty, every Christian

ought to consider his honor ; but to bow down to a new system of expediency, the necessity of which is not apparent, and which cannot be adopted but by a compromise of principle and consistency, is too much to require, and what would be dishonorable to do.

On Dissenters the subject is urged in the following paragraph :—

“ There might even be adduced another reason of the proposed concession, which Churchmen, without discredit, might urge, and of which Dissenters might, with honor to themselves, acknowledge the force.—Is it not, by usage universal, the custom for lighter carriages to swerve from their line of road, in favor of such as could not, without difficulty or peril, pull out of their rut?—Do the Dissenters pride themselves on their freedom from the restraints, entanglements, and burdens, of statutes ecclesiastical?—do they glory in spurning human enactments?—do they abhor to link religion with secular interests?—do they rejoice to admit no forms which, as individuals, they have no power to revise or refuse?—then let them, on this most worthy occasion, and on the loud call of pagan misery, use their boasted liberty for the best imaginable purpose. Now let it be their glory and their honorable boast that, when the advancement of our common Christianity was in question, they *could* and they *did* lay their several preferences on the altar of charity. Is there a triumph to be won on the field of theological strife that can equal in true brilliancy the one that would be obtained by such a concession, prompted by such a motive? Scarcely ought the glory of martyrdom to rank above it:—an offering this—grateful in the court of heaven beyond the fumes of very much incense!” pp. 111, 112.

I am at a loss to know, whether the author is in jest or earnest, in this singular mode of put-

ting the matter before Dissenters. They are referred to as glorying in their liberty, in their freedom from secular entanglements and other things. All such glorying is vain. But can this writer be serious in saying to them, "Gentlemen, you boast of the enjoyment of freedom from the restraints, entanglements, and burdens, which Christ has not imposed, and which man ought not to impose; will you show your love of liberty, and the high-mindedness which the air of freedom generates, by consenting to become bound? 'You abhor to link religion with secular interests;' evince the sincerity of your abhorrence, by becoming part and parcel of a secular system. You admit no forms of human device in your religion; show your spirituality and regard for the authority of God, by submitting to the authority of man." This is the meaning of the proposition when reduced to plain language; and this renunciation of Christian liberty, and submission to restraint, are supposed to be required for the conversion of the world, and to be the likely means of promoting it—magnified to the rank of martyrdom, and converted into fumes of incense most acceptable to God. Dissenters, I have no doubt, will ever be ready to lay their *preferences* on the altar of charity. They have done so often. But it is too much to require them to lay their *principles*, and nothing less than a sacrifice of principle is required by the above demand. This would not be a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God.

But what are the grounds on which this demand is made on the various parties which compose the Christian world? Has the author shown that there is such a collision among them in their attempts at propagating the gospel, that they are thwarting and ruining one another? Have they forgotten their common work, and begun to fight with each other at home, or to contend with one another, instead of the common enemy, abroad? Is their time spent in trying which shall supplant the other in public estimation, or secure the glory of conquests that do not belong to them? No such thing. The author seems to admit that there is a large portion of good feeling and cordiality existing among the several battalions of the one army of Christ. It is so, I believe, in fact; there is no jealousy, clashing, or counter-working. It is acknowledged that the conduct of Christians at home, is strikingly illustrative of this substantial union. We have got the spirit and the principle of union, but we want the livery, the uniform of one party. It is not enough to swear allegiance to the cross, and to march as one man under its banner; all this will avail little, unless we adopt the facings, and adorn ourselves with the epaulets, of a human leader. To be successful, we must submit to a new act of uniformity.

A more satisfactory illustration of the actual unity which exists among the missionaries abroad, could not be furnished, than what is contained in the following paragraph. I believe

the author to be perfectly just in his supposition ; but what then becomes of his argument ? If such a degree of union already exists, why not let WELL alone ?

“ I think I could engage to bring home from India, or from Africa, a bundle of sermons, and expositions, and private conversations, taken verbatim from our missionaries of various denominations ; and after expunging, perhaps, here and there a phrase, offer the collection to the Christian world, and challenge the several sects to claim their own out of the mass. Mistakes much more improbable have often been fallen into than that, for example, of the Congregationalist, who, in looking over such a parcel, should lay claim to the discourses of the Church Missionary ; while a Churchman, perhaps, would challenge the sermon of a Dissenter ; the Wesleyan those of the Baptist ; and possibly the Baptist might lay his hand on the instructions of a teacher who sprinkles rather than dip ! Thus it would appear that the very opinions which, at vast cost, and extreme injury to the great cause, we have shipped off to China, or the Pacific, are so unsubstantial or evanescent, that we cannot recognize them when again brought back to us. For what valuable consideration is it then, that we are dividing our efforts till they become feeble and inefficient ? For what are we putting contempt upon Christianity in the sight of the profane at home, and of heathens abroad ? For what are we stretching our differences from one side of the globe to the other ? For what are we putting in peril the conversion of the world at this auspicious moment, when Heaven has loudly called us to the work ? We are submitting to all this damage, and incurring all this hazard, and putting all this dishonor upon the gospel, for the perpetuation of opinions, which, in fact, we find it hard to preserve from evaporation ere they have crossed the line !” pp. 73, 74.

On the latter part of this passage, I beg to remind the author, that he has not shown that

our efforts are either feeble or inefficient; that we are putting contempt on Christianity either at home or abroad; that we are stretching our differences across the globe, or periling the conversion of the world. All this is the phantom of his own imagination, conjured up to frighten women and children.

The author proposes a scheme of reconciliation to the various parties which are at present engaged in the work of evangelizing the heathen. Moravians, Methodists, Independents, and Baptists, are severally addressed, entreated to renounce their respective costume, and to assume the common garb of Episcopacy. He finds it very difficult to manage our Baptist brethren. The rough garment of John the dipper is not to be smoothed down: he tries hard, is sometimes gentle, and sometimes severe; but he cannot manage his bristly coat; he is obliged to let him go on in his own way, with the following apology for his untoward and resolute adherence to his schismatic course.

“ But if *this* course cannot—must not be pursued, then the alternative which lies before our Baptist brethren is precisely that which common sense, not to say Christian humility, prescribes.—Let them be content to set before their converts the simple fact, in some such manner as this—‘ There has long been carried on a dispute among sincere Christians relative both to the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism, and to the proper subject of the rite. *We* account for the existence of this strange and unhappy misunderstanding, not by granting that any impenetrable obscurity rests upon the terms in which the Lord has made known his will in these particulars; but

by supposing that a superstitious departure from the apostolic practice took place in a very early age, and gained universal credit, and has possessed itself so firmly of the minds of the generality of Christians, that they are unable to free themselves from the illusion, or to perceive the force of the contrary evidence, which, to *us* appears in a light perfectly convincing. We look forward to the time when this error shall be dissipated, and when the Christian law of baptism shall be understood by our brethren, as it is by us. Meanwhile, as you see, we are far from imputing to those who differ from us, any contumacious obstinacy, or guilty persistence in error, or indeed any motive inconsistent with the genuineness of the Christian character. We deplore the mistake which, *as we think*, they have fallen into; but we do not love them the less on account of it; on the contrary, we respect their virtues, not less than as if they thought with us: we cultivate personal friendship with them; we hold with them *undisturbed Church communion*; we join hands with them heartily in every effort to do good; and even more than this;—in order that we may put no hindrance in the way of the measures used for the spread of the gospel, we consent to do and to say *rather less* and *rather more*, than we should, if acting simply on our own convictions, without regard to the opinion of others.

“If once this tone of reasonable moderation and of Christian simplicity were taken;—and I am reluctant to believe that any other would be assumed; then, a diversity of opinion and practice would cease to be a great evil; and means of accommodation might readily be devised. Baptist teachers, wherever they might be called to labor, would enjoy the liberty which belongs to every Christian, to set forth, in charitable terms, and on proper occasions, the grounds of their peculiar opinions; and they, and those converts who might be convinced by their arguments, would be free, individually, to abstain from any practice which they think unwarranted by Scripture, and to observe any ceremonial which they think of divine authority. This extent of liberty could generate no mischief within a Church where common sense and Christian charity preside.” pp. 127—130.

Here I humbly submit that the author has given up his cause. If the apology now presented would avail for a Baptist, why not for a Moravian, a Presbyterian, an Independent, or a Methodist? On what grounds of Christian justice or forbearance is a Baptist to be entitled to a plea which shall be valid in his case, but irrelevant in every other? Why this vast charity and gentleness in reference to one party, and the language of severity to others? If in reference to them it is admitted, that were such a tone of moderation and simplicity adopted, “diversity of opinion and practice *would cease to be a great evil,*” then I contend it must be no less applicable to others. I will go farther; the “moderation and simplicity” exist—they are the spirit and principle, so far as I can judge, of all the existing societies for the propagation of the gospel, with the exception of certain institutions, which, though it may be offensive to the author of the “New Model,” he must be told, belong, exclusively, to the order under which he would wish us all henceforth to rank. [I shall not be supposed to refer to the Church Missionary Society.] I believe the moderation and simplicity referred to, belong to the workmen abroad as well as to the workmen at home. For what then is the author contending?—The veriest shadow of a shade.

On one point more I must remark—the representation of the fundamental principle of the London Missionary Society. After stating that

principle correctly, and referring to the practice of the society, which he supposes sends out only Independents, which is not altogether the case; and even in the extent to which it does, it acts from necessity, not from choice; he says,—

“It is not then true, either that the London Missionary Society sends abroad *no* form of Christianity, or that it sends indiscriminately and at random, this form and that. The practice of the society must be deemed the best interpreter of its professed principle; and this principle we are compelled to understand as meaning simply—that forms and modes are, in the esteem of the society, things of very inferior importance; and that if it can but diffuse the blessings of the gospel, it cares not at all, or cares little, whether the Christianity it propagates assume the garb of Presbyterianism, of Independency, or of Episcopacy.” pp. 117, 118.

The fundamental principle of the society is not intended to convey any such idea of the regardlessness of the parties composing it of forms and modes. It is intended to secure and guarantee *the right of private judgment to all who belong to it, both at home and abroad*. Its object is to secure co-operation, without compromise;—the most enlarged and united liberality, without sacrifice of principle. It has gained its object; and its principle is as inviolate at this moment as it was at the beginning. The author asks,—

“Has not the society always invited favor and aid from serious persons of all denominations, on the broad and no doubt sincere profession, that its object is much larger than sectarianism of any sort? Has it not, in order to win universal concurrence, formally and solemnly re-

nounced the exclusive and sinister designs of party? Has it not virtually given to the world a pledge that nothing should be done under its auspices which might fairly shock the peculiar opinions of any who profess the same great doctrine of salvation?" p. 118.

I answer, Yes, it has done all this, truly and sincerely; and I trust the day is far distant when it shall cease to act in this manner, and to place before the world its noble and catholic principle. The author goes on—

“The London Missionary Society has always, and with marked respect, and even solicitude, invited aid from the clergy and lay members of the Established Church; and in so doing has tacitly acknowledged that there exists no such difference of opinion or practice between itself and them, as must imply a forfeiture of consistency on their part in bestowing upon it their good wishes, their prayers, their eloquence, and their money. In other words, the London Missionary Society, as a body, seeks and desires to accomplish nothing among the heathen which a consistent churchman may not approve of and promote.

“This is assuredly a truly catholic profession, and it were extremely uncandid to insinuate that there lurks under it any sinister purpose of sectarianism; or that it is not founded upon a *perfect mutuality of feeling*; or that there exists any reluctance to follow the ‘Fundamental Principle’ wherever it may lead. We are, I say, forbidden to suppose that the society would, for a moment, hesitate to throw the whole amount of its means into the chest of the Church of England—if once convinced that, in so doing, it would more effectually than in any other mode, promote the one and only object it has in view—the spread of the gospel abroad.” pp. 119, 120.

The society does not, nor ever has done any thing in its corporate capacity which any Christian may not approve and promote. No sinister

purpose of sectarianism lurks under its catholic profession ; nor is there any reluctance to follow the fundamental principle, wherever it may lead. For that very reason, the *society* never can throw its means into the chest of the Church of England. It would then cease to be a catholic, and become a sectarian society ; its fundamental principle being violated, the society would be dissolved ; faith would be broken with its Missionaries, and with all who have intrusted their property to its management.

We live in an age of enterprize and discovery ; schemes and projects of all sorts are continually obtruding themselves on public attention, and are advocated with various ability and zeal. "The March of Intellect" we cannot expect should confine its movements to the arts and sciences ; we may expect to find it in religion, and in religious projects also. It is impossible to hear daily of steam-ships for traversing the seas, of steam-carriages for wheeling along the roads, with a velocity which is to leave the wind behind ; of power-looms by which a few manufactories may supply the world with cloth ; and of gas-works which furnish, by distillation, a metropolis with ten thousand lights, without congratulating ourselves that we live in such an age. The influence of such circumstances on our religious opinions and reasonings, is likely to be considerable. It sets ingenuity and imagination to work. We become tired of what is old ;—it is heavy, lumbering, unsatisfactory ;

things must be done on new principles and on a different scale. Hence new systems of doctrine—new speculations in prophecy—new schemes of government, civil and ecclesiastical. Hence, among other things, MISSIONARY REFORM. By all means let us reform; but let it be on scriptural principles, and well-ascertained experiments.

It is not long since Mr. Irving proposed that every man should be his own society, and his own Missionary. He has only to take up his scrip and his staff, and proceed, and the work of missionary societies is done. A little while ago a work from the Serampore press, (by Dr. Marshman, I believe,) recommends that every church, or even smaller association, should send out its own Missionary; and this is pressed by a variety of plausible considerations, enforced by the character and experience of the author. Either of these schemes would reduce all our societies at once to broken, unconnected, and inefficient fragments. Yet each is supposed to be the only effectual method of propagating the gospel all over the world. By the author of the "New Model," we are assured that units are nothing, that unconnected societies, however powerful, labor under fundamental errors, and that unless we dissolve, and re-unite in a grand episcopal confederacy, our efforts will be vain and fruitless.

There is a portion of truth mixed up with a considerable quantity of error in all these speculations. Individuals ought to do more than is

generally done to propagate their own principles, independently of the aids and connections of associated bodies;—churches ought to take a deeper interest in the work which they leave too exclusively to general societies. Every Missionary goes out from some church, and is more or less connected with a particular class of Christians in some town or district. Why do not those from whom he goes forth, spiritually and ecclesiastically, regularly correspond with him, encourage him, assist him, help to provide for his children while he lives, or for his widow and fatherless children, when he is removed. These are duties which they ought not to leave on any society, however extensive and respectable. All this they might and ought to do without diminishing their contributions to the general cause; and assuredly they would find their own reward in so doing.

Union of heart, unity of plan, and harmony of design, ought to be studied and cultivated by every society. Each should study the field which it appears most competent to occupy to advantage. The region, or district which is taken possession of by one body, ought not to be invaded by another, till there is not room elsewhere to labor. The occupation of “another’s line of things made ready to our hands” ought to be most cautiously avoided. To do the work well, rather than soon, should be the chief concern; and to be approved of God, rather than applauded by men, the great object of ambition. In vari-

ous views of Dr. Marshman, particularly the point to which I have adverted, I do not accord. But there are in his little work, sentiments of deep and vital importance to the success of Missionary engagements. I refer here to the importance which he attaches to the connection between the piety of the church at home, and of the agents abroad, and the blessing of God upon their labors. I greatly fear this subject is not yet sufficiently understood. We think, perhaps, we have done a great deal when we have educated and sent forth Missionaries, and when we have met in public to pray for them; all this is well; but it may all take place, and nothing be effected. It is not enough that the clouds above are charged with that electric fluid which is sufficient to shatter every temple of idolatry to atoms. There must be fit conductors for its conveyance, or it will not explode. There must be men who connect heaven and earth together by their principles and affinities. The church must be a more spiritual community, and Missionaries must be more spiritual men, before the divine influence shall "drop as the rain, and distil as the dew; as small rain upon the tender herb, and as showers upon the grass." The blessing must rest upon ourselves more extensively, before it rest upon the heathen, and the "fullness of the Gentiles come in." In the justice and importance of the following extract, I most cordially concur, and I earnestly hope that the solemn view which it presents of what now

is, and of what must be, before God can greatly bless our efforts, may be deeply impressed both on Missionaries, and on those who send them.

“It is evident, that without that holy and Christ-like spirit so conspicuous in the apostles, Missionaries would be *incapable of training up in a due manner*, were they given, that abundant increase of heathen converts for which prayer is so often made. What could men under the influence of selfishness and carnality do with such a multitude of converts, who had the very image of Christ impressed upon their souls? Would not this glorious image, instead of being preserved in all its beauty and proportion until they reached the ‘stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus,’ be possibly disliked as far too precise? In the present low standard of holiness which almost universally exists, would it not in such converts be quickly injured by the carnality, party-spirit, self-love, vain-glory, and possibly unrighteous dealing, they beheld around them? What mission is prepared to receive a multitude of converts created anew by the Spirit of God in righteousness and true holiness, so as duly to nourish them up in faith and holiness? Is it then any wonder that God should refuse, earnestly as it may be desired in our prayers, to convert thousands in a day, when he knows how soon his holy image in their hearts would be defaced by the wretched, selfish system which now passes for true holiness among so many? How is it that we so easily discern what the Scriptures say respecting doctrines or modes of worship, and remain so blind to those plain truths, those important deductions respecting righteousness, true holiness, and the mind of Christ, which involve our highest personal happiness on earth, and which alone can lead to the accomplishment of our highest desires respecting the salvation of the heathen?

“We may indeed further ask, what missionary body is prepared *to receive with proper feelings* the blessings of a Pentecost, for which prayer is so often made? Were three thousand Hindoos converted on one occasion, and

five thousand on another, what denomination or public body would not find this an occasion of sin, either by its causing them to congratulate themselves on their own liberality and wise conduct, were the blessings given to them, or by its exciting envy toward those to whom it was given, were it given to others? We learn from the apostle James that we may not merely fail to receive because we ask not; we may ask and receive not, because we ask amiss, that we may consume it on our evil desires. And such are vain-glory, self-complacency, and party-rivalry. If then this be the case, is it any wonder that he who refused to deliver Israel by the hand of Gideon's thirty-two thousand men, lest Israel should vaunt themselves against him by saying, "Mine own hand hath saved me," should refuse to grant a Pentecost to our most earnest supplications, until it will tend to promote in us humility, and love, and true holiness, instead of adding fuel to our carnality, pride, and self-complacency? Surely it is time that we all regarded the apostle's exhortation, "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice (or evil feeling) be ye children; but in understanding be men." And if our understandings be duly exercised, we shall soon be convinced, that were the God of holiness to crown with his presence and blessing in the abundant conversion of the heathen, a selfish, unholy, or carnal spirit, in those connected with missionary efforts, he must frustrate the very design of Christ's death, that of saving us from our sins, and purifying unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. May we all be deeply impressed with what the Scriptures say on this important subject, and may the Lord give us understanding in all things."*

Before concluding this Introduction, which, unintentionally, has been too much extended, I must intreat the attention of one class of

*Thoughts on propagating Christianity among the Heathen. pp. 14—16.

readers in particular to the following Letters : I refer to those who are educating for the work of the ministry. To excite, direct, and instruct this important class of the religious community, so as to call forth their zeal for the conversion of the heathen, may be regarded as the chief design of the volume. In all that is said on the topics which bear on this point, by my respected friend, I most entirely concur.

It is melancholy to find, that while we are overstocked with laborers for the home service, there is still a great lack of competent persons for the foreign ; that the spirit of our Academies seems to be bounded by the seas which surround our island ; that many are content to be cooped up in the narrow enclosures of our villages and hamlets, instead of desiring to expatiate over the regions that are beyond us, crowded with a sinful and immortal population ; that there are often competition and rivalry about a very ordinary congregation, but no striving for the furtherance of the gospel in the lands of the shadow of death. Where all is quietness and assurance and comfort, there is great professed zeal for the spiritual interests of men ; but at the posts of danger,—the enterprize of self-denial and hazard,—the ranks of the really militant army of Christ remain unoccupied.

This state of things obviously implies a low degree of principle even among the ministers of Christ. I do not prefer the charge of insincerity or hypocrisy ; but surely there is

reason to doubt the strength and ardor of zeal when it is so generally confined to spheres of exertion which call for little sacrifice, and expose to no danger. Let me intreat my younger brethren to reflect on this, and to ponder the reasonings of the following Letters. Give the subject your serious consideration; let it be matter of solemn prayer and self-examination. Do not take it for granted you have no interest in it,—that your call is at home,—that you have not talents or courage for the work. Contemplate the duty of devoting yourselves to Christ in whatever field or region he may be pleased by his providence to mark out for you. Contemplate the wants and woes of the world, which is all before you; presenting an unlimited field of labor, and the fullest excitement and occupation for your loftiest ambition. To you it may be given to plant the standard of the cross where it has not before been reared;—to assail and to carry fortresses still in the hands of the enemy, and long deemed impregnable;—to achieve the conquest, not of a few individuals, but of a country;—to break down the barriers of a nation's idolatry, and win its universal homage to Christ, and its eternal gratitude to yourselves as his instruments. **IN THE WHOLE COMPASS OF HUMAN BENEVOLENCE, THERE IS NOTHING SO GRAND, SO NOBLE, SO CHRISTIAN, SO TRULY GODLIKE—AS THE WORK OF EVANGELIZING THE HEATHEN.**



LETTER I.

ON THE CHOICE OF A MISSIONARY LIFE.

My dear Friend,

DURING the years I have been a missionary, various thoughts have occurred to me touching the character, qualifications, motives, duties, trials, &c. of missionaries. I have long intended to offer you the result of my reflections on such points, but I need not say what has hitherto prevented the execution of my purpose. I might still defer it if I waited for a season of uninterrupted leisure; but, availing myself of such "remnants of time," as I can seize in the course of a life of labor, I commence my observations. I shall only premise that you must be indulgent to marks of haste which you will doubtless discover in my composition; but although hastily put together, the thoughts themselves have been maturely considered, and I anticipate that in most things you will agree with me. I pretend not to any new or original views, but actual engagement in missionary service has given me a deepened impression of some truths generally admitted, yet not sufficiently weighed, and for that reason, often practically disregarded.

I shall begin with some remarks on the choice of a missionary life.

The ordinary pursuits of mankind present a definite object before the eye. The artizan, the merchant, the lawyer, the physician, the minister of religion tread a beaten path. A young man when he fixes upon any of these professions may form a pretty correct estimate of the duties connected with his choice ; and, generally speaking, his prospects of emolument, respectability and comfort, are not difficult to be ascertained. There is little room for the indulgence of romantic speculation, because the matter is capable of being brought to the test of sober calculation. Every town or district may furnish him with examples of persons in the same walk of life he may have chosen, and thus he is put in possession of data for calculating what he himself will have to be and to do in becoming one of their number. But it is not so with the young man whose mind inclines to the work of a missionary. In speculating upon this subject he finds himself at once beyond the common means of judging of the duties, trials, advantages and disadvantages of the station to which he aspires. The ministry at home bears but a very imperfect analogy to the undertaking he contemplates ; and there are no missionaries, and no missionary ground within the range of his observation. The accounts transmitted from foreign countries where missions have been established, however useful and important in other respects, fall far short of the minuteness and distinctness of information which he finds necessary to enable him to realize the idea of being *there* and surrounded by a foreign scenery and population. But without such vivid pictures of the localities of the missionary settlement, he cannot even conceive what must be the indescribable impression of being actually removed from all the

places and persons hitherto familiar to him. Hence there is much room for the indulgence of imagination, and if the mind is strongly biased in favor of the enterprize, which we may suppose, under the influence of the best motives, there will be a corresponding tendency to view every thing favorable to the undertaking with a partial eye; and on the other hand a disposition to overlook every discouraging circumstance.

For example, the pain of being removed from beloved friends and associates will be thought easily bearable; while the hope of living in their more endeared remembrance, the anticipated pleasure of frequently receiving their friendly letters, and the means which may be enjoyed of gratifying them in return by interesting communications, will dwell upon the fancy and make a separation from friends, in such circumstances, appear almost desirable. The biased mind will in like manner take an encouraging, I may say a flattering view of the exchange of civilized for savage society; a population of professing Christians for a race of idolaters. I do not here speak of considerations of a higher nature, whose influence on the mind of a truly devoted man will bear him up in his determinations to pursue an ascertained path of duty; but I wish to point out how the mind is subject to certain influences, often unobserved and unacknowledged, which, however, may go far in bringing the individual to a state of decided resolution to embark in the cause. A sanguine mind very easily disposes of the difficulties of a favorite project, and in imagination annihilates them, but it cannot annihilate them in reality; and unless there be other more solid and more effective qualities of mind, the actual encounter with these difficulties

may produce effects, little suspected, before the trial comes to be made.

It may be said that, admitting the share which a lively fancy, expatiating upon the unknown scenes of his future destination, may have in determining the mind of one who contemplates the missionary work, there is at least equal reason to suppose that his mind may be as much discouraged by the prospect of future evils, as wrought upon by the hope of redeeming advantages connected with the arduous calling. But I think there is reason to form a different conclusion with regard to most of those who actually become missionaries, and that not merely upon a speculative view of the subject as a question in the philosophy of the mind, but arguing from the real experience of individuals who have entered upon missionary service.

Be it observed, however, that I limit the application of the remark now made to those who have actually become missionaries; because I believe that many whose minds have been agitated by the question, whether they ought personally to embark in the missionary cause, and have ultimately relinquished the idea, have been in a great measure swayed in their resolution to stay at home, by having their minds filled with a gloomy and magnified view of the privations, &c. of a missionary life. But I conceive that in such cases there was not the strong predilection for that department of service in the cause of Christ, which ever accompanies the true missionary spirit, but a cold and suspicious apprehension that it might be matter of duty. In discussing this question, therefore, the subject, possessed of few attractions in itself to such a mind, is viewed in the most unfavorable light; and the suggestions of "flesh and blood" in

favor of the ease and security and sobriety of a life at home, are listened to with approbation, and carry the point over the doubtful plea of duty.

It appears to me, therefore, that, generally speaking, they who most conscientiously endeavor to count the cost before leaving their father's kindred and their house, do not reckon the cost so great as it actually turns out to be. They put an undue value upon certain items of *gain*, and omit or underrate certain items of *loss*. But their after experience discovers to them their error. I would by no means insinuate that this discovery must necessarily make them repent of the step they have taken, or that they do not find, in the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise (Mark x. 30.) *spiritually considered*, an ample compensation for all that they have left and all they forego; but that, had they known all circumstances before, as experience has since shown them, they would have been more sober in their estimate of the satisfaction or reward in the present world. And if they had not had faith to wait, in the want of present recompense, for the recompense of reward at the resurrection of the just, they would have declined the work. Or, if they did go forward to it, they would have done so with a more simple and sublime faith, a higher elevation of aim and desire, a spirit of more entire consecration to the work, "not counting their lives dear unto them." This I take to be the precise effect which the discovery of the real nature of his undertaking, at whatever stage of it this discovery is made, produces on the heart of the true missionary; and that thus his motives and aims are acquiring a superior purity and heavenliness as he advances in his career of labor and tribulation.

I have supposed that a young man may picture

to himself such a scene of missionary labor and success, that he will be ready to quit every thing dear to him in the world to realize it. This may be in connection with the purest motives. The work he chooses is most honorable and praiseworthy. The enjoyments he anticipates are holy and exalted. He reckons upon finding them in the faithful discharge of his duties as a servant of Christ. He will take delight in devising methods to rouse the attention and gain the affection of the natives. He will cheerfully adopt their manners and customs, so far as he innocently may, and so far as may conduce to their favorable opinion of him, or appear likely to promote the success of his work among them. He will anticipate with rapture their becoming interested in the message of mercy, "the glad tidings of great joy" he publishes among them; he will teach them to read in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. He will train them up for heaven, and walk before them in the way to it. Temporal good things, sensual and even intellectual enjoyments, hold a very inferior place in his regard, while he bars his mind against the very thought of seeking pleasure in the ways of sin. In a word, he promises himself much personal enjoyment in his work, and a rich reward in the success of it.

But it is obvious, that if a man contemplates the subject in this light, he is making self-gratification the hinge on which the whole scheme turns. Not that the idea of personal enjoyment is to be utterly excluded, but it must not be made the *swaying consideration*. If nobler views, and more disinterested motives, have not brought the mind to the state of being *made up* upon the subject, and determine it in favor of the missionary work

happen what may, there is reason to fear that, when the scheme of self-gratification turns out to be a life of self-denial—of many temptations from without and from within—a life of many hindrances and few aids to self-improvement, and withal, not rewarded with the anticipated success in the work, while year after year rolls away; the disappointment may, if the grace of God prevent not, turn the work entered upon with glowing zeal and raised expectation, into an intolerable burden, and leave the unhappy laborer to drag it on with weariness, if he does not altogether relinquish it in disgust.

In the case now supposed, there may have been a degree of sincerity of heart, and purity of motive, along with the admixture of selfish views; but it is not difficult to conceive, that the situation of a missionary in a foreign country, may appear a desirable thing to persons who possess neither the spirit nor qualifications of a true missionary. It may appear so to men dissatisfied with their situations and prospects at home, or actuated by the love of novelty, or possessed of a desire to see and know the world, or carried away by a vain ambition of distinction, and getting a name. Such men may find in the project of becoming missionaries, something highly calculated to please the imagination. And it must be allowed, that persons who embark in the holy cause of missions, in such a spirit, may have their reward—the reward they seek—but the reward of the “good and faithful servant,” as they neither seek nor earn, they shall not obtain. Let us endeavor to trace the progress of an individual, actuated by any of the base principles now mentioned—destitute of the spirit of the office to which he aspires. In the

first instance, he overcomes obstacles and difficulties that stand in the way of the accomplishment of his wishes. His resolution and apparent devotedness may gain him the favorable opinion of Christian friends. The very circumstance of his professed desire to engage in the service of God among the heathen, an undertaking so arduous, that many truly devoted men have shrunk back from its difficulties and dangers—produces an impression in his favor among religious people—their charity teaches them in this case to hope all things. A good report of him is carried to the directors of a missionary society, along with the offer of his services. He is accepted as a candidate, passes the time of preparatory study, and finally is sent abroad.

The degree of respect and affection which fall to the share of a minister at home, will just be in proportion to the zeal, and fidelity, and ability with which he performs the high duties of his station. An inconsistent, idle, unqualified minister, cannot hide his true character, and he will not long stand higher in the public estimation than he ought. It is in the power of adventitious circumstances to give a momentary distinction, but not to confer a lasting fame; and for this plain reason, that the man acts his part in the midst of a people qualified to distinguish things that differ, for the Bible has taught them what a Christian and a Christian minister ought to be. Besides, his character is brought into immediate comparison with his brethren in the ministry, and his proper place is assigned him accordingly. But the case is very different, it may be, with our missionary. His residence may be in a country where he is not exposed to the view of a Christian

community. He is therefore left without the encouragement to zeal and diligence in his appropriate work, which the stimulating presence of brethren might afford; and at the same time, beyond the salutary restraint of being under the eye of them who would watch over him with jealous care, lest he should be drawn aside, either in spirit or conduct, from the good ways of the Lord; lest he should grow slack in the service to which he has vowed the consecration of his time, and talents, and heart, and all; lest he should learn the ways of the heathen, and bring reproach on the name of Christ. In such a situation, a truly devoted servant of God will walk with "fear and trembling." Knowing his own weakness, and not ignorant of the deceitfulness of his own heart, and the devices of Satan, there will seem a double urgency in the call *to him* to "watch and pray, lest he enter into temptation." But if we follow an individual of an improper character, such as we are here supposing, into a distant scene of labor, remote from the view of all whose presence might be a spur to good, and a check to evil, it is easy to conceive the almost certain consequence; at liberty to think his own thoughts, and speak his own words, and do his own deeds, and that for a long season; while there are no means of his friends or constituents ascertaining the true state of matters, his real character may remain long undiscovered and unsuspected. His unconscious waste of time—his engagement in pursuits foreign to his proper work—his deviations from sobriety, and dignity, and consistency of conduct—his dereliction of principle, and utter breach of his most solemn engagements, are never known and never heard of, because he will not criminate

himself, and he is at a safe distance from the observation of his brethren. With all this, there may be such a measure of attention paid to the language of the country, and to the duty of holding occasional intercourse with the natives, as will furnish matter for an occasional letter, for the satisfaction of those at home, whom it may be his interest to please. He may find it no difficult matter to keep on good terms with his constituents, and delude them with the vain idea that he is laboring faithfully and successfully to disseminate the gospel among his heathen charge, while he is leaving them without the smallest concern, and, *as yet*, without remorse, to their wicked delusions.

The case is in some respects, but not essentially, altered, where there are several laborers together, and *one* such character among them. There must here be more circumspection, more care to preserve appearances. But as it is generally found conducive to the furtherance of the work, and most suited to the variety of taste and qualification in a body of missionaries to make a division of labor, each in his own department is thus rendered more independent, and left more at liberty. And in the supposed case of an unfaithful member of a missionary establishment, there is more room for the practice of hypocrisy, and less liability of suspicion; while delicacy, and the spirit of forbearance, and hope of amendment, and charitable allowance for peculiarity of natural disposition, &c. may make his brethren very tender of exposing one whose improprieties cannot escape their notice. The truth is, a Judas may remain undetected for years among his brethren and fellow laborers. And who can say but there may be traitors who sell their Master and the souls of men for a piece

of money, and yet live unsuspected, and pass off the stage with a fair reputation! The supposition is awfully alarming; but the use to be made of the observations offered in this letter, must be reserved for the subject of my next.

I am, &c.

LETTER II.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

My dear Friend,

THE promised sequel to the observations contained in my last letter, I now proceed to lay before you.

If other motives than those which ought to actuate the mind, may impel men to offer themselves for missionary service; and if such persons may succeed in obtaining the sanction of societies, be appointed to fields of labor, and occupy them to their own hurt, and the injury of many—the subject demands the solemn consideration of all whom it in any way concerns.

In secular business, though principle is ever regarded as of the highest value, yet it is possible for a servant influenced merely by considerations of interest, expediency, or necessity, to perform his work with as much credit to himself, and satisfaction to his master, as if he had been actuated by the most honorable and conscientious motives in every iota of the service required of him. But in this sacred employment the case is

otherwise. Nothing can compensate for the want of *a heart in the work*—a heart right with God, in simplicity and sincerity devoting itself to him and to his service.

The first and obvious deduction from this is a warning to missionaries and missionary candidates themselves. Its language to them is—“Look well to your motives—sift them to the bottom, and be not satisfied, although you think there be found ‘some good thing’ in you, among much that is not so: separate the precious from the vile, and try how far such views and motives, as have the sanction of the word of God, influence you, independently of all other considerations.”

The conduct which flows from wrong principles of action, although others may admire and extol it, conscience will pronounce to be destitute of all moral worth, and anticipate the sentence of condemnation God will at last utter alike against open transgression and feigned obedience.

Moreover, as there may be, and most commonly is, a mixture of motives to be discovered, when we enter upon the difficult search of the secret springs of our conduct, it is a matter of the first importance, to ascertain what share *right* motives have in leading to any particular act or course of action. The primary motive in the case of missionary service must be a sense of duty, entertained by a mind which approves, and chooses, and delights in the great end to which that duty points—the glory of God. Let the man then who “desires” the “good work,” endeavor to ascertain how far he is actuated by a regard to the command and authority of God. Let him further inquire with what complacency the mind entertains the conviction of duty: in other words, whether he is

brought to love the service, and rejoice in it, as the way in which God is pleased to give him the happy privilege and opportunity of glorifying his name, and fulfilling his blessed will.

Were I further to address such an one, I would say—"If you have reason to conclude that the command to go and preach the gospel is imperative upon you as an individual, it is then with you a simple question of obedience to God. You must acknowledge his authority by yielding obedience to his command, otherwise you are self-condemned as a transgressor. I speak not of the means of ascertaining your call; but supposing that point to be settled, and that you are satisfied in your own mind, that it is your *duty* to embark personally in the missionary cause, you cannot refuse to act upon the conviction, without forfeiting your title to the character of one who is 'following the Lord fully.'"

Were it not that I consider self-deception here to be very dangerous, and the danger of being so deceived very great, I would not think it necessary to pursue this subject farther, but allow it to be taken for granted, that when the call of duty is obeyed, we have nothing more to do but to congratulate the individual upon such a proof of his subjection to divine authority, and of his conquest over the appetites, or habits, or desires, that may have opposed his obedience.

When I consider the difficulty attending all investigations into the operations of our own minds, and the proneness of all to judge favorably in their own case, it occurs to me that there may be persons who take credit to themselves for acting under the influence of motives derived from the authority of God, and their duty to him and

to their fellow men, while in reality, other considerations unattended to or unavowed, in a great measure actuate them. They acknowledge *in words*, it is true, the authority of God, and seem also *practically* to acknowledge it; but after all, the obedience may not flow from regard to the command, but because the performance of the duty is, on other grounds, pleasant or profitable. Now, since partiality in judging of ourselves always inclines us to put the best construction both upon our outward actions and inward motives, we cannot be too suspicious of ourselves;—we can scarcely err in the way of too much severity, and should we ever do so, the evil of the error would not be so great on that side as on this.

To trace the subject a little farther then. Suppose that, in pursuance of the command to preach the gospel, considered as imperative upon an individual, and pointing in his case to the duty of going as a missionary to the heathen, he takes steps in the matter accordingly, and actually sets about the accomplishment of his purpose, there is still room for self-jealousy, for even in this case there may be something “lacking,” and something wrong. The thing itself is commanded, and an acknowledged duty, and yet the motive and manner of performing it may be such as to render it, instead of an acceptable service to God, an abomination in his sight. That the authority of God is acknowledged is so far well—that the thing commanded is performed as well—but after all, the spirit put into the actual performance may be no better than that of a slave. The command must be obeyed “from the heart:”—the service must be a free-will offering; it must be a sacrifice of love and glad acknowledgment of the mercy of

God, who has conferred the ability, and opportunity, and grace, to render back to him of that which has been received from him. The command to "feed the flock of God," and to gather in the wandering sheep, must be performed in the manner required, "*taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but WILLINGLY—not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.*"

If there be not this willing spirit which is so emphatically pronounced to be an essential requisite to acceptable obedience; if the higher and purer motives fail to operate with commanding energy, and the individual nevertheless profess himself to be impelled forward to the performance of the duty, there is reason to suspect that some latent and unacknowledged motive is in operation to which his conduct is to be traced. His mind in this case probably has recourse to some bye consideration, which urges it on, and bears it up, under the weight of the contemplated work. Some flattering scheme of present profit or pleasure may be holden under the self-denying garb of a missionary, and the desire of fame, or the love of knowledge, may become the succedaneum for the general principles of love to God and man.

I repeat it, that even where there is a professed practical acknowledgment of the imperious obligation to obey the command of God, there may be the absence of that *love* which is the animating spirit of true obedience; and if love be wanting, the obedience is a dead work. Surely then it becomes all who aspire to the missionary character, to bring the hidden springs of their actions to the severest test—to subject the secret and often unobserved motions of the heart to a rigid scrutiny.

If they cannot endure this trial, "how shall they abide the judgment of God? for if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things—if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." In a word, our duty to God and man are involved in the question of disseminating the gospel; but we cannot discharge that duty, unless the love of God and man warm our bosoms, and put spirit and life into our obedience. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again." Unless thus influenced, thus "constrained," and carried beyond the base and selfish considerations of the hireling, the vain pretences of the hypocrite, and the dreams of the enthusiast, there can be no faithful and persevering devotement of a man's ALL to the missionary work. When God says, "Whom shall I send?"—and when in the spirit of lowly and trembling, but willing consecration, a man can say, "Here am I, send me;"—then and then only does he "present himself a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is his reasonable service."

It is scarcely supposable, that a mind can be so far enlightened on the subject of duty, and so far under the influence of principle, as to act in obedience to a given command, conscientiously fulfilling it in the fear of God, and yet be destitute of the other principles requisite to render that obedience such as God can approve. And therefore I think the true explanation of the subject is that which is above suggested, namely—that where there is obedience to the command, with-

out love to the duty, and him who commanded it, the principle of action is some base or selfish consideration; and that the taking credit for a conscientious regard to the authority of God, as the grand actuating motive in pursuing that course of obedience, is mere self-delusion or detestable hypocrisy.

At the same time, in regard to a duty so plainly enjoined, as that of preaching the gospel—*i. e.* publishing it through the whole world—a duty implied in the very nature of Christianity, there must be multitudes of professing Christians, who, if they think of the matter at all, must be visited with many compunctious thoughts as to their neglect of it. Acknowledging the paramount obligation that lies upon every Christian to do all that his most zealous and persevering exertions can accomplish in this work, the hearts of many must accuse them of supineness, idleness, lukewarmness, want of zeal for the glory of God, want of practical love to their Saviour, want of compassion for the souls of men, want of consistency with their profession. In the case of young men of education and talents who have enrolled their names and taken their place among the disciples of Christ, there must be either great dimness of sight, or a wilful shutting of the eyes, if a command so legible is not perceived; they must employ much unsound carnal logic with themselves, before they can reconcile it with conscience and duty to stay at home, while the cries of hundreds of millions of heathen are ringing in their ears. They must have many misgivings of heart. They often are—they *must* be impressed with a sense of the duty required of them; and some, I believe, unable to shake off

their convictions, find no alternative left but to act in obedience to them, or lose a good conscience. It is surely possible to conceive of conviction of duty being very unwelcome—of the mind resisting it—and when it can resist no longer, yielding a constrained and unwilling obedience. In this state of mind, other views and considerations of a selfish character may present themselves as encouragements to proceed in the course duty points out; but so far as proper principle is concerned, the man goes forth to the work as a convict to banishment—reluctant to go, but unable to escape; and deriving consolation only from the hope, that in the land of his exile he may find some alleviation of his misery in the pleasures of the place, or in occupations capable of diverting his mind and shortening the time.

I have supposed an extreme case, and perhaps this illustration is too harsh; but I wished to show how a mixture of motives mars the character of the obedience, and turns what ought to be a willing and cheerful service, into a hated task. Whatever may have been the history of a man's secret cogitations—struggle with conviction—collision of motives—opposition between inclination and duty—the conduct he ultimately pursues must be pleasing or displeasing in the sight of God, according to the principles which form the secret springs of that conduct. If the MAIN spring be what it ought to be, the existence of other feelings and considerations, not wrong in themselves (and when under proper regulation, even commendable), will not defile the offering. For instance, a man under the influence of the highest motives in the missionary work, may derive farther encouragement in the prospect of it, or when actually engaged in it, from

the reflection that it is a calling congenial to his taste, favorable to his own spiritual progress, and offering many innocent gratifications to an intelligent mind. But if these and other subordinate considerations occupy the first place in his view of the work, and degrade zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of men, to the rank of inferior motives—there is utterly a fault in that mind. If self-interest, self-seeking, self-gratification, conduct the enterprize, while love, and zeal, and obedience, or the shadows of them, follow at a humble distance in their train, is not the whole rather an offering at the shrine of human vanity, than a sacrifice on the altar of God? I have said enough to show that such service cannot be a “holy acceptable sacrifice unto God”—such labors cannot be “unto God a sweet savor of Christ.” Nor is this all, the service itself, even outwardly considered, will be but a cold, indifferent, negligent, undevout, formal work; for as *self* is the chief mover, whatever degree or kind of service is contrary to the interests or inclinations of self will be neglected. Instead of every thing giving way before the energy of a mind seeking not its own things but the things of Christ, there will be all the vacillancy and weakness of a man attempting to serve two masters. His spirit will not be that of love and power, and of a sound mind, but of fear and weakness and foolishness. How wide a difference between the faithful and the false missionary! The one is seeking his own glory, the other, like his divine Master and pattern, the glory of Him that sent him. This becomes the simple and elevating principle of action, and every thought is subordinated to its influence.

I need not have been so prolix upon a point so obvious as the worthlessness of all obedience which

springs not from the love of God and regard to his authority; but the intricacy of the subject of motives and principles of action which I have been led to touch upon, in its application to missionary undertakings, has obliged me to multiply words, but whether to your satisfaction I have some doubts. I have felt my own inadequacy in attempting to investigate some of the operations of that mystery of iniquity—the human heart; but that it is such a mystery of iniquity even in the case of those who are in part renewed in the spirit of their minds, is the strongest possible reason to be jealous of it and strict in examining it, and this is in one word the sum and scope of the reiterated admonitions scattered over these pages.

I am, &c.

LETTER III.

MISSIONARY QUALIFICATIONS.

My dear Friend,

How shall I speak of the qualifications of missionaries. It would be easy to string together a number of epithets, such as pious, zealous, persevering, self-denied, overflowing with love to God and man, &c. and so dress up a character of unqualified Christian perfection, unlike any specimen of human nature ever beheld. Upon any one who might be desiring the office of a missionary, and who might attempt with fear and trembling to compare his own attainments with such a picture of an ideal

missionary, the contemplation of it could have no other effect than to drive him to despair; unless he ventured to question the skill or the authority of the painter who formed an abstraction of his own, instead of copying from the life. While upon the mind of another aspirant to missionary service, a young man made up of self-ignorance and presumption, the opposite effect would be produced; for in beholding this portrait of a missionary, he would fancy he was looking in a mirror and beholding the image of himself.*

I shall endeavor to avoid the evil referred to, and exhibit the missionary as a *man*.

That man must in the first place be a *Christian*, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the converse of the proposition will not hold. Every missionary must be a Christian, but every Christian is not fit to be a missionary. This obvious remark opens to us a very important view of the missionary character. The missionary must be a Christian distinguished by certain qualifications not possessed by all, and in fact which few possess in an eminent degree.

He ought to be a superior man, both morally and intellectually; one whom the God of nature has adorned with superior gifts; upon whom the God of salvation has bestowed a rich measure of grace. But I must descend to particulars.

In attempting to delineate the character of one who bids fair to become a useful missionary, I shall do it under the idea that he is a young man—not

*Care must be taken, however, to exhibit the character in question, as something more than what may suit a common every-day profession of Christianity. If the missionary is not all perfection, neither is he all defect.

that this is essential, but because it will better accord with the generality of cases that occur.

In a circle of religious young men, is there one distinguished among his fellows for deep and fervent piety, one who has learned under the Divine Teacher much of his Bible and much of his own heart, and who is still sitting with humility and love at the same Teacher's feet? This is the individual upon whom we are to fix our eyes, and if upon further examination other requisites be found in him, he will be the missionary. We proceed to inquire then, Does his character brightly reflect the image of Christ? Has he decidedly come out from the world? Are the people of God his chosen associates? Does he, before all, firmly and consistently avow his Christian profession, showing that he loves Christ more than father or mother, sister or brother; yet does he with all the meekness and gentleness of Christ, behave towards them as a dutiful and loving son and brother? Is he the foremost among his companions in devising and executing plans of usefulness, and yet willing to take the meanest place, proving that he is seeking more to do good than to be known as the doer of it? Does he shine more in the eyes of others than in his own? Do truth and goodness and love appear to form his unaffected character—not the dress he assumes on particular occasions, but his every day ordinary apparel—and for blamelessness, sobriety, and all that even the world esteems pure, lovely, and of good report, has he the testimony of them that are without? If these things be so, if the streams be so pure and sweet, we may infer that the fountain whence they flow has been cleansed. But this is not to be taken for granted—we must examine the state of the fountain that feeds these streams.

It is especially necessary, that he who is to be a teacher of others should be sound in the faith himself. I shall not attempt to draw up a scheme of the truths of revelation, the belief of which I consider as constituting soundness in the faith; for in that case I should be merely presenting you with my own theological system. Upon points of indifference, and matters wrapt in a veil of obscurity, there have been, and probably will be to the end, differences of opinion; but all who are "taught of God," hold substantially the same views of the great fundamental truths of revelation. These our young probationer must understand, and believe, and feel in their heavenly and transforming influence. We have supposed his character to be adorned with the lovely fruits of righteousness; here we see the cause of his fruitfulness. He is a tree planted by the rivers of water;—his root is nourished in secret by the river of the water of life;—he is sanctified by the truth which he believes and delights in;—he derives from it motive and direction, will and ability. The life he lives in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him and gave himself for him. He has fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. In him the virtues and charities that command the approbation of all who witness their exercise, are not the productions of nature, but the fruits of the Spirit. In a word, "he abideth in the doctrine of Christ," and his conduct adorns it. If this be true of him, he will be able to give a reason of the hope that is in him, both as to his own Christianity, and his belief in revelation itself. Nor will his views of divine truth be vague and superficial, as is the case with many. Loving the fountain, living near it and drinking of it

daily, his knowledge may be expected to be accurate, extensive, well digested, and always increasing.

Young converts, if they are not spoiled by unsound public instruction or by improper books, make rapid progress in divine knowledge. The dimness of their first conceptions gradually wears away. What was confused becomes distinct, what was unperceived is now clearly seen, and every thing appears in its true colors and proportions—just as the face of nature is discovered to the eye, when the mists of the morning disappear.

This, although with great variety, in individual experience, may be called the first stage of Christian experience. In favorable circumstances, there will be seen a beautiful proportion between the work of the Spirit in enlightening the mind and renewing it—the increase of light and the increase of heat—the spiritual perceptions of the soul, and the vital warmth of the system.

But the candidate for the missionary office must not be a new convert. He must have passed his novitiate before he be encouraged to take any steps with a view to it; for the circumstance of being a novice in the Christian profession, is of itself a bar to every department of the work of the ministry. In most cases no accurate judgment can be formed of what his profession will come to, till a considerable time has proved it. It is not safe to judge by the early blossoms. The young disciple may seem to the eye a promising plant of righteousness, but “by their FRUITS shall ye know them.” And even supposing his profession to be genuine, to lay hands suddenly on such an one at an early period of his experience might be attended with the worst effects. The specific rea-

son assigned why a novice should not be appointed to the bishop's office is, "lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil." The wisdom of the apostolical rule, therefore, is manifest, and it can never be infringed without danger.

We have supposed the individual in question to have made a good beginning, to be well grounded in the truth, and as he must have passed the first years of the Christian life, he ought to have made good progress. If he has not been apt to learn, he cannot be thought likely to prove apt to teach; and that whether we understand the phrase to denote aptness as to *capacity*, or aptness as to *disposition*; whether able to teach, or ready and inclined to teach.* Habits of study are of vast consequence in teachers. Neither learning, nor piety, nor talents, nor fluency of speech, nor any other gift can compensate for the want of such habits. This is universally acknowledged as to ministers of the gospel at home, and it holds equally in the case of missionaries. There may not be in the sphere of the latter, at least for a season after entering upon their work, the same call to study in the way of preparation for the pulpit; but still they have studies, and those perhaps more laborious, more uninviting, and considered in themselves more irksome than the closet employments of a minister. And without *habits* of study, how shall

* *διδακτιζο;* may properly mean both *able* and *willing* to teach. The word occurs only twice in the New Testament, viz. 1 Tim. iii. 2, and 2 Tim. ii. 24. In the latter of these, the Vulg. renders it by *docibilis*. This rendering is supported by Schleusner, who considers *docile*, *teachable*, as agreeing better with the immediate connection; but I much question the accuracy of his opinion in this instance.

a man encounter the task of learning barbarous languages—studying the voluminous mythology, and philosophy, and absurdity of Brahma or of Fo? But in the contemplated work, the duty of preaching the gospel must not be lost sight of. The missionary must “preach the word”—and will he have no need to study the sermons he delivers to the heathen in their own tongue? Is the task of preaching easier in proportion to the ignorance of the hearers, or does not this very ignorance increase the difficulty of making instruction effectually to bear upon them? What clearness, what plainness, what evidence, what energy, what various lights, what illustrations, what comparisons must be used by the “instructor of the foolish, the teacher of babes!” Which is the easier task—to convey your meaning to the mind of a man of good understanding, or to make an idiot comprehend it? But I need not insist upon this here. Only be it remembered, that a missionary as well as an ordinary minister must be a man of application, and have both capacity and inclination to learn and to teach; otherwise he can neither conduct his ministrations with comfort to himself nor benefit to others. His teaching may not be positively erroneous, but he must either tire his hearers with a never ending repetition of the same things, or his instructions must be superficial and unsatisfactory. If he make no progress himself, he cannot possibly lead forward others from one step to another of the knowledge of the mystery of Christ. Besides, the want of such habits implies, that he is addicted, if not to absolute idleness, to some unfit methods of spending his time. And whatever these be, although not altogether inconsistent with the Christian profession,

they are yet unquestionably inexpedient for him, since they lead to the neglect of some of his primary duties, and affect the usefulness of his ministry in the most serious manner.

I feel that I am wandering from the point with which I set out; but these discussions arising out of the view we are taking of the missionary character, although not necessary to the simple exhibition of the qualifications with which that character ought to be invested, may furnish matter of useful reflection, and show what the missionary *ought not* to be, as well as what he ought.

Before proceeding to examine him as to talent, temper, &c., our young Christian's *desire* for the missionary work may here be noticed. We have been taking a view of his piety, the holiness of his deportment, and the spirituality of his mind; connected with these features, there should be a decided predilection for the missionary work. I reckon this an essential qualification. But this predilection must not be a sudden flash of feeling, not like the prophet's gourd which came up in a night, and may perish in a night. I should not augur favorably of the determined resolution and unwearying perseverance of the man, who all at once formed, and as suddenly executed, the purpose of becoming a missionary. It seems to me more congruous to suppose, that an undertaking of so momentous a nature, and involving consequences so incalculably serious, both to the individual himself, and all who may be in any manner connected with him, has been the subject of long, and anxious, and prayerful consideration: that it has been revolved again and again; that it has stirred up a "multitude of thoughts" in the breast of the young Christian, uncertain as to his call, diffident of his qualifications, fearful of mistaking

inclination for a sense of duty, mortified by the consciousness of inadequate impression; and yet habitually contemplating the work with deep solemnity of spirit: at last opening his mind to Christian friends; meeting both with discouragement and support, but still growing in his desire* for the office of an evangelist; decidedly preferring it before all others, feeling more powerfully the impulse of holy motives, more steadily resisting the suggestions of the flesh, and all temptations that would either allure him to a life of more honor, or less self-denial:—but his purpose still acquiring more stability amidst the agitation of conflicting views and interests; till the voice of Providence evidently concurs with the written commandment, urging him to go forth to the help of the Lord. Thus far all is as it should be; and if the inquiry as to talent, &c. be equally satisfactory, it will be the duty of friends and connections to join in bidding him God speed, and *help* him forward in the name of the Lord.

I must break off for the present, hoping to be able soon to resume the subject. I am, &c.

* “If a man *desire* the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work,” 1 Tim. iii. 1. The word *desire* occurs twice here; but it is not the same word in the Greek in both cases. The first is the word *ορεγεται*, which signifies to stretch out the hand towards a thing, hence, metaphorically to *desire earnestly*, to *express eagerness to obtain*. It is the same word used 1 Tim. vi. 10. “The love of money is the root of all evil, which, while some *coveted after*,” &c. Like the miser’s passion for money, should the man of God *desire—covet* not the wages, but the work of the ministry. The other word *επιθυμει*, has a similar meaning. See Luke xxii. 15. Acts xx. 33. Rom. vii. 7, and xiii. 9. where it is translated *covet*. In other places, it is used to express the desire of food which a hungry man feels, as in Luke xv. 16, xvi. 21, &c.

LETTER IV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

My dear Friend,

AN opinion has been very generally taken up, that missionaries to the heathen need not to be more than men of very ordinary talents: that a man of warm piety, though not distinguished above the common run of every day characters, either by depth or acuteness of understanding, but a man of plain sense and moderate intelligence, is fully competent to fill the station of a Christian missionary, except, perhaps, at a few places among Pagans or Mohammedans of a more refined and intellectual cast. There, it is admitted men of greater ability are requisite. This contracted and most false and hurtful notion of the subject is less prevalent now, I believe, than it was fifteen or twenty years ago; but it is still retained by many. Even to this day, in certain circles, it is not uncommon to hear such a remark as this: "Such an one has not talent enough for the ministry at home, but he may do for a missionary;" or, "What a pity that a young man of fine abilities like Mr. Such-a-one, should not stay at home, but throw himself away by becoming a missionary!"

This subject ought to have a candid consideration. If the opinion or impression on the public mind, respecting the sort of men that should become missionaries, be erroneous, it must be highly injurious, not merely to the individuals who have entered the missionary field, and those who may yet follow them, but to the cause at large. It

tends to lower the character of all the operations connected with the evangelization of the world—makes it almost disreputable to have any immediate connection with the agents employed in conducting these operations, and by a natural consequence diminishes the interest that is taken in all that is done, and all that may yet be accomplished by such instruments. I trust I may “magnify my office,” (not supposing it comparable however with that of him whose words I quote,)—I say, I trust I may “magnify my office” without the imputation of pride or vain glory. But if in regard to the sacrifices it requires—the duties it involves—the responsibility that attaches to it—the object it aims at—the effects it may produce—the missionary service is not inferior to the ministerial, why should it be more lightly esteemed?

I admit that, in some missionary settlements, there are inferior departments which may be filled most usefully by persons of mediocrity, both as to talent and attainment, provided there be men of a more able description to fill the higher departments. For instance, a man of ordinary capacity may occupy the situation of schoolmaster:* he may give instruction in the common branches of education; he may catechise children and even adults, and may do much valuable service to the cause in his limited sphere; leaving to others of greater energy of mind, and of higher acquire-

* But *query*, May not schoolmasters and all such inferior laborers in a mission be found among the natives? The employment of native catechists is recommended, not merely on the ground of their being equally able to do such duties; but because the expense of employing such is incomparably less, and they can be found in much greater numbers, than Christian teachers sent from another country.

ments, to direct the general affairs of the mission—to engage in translating—in preparing elementary books of instruction—in studying the religious system of the people—in convincing and instructing gainsayers among the heathen—pointing out their absurdities—refuting their arguments—proving the futility of their objections to Christianity—bringing the facts, doctrines, &c. of revelation to bear upon the hearts of the people—and adapting all these to their peculiar character and circumstances. Without ascribing to human agency more than belongs to it, no one hesitates to assign a high value to the talents and learning of a minister at home, which render his ministry acceptable and effective. Will the weight of character and the power of mind displayed by a missionary be less felt in his sphere? Has he not full scope for all his powers? And is not the exercise of them required in a missionary field as much as in a Christian congregation? Should a missionary of the first abilities, stationed among some of the most degraded of the species, represent his sphere as too limited for the exercise of his talents, I should entertain a very mean opinion of his judgment, to say nothing of his humility and modesty. I cannot well conceive of any field of missionary exertion where high intellectual powers may not have the finest and most useful display—and indeed many of the duties of a missionary are such, that none but persons of superior understanding and of cultivated minds are qualified for the proper discharge of them. To present this in another point of view, be it observed, that it is the property of a vigorous mind to accomplish with ease, and in a short time, what a mind of inferior power cannot perform but at the expense of much time and

severe labor. In the acquisition of languages—in plans for the amelioration of the people—in acquiring influence over them—managing and moulding them—and many other branches of missionary work, a man of quick perceptions and energetic character does more in the course of a few years, than weaker men could in a long lifetime. Now, is this a matter of no consequence? Is the *quantum* of effect which may be produced in a given time not worth consideration in the appointment of men to this service, although the life of man is so short, and the work so great, and the laborers so few, and delay so much to be deprecated?

There is one specious argument in favor of the erroneous notion I am attempting to expose:—namely, That the mind of a heathen unenlightened by revelation, into whose understanding science or philosophy never shot a single ray, but beclouded and bewildered by his gloomy mythology, whose very light is darkness, must be so weak, that a Christian of the most ordinary capacity will prove more than a match for him. This is quite mistaking the matter. The Christian, it is true, has greatly the advantage of the other in the possession of the knowledge of revelation which he firmly believes, and which has enlightened him on a multitude of topics that are altogether unknown to the heathen. But there is a natural force of mind, a power of reasoning, and examining, and *objecting*, often discovered by mere savages, which would quite confound the theorists who attribute to them only ignorance and stupidity. There are doubtless minds of the highest order among all races of men, and perhaps there is no good ground to conclude that such specimens of genius are more

rare in savage than in civilized countries. In the latter every advantage is enjoyed for bringing out and improving the faculties; but in the former, in spite of all that tends to stint and repress them, there are minds that burst through every obstacle, and expand and shine in all their native light and majesty. The missionary often comes into contact with such. In discourse with them, he hears them start objections, bring forward arguments, require explanations, and defend their own opinions in a manner that will gravel the most experienced dialectician. How can a teacher of shallow understanding, and mean reasoning faculties, stand before such a man? Assuredly, if he does not feel his own inferiority, the savage will perceive it; and it is easy for him to transfer his contempt of such a missionary to the cause he advocates, and become confirmed in his errors because his antagonist could not refute them. No one will say, surely, that a missionary ought to avoid such discussions. To do so would be construed as a confession of his own weakness, or the weakness of his cause. The apostle Paul exhorts to avoid foolish and untaught questions, &c. agitated merely out of a contentious spirit, or concerning subjects *not revealed*, or beyond the reach of the human faculties. But a missionary must distinguish between cases of this kind and the reasonings of a heathen, desiring nothing but a fair discussion of his views. When a man "opposes" in this spirit, the missionary's duty is "in meekness to instruct him—if God peradventure will give him repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth."

I am not making overstrained representatations on this subject. I appeal to the experience of every

missionary, if he has not at times been placed in situations which made him feel most keenly his deficiencies, both perhaps in respect of natural endowments and acquired knowledge; and few I think who know the work practically will refuse to own that, as to themselves, with far higher powers, and more extensive learning, they might find scope for the employment of *all* in the course of their ministry among a heathen people in a state of utter barbarism.

But some one may ask of what use is Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, philosophy, and science to a missionary among a horde of savages? What is he the better for being an adept in mathematics or astronomy, for being a skilful chemist or botanist? "An ounce of grace is worth a cart-load of Greek," say some. When I have heard such remarks—betraying so much ignorance and so great love for it, I have been tempted to treat them with silent contempt; but as this specious way of representing the matter may have led some honest but ill-informed minds to contract a prejudice against learning in missionaries as altogether useless, if not positively hurtful, I shall endeavor to form a very short and plain answer. First, As to the learned languages.—Missionaries may have to act the part of translators of the word of God. They should be able to do it from the originals. And even should the task of translating not be required of them, the capacity of reading the books of inspiration in the languages in which they were written, is a qualification which none will despise or think of small value, but those who themselves are destitute of it. Second, As to philosophy, science, and art; the right use of them is to enable a man to read and explain the *volume*

of creation. They hold the same relation to the *works* of God, that the knowledge of languages does to his *word*. The innumerable lines of wisdom, goodness, power, and majesty, written on every leaf of the great volume of the universe of God, cannot be perused and understood to full advantage, without an acquaintance with the facts and discoveries in every department of science. "Knowledge is power"—and as we take it for granted that the missionary is not disposed to abuse his power, but to employ it to the "profit of many that they may be saved"—he cannot have too much knowledge. All things are not equally important to be known; but there are few branches of knowledge which may not be of use at one time or another—the *missionary*, I repeat it, *cannot know too much.*

I proposed, when I began this letter, to treat of the talents and learning requisite for missionaries, but did not foresee that so much was to be said in removing objections before coming directly to the point. I shall be more brief now, because, from the incidental remarks already thrown out, you may gather what are my ideas of the intellectual qualifications, which, with other gifts and graces, render an individual eligible to the office of a missionary.

A *facility of acquiring languages* is commonly and justly reckoned a valuable missionary talent. This is too obvious to require any illustration. A missionary, in a great measure destitute of it, may indeed, in certain situations, prove a very useful member of a mission. The possession of other gifts, in an eminent degree, may almost compensate for the want of this; but, generally speaking, one who possesses this quickness in the acquisition

of languages, promises to be the more useful missionary. He can sooner, and with more effect, have direct intercourse with the people---can sooner engage in translating, or in original composition---preparing elementary books, tracts, &c. But one who has only a small portion of the gift in question, is not merely *late in acquiring*, he rarely acquires a foreign language to any perfection.

Whether a young man actually possesses this facility may be easily ascertained; but many, I think, acquire the character without deserving it. A young man of intense application, by mere dint of long and severe study, gains perhaps a tolerable acquaintance with Latin and Greek;---he is able to make a respectable figure as a classic, and with many he gains the reputation of having a great turn for languages. But all that ought to be said of him is, that he is able, after a season of severe and perhaps unacknowledged toil, to master the difficulties of a language---and this is saying a great deal. The acquisition of a language, even to a man of the quickest talents, is only the reward, (whatever some may pretend,) of hard, persevering, close study. It is well known that this talent is one of the first a man loses as he advances in years. As the memory, upon which it essentially depends, is the first of our faculties that arrives at maturity, and is often exercised in all its vigor, before there be any ripeness of judgment, so it is the first that begins to decay. Few retain, even to middle age, the ability to acquire a new language, unless they have been habituated to such studies from their youth. In this case the faculty is longer retained, for the constant exercise of the memory both greatly improves it

and preserves it in full vigor, sometimes to a late period of life. I therefore fully agree in opinion with Dr. C. who once observed to me, in conversation upon this very subject, that, considering the importance of a facility of acquiring foreign tongues to a missionary, and the early decay of this talent, a young man of twenty was preferable to another of twenty-five (*ceteris paribus*) for the missionary work.

A *clear* and *vigorous understanding*—a sound judgment—an active and energetic mind;—these are of prime importance to a missionary. Placed in circumstances where he must often be called to determine for himself, or to consult with his brethren in matters of the first moment to the interests of their mission, the possession of a calm and discerning judgment is peculiarly requisite. A man who is too hasty or too shallow to deliberate and compare, and take a clear and comprehensive view of things in cases of difficulty, will, if alone, be often in danger of taking the most fatal steps; and acting with equal want of wisdom in other cases, may commit as egregious mistakes in taking no steps at all. It is the part of a sound mind to inform a man both what to do and what to refrain from doing; and to determine the *time* and *manner* of doing things, is of as much consequence as to ascertain the propriety of the thing itself. But it is not merely in a few great transactions that the exercise of judgment is required. The daily occurrences of life, and especially of a missionary life, present innumerable occasions for the exercise of a clear, prompt, enlightened, well-regulated mind. Intercourse with persons of all ranks and characters—the management of secular affairs—the direction and superintendence of servants and converts—

of the family establishment—of the missionary settlement—perhaps of the whole community. If a strong mind is not brought to the performance of such duties, the missionary will often expose the cause to danger and loss, and himself to contempt.

Prudence and *circumspection* are likewise valuable qualifications. Prudence is wisdom applied to practice. The possession of this quality enables a man to apply his knowledge in a wise and considerate manner. A man greatly deficient in prudence is a most dangerous member of a missionary settlement. A rash unadvised act, one imprudent word, may occasion the most serious mischiefs to a cause perhaps in its infancy—opposed by all the wickedness of the place, assailed by the tongue of slander, watched by the eye of malice, and every advantage ready to be taken of the smallest impropriety of speech or behaviour of the individuals who belong to it.

Besides, in the general prosecution of the work of evangelizing the people, there is continual occasion for the exercise of this virtue. It was when our Lord sent out the disciples to preach, and with immediate reference to the fulfilment of their commission, that he charged them to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” This precept is dictated by the highest wisdom; and nothing, humanly speaking, is more essential to the success of missionary undertakings, than that the execution of them be intrusted to wise and prudent men. Without prudence, the most fervent love, and the purest motives, and the best gifts, would be insufficient for the attainment of their object; and the greatest zeal, without wisdom to conduct it, would but enable its possessor to

do the more extensive mischief. Think for a moment what a work is intrusted to missionaries; and if they be men deficient in wisdom and prudence, imagine what must be the consequence. They aim at nothing less than changing the moral face of the world. When they establish themselves in a heathen country, they set themselves to subvert the established belief of the people on the most important of all subjects—they give the lie to the gods the people worship, and to their sages who taught them to do so—they lay the axe to their most deeply rooted prejudices, oppose their favorite dogmas and ancient customs—pouring contempt on their most venerated institutions, and drawing down infamy on their priesthood, and ruin on their craft—and all to introduce a new, a foreign religion! Here is a task—and what sort of men ought to attempt it? Whoever is qualified, an imprudent man is, *prima facie*, unfit. “Not that the wisest are sufficient to think any thing as of themselves;” but if there is to be the adaptation of means to the end, let them be *wise* as well as good and zealous men who go forth as missionaries.

I should now pass on to another point of great moment to be attended to in judging of the suitability of a young man proposing to become a missionary—I mean *temper*. But in another letter, I have so fully entered into the subject, when speaking of the cultivation of right feelings and dispositions among the members of a missionary establishment, that I need say little more here. It is proper to observe, however, that a good temper, and kind, respectful and conciliating demeanor, are not important *in reference merely* to the missionary’s individual comfort, and the

peace and cordiality of the family circle ; it extends to all his multiplied relations as a member of society, and especially as a missionary among a heathen people. Instead of descanting upon this, however, I would merely suggest that "the meekness and gentleness of Christ," the great exemplar of all his followers, and especially of them who "bear his name to the Gentiles," should be brightly displayed in their characters. Meek—patient—gentle to all men—loving peace—not self-willed—not soon angry—bearing the infirmities of the weak—these are among the prominent features of the beautiful portrait of the man of God, as sketched by the pen of inspiration. It is required of a bishop, that he be one that ruleth well his own house. This surely implies that he is able to govern his own temper ; for, if a man has not his own passions under due control, how can he "have his children in subjection with all gravity ;"—and if he know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God ?"

Candor and condescension, sympathy and amiable concern for the good of all around him, should mark his whole deportment. Thus he will gain his way to the hearts of his people ; or, if they return evil for his good, and hatred for his love, he will not need to reproach himself for neglecting the means of attaching them to him by affection. The uniform language of his behaviour should be, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." And should this unworthy return be his actual experience, he will then be more conformed in character and suffering, not merely to the apostle of the Gentiles, but to

that Saviour who bore a love to sinners beyond all parallel, and who was requited by hatred equally unexampled.

I mention self-denial last; but it is one of the first duties the missionary will have to put in practice. But how can it be ascertained beforehand that an individual possesses it, or shall be able to exercise it, to the extent required of him? What is self-denial? It is not the being satisfied with mean fare and lodging, although it implies temperance and contentment with little. It is not merely ceasing from favorite pursuits, forsaking beloved society, and encountering perils and hardships. Self-denial refers to the state of the mind with respect to some one great object—some great commanding principle, for the sake of which object, and under the influence of which principle, all evils and all goods are alike scorned—or at least sufferings are patiently endured, and enjoyments willingly renounced. In the case of the Christian missionary, the foundation of his self-denial must be laid in solemn and unreserved devotement of *all* to the accomplishment of his work—a devotement he has made after deliberately counting the cost. If he has done so, it is not this or that particular way in which he may be called to deny himself, that he has calculated upon and prepared for; but, be it what it may, *he cares not*, for he counts *all things* but “loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, by which the world is crucified to him, and he to the world.” He has taken up his cross at the command of Christ—he has heard him say, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross

and follow me." This was the self-denial of the primitive disciples. In this spirit went forth the apostles and first preachers of the word, clothed in their panoply of celestial brightness, and yet with all the "majesty of meekness"—"giving no offence in anything, that the ministry *might* not be blamed, but in all things approving themselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold they lived; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." Modern missionaries must possess a measure of the spirit of those holy men—and, as they did, rejoice that if they suffer with Christ, they shall also be glorified together with him.

The self-denial of a missionary, then, is self-renunciation. Henceforth his own enjoyment—honor—profit, unconnected with the advancement of the cause he has espoused, are not to be the *end* of any one action. All his thoughts and all his deeds must be bent towards the accomplishment of his ministry. That this crosses his private interests—opposes his private inclinations—defeats his private ends—increases his private sufferings—blasts all his worldly hopes—must not

be allowed to move him from the direct course duty commands him to pursue. And he does and suffers all *willingly*.—"For Christ" is his watchword, and his motto is, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

This may seem a hard saying, but "he that is able to receive it let him receive it."

I have attempted then to give a slight sketch of what I conceive a missionary should be, intellectually and morally, by nature, by education, and by grace. If you think I have raised the standard too high, and that the adoption of it would keep many who might prove useful laborers out of the field, I pray you to think again, and reflect whether the lower standard hitherto applied to missionary candidates, may not have kept back some individuals of the first rank as to learning and talents, who were given to understand, that superior learning was rather a disqualification than a recommendation; would raise them too much above their fellow missionaries, or tempt them to neglect their work for the sake of literary or scientific pursuits. Be that as it may, I am persuaded that were it generally understood that missionaries ought to be superior men in every sense of the word, and were the impression on the public mind respecting them, consequently raised to what it ought to be, the missionary cause would find more able supporters at home, and more able agents to conduct its operations abroad.

As a corollary to what I have said on this subject, I will just add, as my own conviction, without going into the argument, that the ordinary term allowed young men for preparatory studies might, in most cases, be *doubled* with advan-

tage to all concerned. * A longer season devoted to preparation I think advisable, not merely that missionaries might be sent out better furnished with human learning, and with greater stores of general knowledge, but that they might have more time to *prepare their hearts* for the work, and have all those feelings, and views, and impressions of their great undertaking, which they should be taught to cherish, more deepened and matured.—While their tutors and patrons would have better means of getting an intimate knowledge of the men they have taken under their care, be better able to direct them in their studies, and be at last qualified with more judgment to arrange the appointment of these young missionaries to fields of labor suited to their peculiar talents and characters.

I am, &c.

LETTER V.

DIFFICULTIES ARISING FROM DIVERSITY OF TEMPER AMONG MISSIONARIES.

My dear Friend,

IN pursuance of the subject of former letters I have now to submit to you a few more thoughts that have occurred on taking a practical view of missionary undertakings.

* Not applicable to missionaries sent from the United States, who generally spend two or three years in a theological seminary, after completing a collegiate course of education. American missionaries to the heathen, are as well educated, taken as a class of men, as the pastors of churches in any district of our country.—*Am. Ed.*

Missionaries, associated together in the honorable and arduous work of evangelizing the heathen, have a strong, a sacred bond of union; and this bond, it might be supposed, could in no case be in danger of being broken. Those who have made accurate observations on human nature, however, will not find it difficult to believe that even missionaries may "fall out by the way;" and that much wisdom and grace are necessary to preserve, in all its integrity and beauty, the golden chain of love which constitutes a missionary bond. That there have been and are so many edifying instances of this cordial union and co-operation, is not to be regarded as matter of course, but to be ascribed to the influence of that elevated Christian principle, and that spirit of consecration to the advancement of the common cause, which make those who occupy the same field of labor smother every germ of dissension, and have taught each to look, not upon his own things, but the things of others.

When a number of individuals are brought together, previously unacquainted with each other; perhaps natives of different countries, of different tastes, habits, and natural tempers; and differing not less it may be in point of learning and talent; do not these diversities form so many points of resistance to a close and cordial union? They have now to act together in a great and responsible work, in which each has an undoubted right to judge for himself. It will therefore soon be discovered that there is among them in many things, a difference of judgment. Some surpass others in natural and acquired endowments—some will be more active and forward, others more passive and yielding—some fond of study, others more inclined to business and bustle—some with a talent for

managing, and others ever jealous of their brother's superiority. It is more than can be expected that in all things they should think alike. The same subject will appear in very different lights to different minds; and now is discovered the difficulty of acting in harmonious oneness of spirit. Even supposing passion and selfishness to have no place among them, how can they possibly avoid occasions of offence? Pursue what plan they may, they must sometimes act in opposition to the views and impressions of duty of some individual of their number. Not to mention peculiarities of natural disposition found in some of the best of men, which render it impossible for others to live and act with them, but on the terms of submitting to endure much from them, and habitually exercising forbearance towards them. To maintain all the warmth and cordiality of Christian feeling towards one another, among the members of a society so constituted, requires no small share of grace. The peculiarity of their situation greatly increases the difficulty. Nothing in a Christian country is exactly parallel to it. At home, ministers and private Christians, when they combine their energies for the promotion of any common object, can select such individuals as possess congenial minds, and all other requisites for harmonious co-operation. Thus similarity of taste and temper attract men to each other, and they lend mutual assistance, and mutually contribute to each other's pleasure and progress in their various objects of pursuit. And when in any case such societies of men, or any individual connected with them, may find it difficult, or uncomfortable, or unprofitable, to continue together, the fraternity breaks up, or the individual withdraws. But not so mission-

aries. They have no power of choosing. One grand object, it is true, has drawn them together ; but be the object of human pursuit what it may, there must be accordances of character in other points, as well as the main one, in order to their hopefully and harmoniously working together ; and of such accordances there may be a deficiency in a band of missionaries brought together, we would not say accidentally, but with little or no regard to the fitting of one character to another, so as to form a compact heart-cemented body. Now in the possible case of the members of a missionary settlement, proving by experience that they are ill assorted together, they cannot, like a religious or literary association at home, dissolve their connection with each other at pleasure, or at any rate, with little loss to themselves or others ;—they cannot break up and re-model the establishment with more congenial materials. They cannot separate ; scarcely can an individual even withdraw, without involving the mission in confusion, perhaps occasioning its utter ruin, and exposing the sacred cause with which they are identified to irreparable injury.

There is then no situation in which Christians can possibly be placed, where they stand more in need of being imbued with the spirit of the apostolical exhortation, “to be of the same mind one towards another—to esteem each other highly in love for their works’ sake, and to be at peace among themselves.” And perhaps there are few situations where the maintenance of this spirit is more difficult than when, unfortunately, difference of judgment, in matters of duty, and contrariety of disposition and habits in common life, exist in a missionary settlement. But if the duty be diffi-

cult, the motives to the exercise of forbearance, forgiveness, and love, are, in the case of missionaries, very strong. They have their hearts and hands engaged in the work of the Lord. They have vowed the consecration of their all to it; and to merge every interest and every feeling in the one grand design of promoting the kingdom of their Saviour among men. They are, or ought to be, so absorbed by this, as to leave no room for reflection upon their personal interests; habitually reckoning themselves nothing; and contented to be accounted nothing by others. Possessed of this spirit, a missionary will bear and forbear much; but if destitute of it, his own comfort, and that of his associates, will be perpetually marred. In the course of the daily intercourse of the brethren, much will occur to try the power and patience of faith. If that intercourse be conducted in the spirit of love, sweetened by amiable and Christian condescension—"in honor preferring one another," they will truly be fellow-helpers. But if they give way to their own spirit, and suffer unholy feelings to embitter their necessary and unavoidable intercourse, the great end of their being associated together, so far as mutual assistance and comfort are concerned, is defeated—and their living together is rendered the more irksome, because they know they cannot separate, except perhaps at an expense to the cause they have espoused, which they may not think it their duty to incur.

I have dwelt more particularly upon these representations of the subject, in order to give the greater emphasis to the cautions and warnings I would address to intended missionaries, as to the spirit they must prepare to cultivate towards the

brethren with whom, in the course of providence, they may be associated—brethren not of their own selection—and it may be, not such as they would choose as their favorite companions and friends. They may be men who possess few qualities in common with themselves, with the exception of the fundamental ones of piety towards God and zeal for his glory, devotion to the missionary cause, and the possession of one or two talents which they desire to employ in the service of their Lord and Master among the heathen. But these qualities, common to all, should be considered by each as sufficient to bind his heart to his brethren, and teach him to overlook the peculiarities which may accompany these primary graces and gifts—to bear with and forgive the tastes and habits, the likings and aversions as to indifferent things, with which he can have no sympathy—remembering that his own peculiarities require an equal degree of forbearance to be exercised by his brethren towards him.

Let the candidate for this arduous office, then, not suffer his glowing imagination to carry him away with the prospect of the exalted happiness he must enjoy in having for his associates in labor, and for the companions of his selected hours, men whose hearts have been warmed like his own with the missionary flame; men with whom his every pulse beats in unison as to the extension of the Saviour's kingdom among men, and who, like himself, have left all to follow Christ. Let him not delude himself with this romantic view of the missionary life. It may be his happy lot to be united with brethren not more respected and honored for their works' sake, than beloved as bosom friends. He may live and labor with

them with so much comfort, confidence, and unity of spirit, as to leave him in these respects nothing more to wish; nor am I to be understood as intimating that such unions are rare; but this hypothetical enjoyment must not be suffered to enter as an important item into the calculation of one who is counting the cost of becoming a missionary. The estimate ought to be made on the supposition, that there will arise from this quarter many temptations, many sorrows, many hindrances, many humiliations; and if the estimate is so made, he will not need to add,—many bitter disappointments. When he has thus prepared for the worst, if his expectations of peace and comfort are exceeded, his enjoyment will be so much the greater. He will learn better how to appreciate the blessing, and to improve it accordingly.

Paul's expostulation with the Corinthians, "Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" had a more immediate reference to the case of Christians going to law with one another, and that before unbelievers. Missionaries may not go so far as this, and yet they may utterly violate the spirit of the passage now quoted. But O the comfort and advantage of thoroughly imbibing it! One, resolved to make every sacrifice consistent with duty and a good conscience, for the preservation of harmony, will most effectually secure his own peace of mind, while he is thus studying "the things that make for peace," with his brethren. It was the wise resolution of a distinguished friend of missions, one of the first of those philanthropic men who embarked in the cause of the Missionary Society, "NEVER TO BE OFFENDED," whatever treatment

he might meet with in the course of that undertaking. It was indeed a wise and noble resolution; and his adherence to it was of greater importance, perhaps, than can well be estimated, in regard to his own comfort and usefulness, and the good of the cause as far as his influence extended. Let this resolution be that of all missionaries. Let them never take offence at the treatment they meet with from friends or foes. The disposition to take offence where none is intended, is despicable and hurtful in the extreme to all parties. Where the conduct of any one is such, that we have reason to believe he had the design and wish to hurt us; let us disappoint him by still resolving not to be offended. Let us overcome evil with good, and heap coals of fire upon the heads of our cruel enemies or unkind friends; and who can tell but this, by the blessing of God, may melt and soften them, change their enmity into love, and their intended injury into a real blessing both to us and to themselves.

Let it not be thought from the strain of these remarks, that missionary stations present nothing but internal dissension, alienation of affection, and mutual dissatisfaction among the members; or that they hang together and keep up a show of affection, interchanging heartless civilities, and submitting to a constrained and unavoidable intercourse as if they were cordially united, while there is at bottom nothing but coldness and indifference. No! I am persuaded that, so far from that being the case, there is in most of the existing missions the most happy cordiality, and the best mutual confidence and friendship in exercise among the missionary families. But this by no means disproves the justice of the above remarks. The fact that peace and love reign in missionary settle-

ments, rather argues, that those devoted men have so fully entered into the spirit of their work, and that *grace has so abounded* towards them, that they have been enabled to overcome their peculiar temptations; and so to triumph over the disadvantages of their outward circumstances, that every evil passion, and every unchristian feeling are laid to rest; that in their social capacity all bitterness and clamor and evil speaking and *evil thinking*, are consumed in the celestial flame of love. "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." This is the oil that makes all the parts of the moral machine move smoothly, and perform its work without noise and without weariness, to the glory of God and the good of men.

I think it very desirable, on many accounts, that these things were generally known and attended to. Young men preparing for the work, or having their minds inclined towards it, would, if the real state of matters were honestly and without concealment laid before them, be better able to judge what they had to expect, and how they ought to prepare themselves for the work in every view of it.

The friends of such young men, if aware of the importance of missionaries being men of sober minds, * and of their being capable of becoming all

* "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded," (*σωφροσυνεω*) to have the due government of the mind; to have the passions in due subjection to judgment—to reason enlightened by religion.

things to *all men* (not to the heathen merely for their conversion, but to *all men*), to their brethren also for their mutual help and comfort;—I say if the friends of missionary candidates were aware of all this, they could in many cases better decide whether from their knowledge of the character of an individual as to temper, prudence, candor, &c. they ought to encourage him to go forward; and in every case they might be able to suggest hints, and inculcate the importance of attention to the “smaller morals,” in the probable scene of his future activity. A judicious minister, or other Christian friend, might in this way be rendering a most essential service to the individuals whose minds they thus enlighten as to an important class of duties, and perhaps instrumentally prevent scenes of discord, disaffection, and confusion at a future day. I conclude this letter with one word more:—If these things were generally known and considered, the people of God would pray more feelingly for all missionaries, that “the Lord of peace himself would give them peace always by all means.”

I am, yours &c.

LETTER VI.

THE OFFICE OF THE MISSIONARY COMPARED
WITH THE MINISTRY AT HOME.

My dear Friend,

COMPARISONS, it is said, are invidious; but, as the Christian world tacitly makes comparisons, forms

its own divisions, and acts accordingly, it cannot be unfair to bring such things under review. If there is reason to suspect that in any one instance popular opinion rests upon insufficient grounds—that the things compared, and concerning which a judgment is formed, are seen through a medium that distorts their proportions, and imparts to them a shade and color which do not belong to them; the interests of truth require an exposure of the deception, and an exhibition of the things as they are.

Comparisons have been, and will be, made between the ministerial or pastoral, and missionary offices; but if this be done in the way of exalting one against another, there is utterly a fault among them who do so. There ought to be no strife which of them should be accounted the greater. Pastors at home, and missionaries abroad, are “brethren”—servants of the same Master, employed in essentially the same service, although very different spheres of exertion are assigned to them. The offices have many things in common, although each calls for the exercise of appropriate gifts; and the reward of every faithful servant of Christ, whatever may have been his station in the church, will be the crown of glory that fadeth not away. If those crowns, like the stars, differ in glory, the brightest will not be given to those who have been greatest in their own eyes, but to those who have most humbly, most faithfully, and most devotedly served their Lord in the work allotted them.

It is therefore to be regretted, that there exists so strong a prejudice with many against the missionary character, and that there is such a tendency to depreciate evangelical labors in a heathen, below similar labors in a Christian country.

But on the other hand, far be it from me to sanction an error, not less unjustifiable than the one against which these remarks are pointed;—the error of exalting the missionary at the expense of the stated minister of a Christian congregation at home. Some ministers eminent for learning, piety, and abundant labor, are in the habit (it must be supposed from real humility) of extolling the man who becomes a missionary above all due bounds;—they speak of shrinking from the comparison with men of such fortitude, zeal, &c. They almost rank some living missionaries with apostles, and deceased missionaries with martyrs. Now, however graceful and humble all this may sound from the lips of a minister eminent for his gifts, and perhaps venerable for his age, it seems to me to be an infringement of the rule to think and speak *soberly* both of ourselves and others, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

Let it not be thought, then, from the remarks that follow, that I wish to raise the missionary above his fellow-laborers in the gospel at home. My object is simply to state some of the difficulties the missionary has to contend with—difficulties which are peculiar to him; and, if felt at all, felt but in an inferior degree by a minister surrounded by a professing Christian population.

In the case of the missionary, there are difficulties arising from the peculiarity of his situation as a man and a foreigner. And there are other difficulties directly affecting his success, arising from the state of the materials he has to work upon. To begin with the first.

The epidemic malady of human nature is seen in the heathen world in all its inveteracy. It

there rages with uncontrolled force, and seems to be beyond remedy, as it certainly is beyond the reach of any means of *human* devising for its cure. In countries where the influence of Christianity is felt, the symptoms of the malady are often greatly alleviated. It puts on a much less disgusting and alarming appearance; and from this mitigated state of the disease, arising from the indirect and unacknowledged effect of Christianity, have men attempted to gather an argument to discredit Christianity itself, and to falsify its declarations as to the reality and extent of the evil it proposes to cure. The gospel has silently and unperceived raised the tone of morals, softened the aspect of society, brought virtuous principles and actions into general credit and honor, and fostered the principles of benevolence and universal philanthropy, even where it has not gained access to the heart, and produced its full effect in the transformation of the whole character. There are many who are themselves constrained within the bounds of decency, and who have acquired habits of moral propriety, because they have been trained up where Christianity has made a character for virtue and decorum valuable; who turn this very effect into a weapon against Christianity itself. Because they are not given up to unrestrained licentiousness—because passion, in all its malignity, and vice, in all its deformity, does not characterize them—they come to the flattering conclusion that they are *whole* and need not a physician. They spurn at the Bible when it addresses them as *sick*—as “poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked,” with respect to all moral worth in the sight of God. Whereas it is owing to the

indirect effects of Christianity, operating in the way now stated, that the outbreakings of corruption in them have been prevented. Yet because Christianity has done this for them, they repay the favor by denying its truth; because it has taught them to cover up the more offensive marks of their depraved nature, they deny that they are under the infection of depravity at all.

But in the heathen world there is less room for this self-deception. There is little or nothing there to mitigate the violence of the moral disorder. There all the symptoms of confirmed, inveterate, deep-rooted disease, are obvious to every eye; and this circumstance also adds greatly to the difficulty of effecting the cure. To carry on the allusion, I might say that the missionary there appears as a physician who pretends to have an invaluable remedy for the general disease; but assures those who are afflicted by it, that while upon trial they shall assuredly prove its sovereign virtue, they must ever afterwards observe a strict regimen, breaking off all the excesses in which they once indulged; but that this, by the continued effect of the same powerful antidote to their universal malady, will be rendered easy and delightful, and by no means so grievous a restraint as they now imagine. Thus he makes known his benevolent purpose; but the people, though they cannot deny the existence of the disease, are possessed of the notion that it is by no means of so malignant a character as he would represent—that they they have the means of cure in their own hand—that their own physicians know cheap and easy methods of preventing its bad effects, while his are irksome in the extreme—such as they will never submit to—and that they will rather die

than use them. Interest and passion, and love of all that is evil, will combine to scout the pretended dealer; and perhaps the diseased state of his own countrymen will be pointed at as proof of the inefficacy of his medicine, and the falsehood of all his pretensions.

There are difficulties in the way of success arising from the moral state of the people. But they are not insuperable, because the gospel is mighty through God, to pull down the strong holds of Satan. Have we not seen that the strongest and proudest bulwarks, by sinners deemed impregnable, have fallen down flat before the sound of the gospel, as did the walls of Jericho by means apparently as contemptible? Even in circumstances deemed the most favorable, nothing less than the exertion of the same almighty power could effect the overthrow of Satan's empire in the soul; and in the most unfavorable, nothing more is necessary. But the state of a people characterized by an universal degradation of feeling, sentiment, and practice—exhibits the general difficulty under a most discouraging aspect, and requires on the part of the men who would attempt to raise them from their moral prostration to the level upon which Christianity places its disciples, strong faith, and fervent zeal, and unwearied patience, and persevering diligence, and, as the life of all other duties, and the sustainer of all other right dispositions—a spirit of *prayer*. These qualities and graces are required in every minister, but missionaries should possess them in a sevenfold degree.

To attempt a full illustration of the difficulties of the missionary work would neither be a pleasing nor a profitable task. Many of the specific forms

which the depravity of the heart assumes in heathen countries are local, and others are temporary—such as *caste* in India; and contempt of all people but themselves, and of all customs but their own, in China. But passing these, I shall just notice one or two things as specimens of the outworks which, in many parts of the heathen world, protect the empire of Satan, established there, from the threatened invasion of Christian missionaries. The political relations of pagan countries, the civil condition of the people, and the whole structure of society present so many points of resistance to every attempt to make an inroad upon them. Their religion, or if you will, their superstition, and their civil polity, are in many instances so interwoven, that the one cannot be assailed without striking a blow at the other. The sovereigns and chiefs of many pagan nations are the spiritual as well as the civil heads of the community, and to interfere with the religion of the state is to touch their prerogative. It is accordingly found, that where the king or the powers of the state are hostile to missionaries, they can do little or nothing. They can neither obtain a footing in the country, nor if they did, would they be long able to maintain it. Witness in illustration of this the recent history of the Burman mission. It is therefore to be considered one of the favorable signs of the present day, that the rulers of several heathen countries to which missionaries have been sent, have given them a cordial welcome, and promised them continued countenance and support. Whatever the immediate views or motives may be that lead to such conduct, we ought devoutly to ascribe praise to God who holds the hearts of kings in his hands, for disposing them to give his servants liberty to enter their dominions.

As the spiritual power vested in their hands renders it next to hopeless to attempt the evangelization of their people without their sanction, so their favor is proportionably to be desired, and ought to be cultivated by all proper means. "The king's favor is as dew upon the grass;" and we ought to pray for it, and give thanks for it to Him who gives both the dew and the rain.

I am tempted here to digress still further from the point in hand, in order to notice a silly outcry raised by a certain class of professors against the conductors of Bible and Missionary Societies. They are branded as spiritual parasites, because they seek and put a value on the patronage of princes and men in power, both at home and abroad, as if they were fawning upon the great from a mean ambition of being brought into notice, and of having their cause dignified by a sort of connection with high sounding names. Were this the spirit of those societies, or these the only ends to be gained by such alliances, or were the smiles of kings and potentates to be purchased at the expense of principle, I should be one of the first to reprobate their conduct. But I think that not charity merely, but fact and experience, should by this time have taught those who are so ready to find fault, that more honorable and disinterested motives have operated both on the part of the seekers and the bestowers of royal and noble patronage; and that benefits, more unequivocal and substantial than the mere credit of a name, have resulted from such personages being induced to identify themselves with the best of causes:—a cause which cannot derive dignity from the highest of its promoters, but which exalts the humblest of its friends to the rank of a benefactor of the race.

It is easy, however, to expect too much from men of high degree; but this is a mistake which soon corrects itself; for, after all the aid the highest and most powerful upon earth can lend to the labors of missionaries, the great and radical difficulties of the work remain behind. Kings themselves can do nothing more than remove the obstacles *in limine*. To this their power may extend; farther it cannot go: and if their influence in any case be exerted in favor of the cause of God, it becomes its friends thankfully and wisely to avail themselves of it, giving God the praise.

The heathen priesthood is an army in battle array with Satan at their head, ready to obstruct, at every step, the progress of the servants of the Prince of Peace. The influence the minions of the popular superstition exercise over all classes of the community makes them formidable in the highest degree. They have the passions, prejudices, and supposed interests of the people leagued on their side; and they employ force, fraud, or chicanery, as suits them best, to subvert the designs of the missionary. The weapons of their warfare are carnal, and they are skilful in the use of them. And even when circumstances restrain them within the bounds of outward respect for the servants of God, the most deadly animosity is raging in their hearts.

They know also how to infuse the venom of malice into the minds of the people—and they do it sometimes unnoticed and unsuspected. How often have missionaries sowed the seed, and with such flattering appearances of not having labored in vain, that they anticipated with joy the harvest, till it was discovered that some emissaries of Satan in the form of priests, like the fowls in the parable, “came and devoured it up.” They “catch away”

what is sown in the hearts of the people, and would effectually frustrate all the sower's hopes of reaping the harvest, if it did not now and then appear that God has prepared the hearts of some and made them good ground; so that in spite of all enemies, and to the surprise and joy of the laborer, "the seed springs and grows he knows not how."

There is another class of difficulties connected with the missionary being situated as a foreigner, comparatively ignorant of the language of the people, and still farther separated from them by the difference between his habits, manners, &c. and theirs. The operation of these circumstances, however, is different in different places, and will be as variously felt by missionaries as the constitution and character of the individuals are various. In some cases the circumstance of a missionary being a foreigner gives him a kind of superiority over the people; but in other cases the very reverse. Again, as to the contrariety of the missionary's habits, &c. to those of the people among whom he labors—his being under the necessity of having constant intercourse with them—his being much engaged in secular concerns, &c.; such things will be regarded just as the diversity of character makes them disagreeable or otherwise; what is to one man a weariness of the flesh and an act of positive self-denial, may in another man, differently constituted, be perfectly according to his taste, and a pleasure rather than a task.

Upon the whole, however, the life of most missionaries implies a variety of duties, little consonant with the general taste and habits of such men as should be encouraged to become missionaries; and this, among other reasons, confirms me in

the opinion that missionary undertakings should be planned so as to admit of a division of labors at every station. In other words, that there should be several missionaries together. By this means they can divide the departments of general management, public teaching, the duties of the study, of the seminary for native youth, of the printing office, &c. so as to suit best the characters and qualifications that may be found among them. Nor is such an arrangement recommended merely on the principle of studying the personal comfort of the missionary in his work, but the real and effectual performance of the duties of the work itself in all its various branches. Who does not know that how conscientious and devoted soever any man may be, there is perhaps a particular line of duty for which his turn of mind less suits him, and which therefore is a burden and a grievance; while there is another line of duty which better accords with his taste, in which he engages with more *heart*, and consequently with a better prospect of being in *that* department an efficient and successful laborer. And no one surely will question the wisdom of acting upon this principle, and giving to each missionary, as far as circumstances will admit, *that* work to do, which he will perform with the greatest comfort to himself and advantage to the cause.

But, to gather up the substance of this rambling letter. The missionary has to contend with certain difficulties, not felt at all, or, but in an inferior degree, by the minister at home. The destitution of moral principle—the inveteracy of vicious habits, sanctioned and strengthened by the reigning superstition—the aversion to Christianity as a *new* religion and a *foreign* religion, independently of its

own internal character, as so opposed to all the corrupt propensities of man—the missionary's dependance on the will of heathen princes and rulers for liberty of access to the people—the opposition made by an interested and wicked heathen priesthood—the missionary's difficulties as a *foreigner*—as a Christian among a heathen people—as a man accustomed to retirement, and requiring it for the performance of some of the most important branches of his work, but placed in a sphere of active exertion, the management of secular concerns demanding a great share of his attention, and consuming much of his time,—these and other things more or less felt by all missionaries, show, that although there is an analogy between the office of a minister at home and the charge of a missionary abroad, there are also considerable points of difference—that while they have some duties and trials in common, there are other arduous duties, and not a few hardships and perils, which are in a great measure peculiar to the missionary.

My design in stating these things so circumstantially is to give you a more distinct view of the missionary work. The best way to judge of two objects supposed to be nearly of the same color, is to place them side by side, and then, although both may be green or yellow, their juxtaposition will discover to you a much greater difference of shade than was before suspected.

I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

ON LOW VIEWS OF THE MISSIONARY OFFICE.

My dear Friend,

IN giving you my thoughts on the character and qualifications of missionaries, I have been diffuse in speaking of talents and acquirements, while I have more briefly touched upon piety—the possession and exercise of the gifts and graces of the Christian. You will not attribute this to my considering the latter inferior in importance to the former; but they are less disputed, or rather not disputed at all, while the question of the intellectual and literary character of missionaries has been much agitated; some contending that missionaries should be *able* men; others that *weak* men are strong enough. It seems to me strange, that the importance of good intellectual endowments should be decried by those who consider piety to be indispensable. Their argument is, that it is not the great learning or shining abilities of men that will convert the heathen. But what does this argument prove? It proves, among other things, that neither is piety requisite in a missionary; for it is not the piety of the preacher that is to convert the heathen, any more than his learning. The truth is, that in every case it is God that giveth the increase. It was so when Paul preached and Apollos watered. But was the learning of the one acquired in the school of Gamaliel, or the eloquence of the other, of no value? Did not they consecrate *all their talents* to God; and did not He make use of these as *means* adapted to the end

of pulling down the fabric of idolatry and building up the church? Did not they and others, as *wise* master-builders, lay the foundation, and exhibit to all ages a pattern of *what* they were to build, and *how?* and what sort of workmen ought to be chosen to carry on the sacred edifice, till it should reach its destined dimensions—its breadth and length filling the earth, and its top reaching to heaven? According to the theory of some, God should have refused to give the increase when Paul and Apollos labored, lest the talent they brought to the performance of their work should obscure the lustre of his own power and grace in the effects that followed.

I am well aware, at the same time, that many individuals of small pretensions to literature, and not greatly distinguished by talent, have been exceedingly useful in the Lord's vineyard both at home and abroad. They loved and served their Master faithfully, and he honored them with success, not *because* they were men of more limited abilities; but *although* they were so. I am persuaded, that when any such instance of a man of inferior talents, in the general sense of the expression, being rendered highly useful in his sphere, is narrowly examined, it will be found that he actually did possess some specific qualification for that very work assigned him, to which, under the blessing of God, his success may be traced.

The case of the Moravians furnishes an apt illustration of my meaning; and perhaps a short consideration of their proceedings may serve both to obviate objections to the view I have attempted to give of the requisites of the missionary character, and illustrate the doctrine of the necessity of adapting means to the end.

I have represented piety as the foundation of the missionary character. This we may, without any great stretch of charity, concede to the Moravian missionaries. I have insisted upon a predilection for the work as another requisite, and the mode of the admission and appointment of missionaries among the United Brethren is a practical acknowledgment of this principle. Good natural parts, good temper, great practical wisdom, prudence, self-denial, ardent devotion to the work, have also been enumerated among the desirable qualifications, and I think the numerous biographies of deceased Moravian missionaries,* as well as the communications from the brethren now laboring among the heathen, prove that most of them possessed these excellencies of character in an eminent degree. Amidst all the genuine Christian simplicity so admirable and so characteristic of these worthy servants of Christ, I have been again and again gratified by the proofs their letters and journals furnish of their acute discrimination of the character of the people to whose conversion† they

* Since writing this page I have turned to the Periodical Accounts of the Brethren's missions, to refresh my memory by glancing at the brief memoirs they contain of departed laborers. The part that caught my eye, viz. "The Life of David Zeisbergen," exemplifies what I have said,—great quickness and decision of character, accompanied with a large share of prudence and zeal, a fine talent for languages, &c. were his distinguishing qualities. Had I time to search for further confirmation of what I have stated, it would be easy to select abundance from these records of missionary exertion. See also the accounts of T. S. Schuman.—Per. Acc. No. 103.

† This word *conversion* is used by the Moravians in a sense which has an odd effect upon an English ear. They seem to mean nothing more by it in their application of it to the heathen, than the circumstance of becoming a scholar or catechumen. Thus the phrase often occurs in their journals,

have devoted themselves. How wisely and circumspectly they deal with them—how well they know the heavenly art of winning and ruling them—gaining the entire command of their converts, while they make themselves more beloved as fathers and friends than feared as masters. Nor is the charming naïveté and happy Christian cheerfulness of the female part of their communities less worthy of notice, as qualities of great price in such situations as they fill. If occasionally passages in the brethren's letters or journals may be met with that betray superficial knowledge, or the substitution of warmth of pious feeling for soundness of judgment, many paragraphs might be pointed out indicative of their quick perception, sagacity, and good common sense.

I am far from approving some things in the management of their communities (e. g. their regulations as to marriage and single life), and I am not blind to some defects that adhere to their system; nor can I admire the cant phrases peculiar to the sect, plentifully scattered over the pages of their publications; but they hold up a pattern to the world of the unobtrusive but mighty energies of the Christian character. If their piety and zeal have not been made to shine out as in combination with superior talent, it has been because their talents, their whole hearts and souls have been devoted to the accomplishment of *one* thing—the

that such an one desired to be converted, i. e. to come under instruction. They of course understand that a farther and more important change must take place before this heathen disciple becomes a *Christian*—and their manner of procedure shows it, for such are not admitted to Christian privileges till proof is obtained of their sincere belief and profession of the truth.

conversion of the heathen, and that chiefly by patient and persevering oral instruction. To this they have directed their energies, and we know with what success. They have not astonished us by new discoveries—by deep researches into nature—they have not expatiated on the fields of philosophy and science, but they have solved some of the most interesting problems in the science of human nature, by showing what the Esquimaux, the Cherokee, and the Hottentot can be made, under the transforming “word of the cross.”

But if we advert to the pretensions of the missionaries in question to general learning, here I believe they will be found defective; and to their deficiency in this point perhaps is to be attributed their having done so little in the way of translating the Scriptures and other books, and introducing generally the knowledge of letters among their congregations gathered from among the heathen. Besides, as if conscious of their inability in this respect, the fields of exertion they have chosen are the very spots where the want of literary acquirements would be least felt. Their Greenlanders, &c. have no books or learning of their own, like the Hindoos, Chinese, and other pagan nations, high in the scale of general improvement, skilful in the arts of civilized life, and among whom learning raises its possessor to a proud elevation above the unlettered multitude; not but that learning might be turned to good account in Labrador or South Africa, but the want of it may there be more readily dispensed with than at Benares or Serampore.

It is true, that God employs the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; “and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to con-

found the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." And there have been many striking illustrations of this from the days of the apostles to the present time. But it is easy to overstrain such passages in their application to every department of the work of God; and they will be found to have utterly mistaken the meaning of such declarations, who think themselves thereby warranted to act as if the excellencies of character which God has bestowed upon individuals, and the height of acquirement in knowledge human and divine, which, by his blessing, they have reached, were talents of no value, and of no use in the propagation of the Gospel—as if miracles were to be expected in the accomplishment of the work carried on by instruments physically and intellectually (and why not also *morally*?) disqualified for the task—as if it were expected that men should successfully study languages without any talents for philology, or make translations of the Scriptures into a foreign language without being able to distinguish things that differ in their own—or feel the difficult and delicate situation of a Christian missionary, without being possessed of an ordinary measure of discretion in ordinary affairs. It may be allowable to interpret the text above quoted as countenancing such views when the gift of tongues—of prophecy—of discerning of spirits—of healing, &c. are restored to the church. But till then it will be a wiser course to seek the blessing of God to crown the employment of the best means we can command; and, after all, there will be infinite room for him to manifest that "no flesh shall glory in his presence."

When men pervert texts of Scripture to excuse their supineness in the work of God, as if the employment of human agency was a tacit infringement of the divine prerogative, or, refining still farther, while they employ means, yet, to preserve all the glory to God, insist upon using only such as are unfit, protest against learning and genius, and hail imbecility and stupidity as the best qualifications for that work which is to be performed "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord,"—I say, when men entertain such sentiments, or hold principles evidently drawing such conclusions after them—and withal point us to the word of God as their authority; it is hard to find language expressive enough to denote the mischief of such perversions. The evil may be conceived by supposing the sentiments to become general, and to be acted upon throughout the Christian world.

The most strenuous advocates for choosing men fitted* to be ministers of the New Testament by gifts as well as by graces, know and confess the inadequacy of all "might and power" without "the Spirit," as much as they who are afraid of suiting the means to the end. The truth is that the power requisite to convert a sinner from the error of his ways, is so infinitely beyond all the power of human agency—that the most excellent means and the worst possible are nearly on a level; with this difference however, that they who use the former honor the command of God, while the latter hesitate to obey, lest fit means should prove too efficacious, and so eclipse the glory of the work of

* 2 Cor. iii. 6. "Who hath *ἐκάνωσεν* fitted us for being ministers," &c.

the Spirit ; or even accomplish the work altogether without the interposition of his agency. It is easy to see which of these schemes ascribes more glory to God—whether that which consistently employs proper instruments at his command, leaving him to vindicate his own honor, and make it appear that the success depends not upon the means but upon Him who blesses them ; or that which pretends to be so morbidly jealous for the display of the divine power of the Spirit in converting sinners, as to employ instruments qualified for the work assigned them, by the rule of contraries—a scheme which savors much of the imbecility of understanding they so much admire.

If men go forth in this holy cause with a proud reliance on their own wisdom and excellency of speech, God will confound them before their enemies, and humble them till they acknowledge that it is not for man to glory in his presence ; but it is possible that there may be the most heart-abasing conviction and confession that to God belongs *all* the praise, even when the instrument has been highly qualified and most wisely adapted for the service assigned it. Such instruments were Martyn and Milne, and many more who rest from their labors, and whose works follow them. And such instruments are many who are still laboring with manifest tokens of the divine approbation ; and who will say that the cause would be better served by men less highly qualified, or that it deserves not and demands not the best talents, and the most extensive learning, and the warmest piety, and the purest zeal the Christian world can furnish ?

The man who is himself learned, and yet decries the advantages of learning to a minister or a mis-

sionary, only proves that learning cannot supply the want of common sense; but the *illiterate* man who contends that learning is little worth, is evidently in the predicament of speaking evil of that which he knows not; and should he assume the office of an instructor, perhaps he might not deserve a better character than those who “desired to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say or whereof they affirm.”

But if Scripture is to be quoted in defence of doing nothing, or doing nothing to purpose—in defence of lukewarmness in the cause of God, or of principles which would soon paralyze every right effort to promote it; I will quote Scripture also, and ask what is the import and bearing of that remarkable saying, “the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light?” The answer is this—the children of this world exercise a prudent forecasting care in the management of their concerns. Their undertakings are planned wisely, and conducted judiciously. They take an enlightened view of what is before them—foresee evils—secure advantages—select proper means—neglect nothing conducive to success—make provision against future necessities—“rise early and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness;” and for all this they are commended. Yea, an *unjust* steward is commended for his wise and crafty policy in making to himself friends against the time of his approaching need of them. But what is the lesson the children of light are to learn from this parable? Not to imitate the *works* of the unjust—but to imitate their *wisdom*—to show, in the management of their spiritual concerns, equal address, and intelligence, and zeal.—It is as if the divine Teacher had said—a man of

this world, unjust, but wise and prudent in his secular business, is more to be commended than the spiritual man who acts as a fool in all that relates to his own salvation and that of others.

O it is fearful to think that in the day of judgment many an unjust steward, who made himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness—many a pharisee who compassed sea and land to make one proselyte—many a merchantman, who, seeking the goodly pearls of time, visited in the spirit of commercial enterprise every quarter of the world—shall rise up and condemn the unwise conduct, and mistaken policy of the professed children of light.

I will just add, before closing this letter, that I believe some who talk lightly of the qualifications required in a missionary to the heathen, are not aware of the conclusions to which their hypothesis leads; but if it proceed not in the tacit assumption that God *prefers weak instruments* that his power may be more conspicuously displayed—and involve not the consequences of tempting God, and giving the enemy occasion to triumph, I have utterly mistaken the matter. I am, &c.

LETTER VIII.

ON THE QUANTITY OF MEANS EMPLOYED.

My dear Friend,

I AM impelled to take up once more the subject which occupied the greater part of my last letter; but in a view sufficiently distinct from the former,

I hope, to screen me from the imputation of giving you a bare repetition of the same sentiments.

I endeavored to combat the notion, that for the conversion of the heathen world able men are not required—that little stress should be laid upon the *kind* and *quality* of means employed, since the grand effect is to be produced by the power of God.

It is my purpose now to expose a similar error as to the QUANTITY of means. “No matter,” say some, “though the means we employ be inadequate in extent, as well as humble in quality, according to human reckoning; our handfull of plain unpretending missionaries will be sufficient for the accomplishment of the whole undertaking if the hand of God be with them; and it may be confidently hoped, that he will take occasion from the circumstance of their weakness to manifest his own power, and show that the work is not man’s but his, and his the glory of accomplishing it.”

The pious sound of such words is imposing, and they *pass for solid argument* with many who feel as if it would savor of profaneness to question the correctness of the views that dictate such speeches. While with others, this convenient view of the matter seems to keep all quiet in the inner chamber of conscience, and hushes an occasional unwelcome whisper that we are not doing all we can, nor exerting ourselves as the mighty extent of the work demands.

Let the question, however, obtain a fair hearing. Were I to come in contact with an individual who disapproves of attaching so much importance to *fit means*, I would encourage him to the discussion, by the assurance that if his be really the right view of the matter, missionary societies and the

Christian public at large may derive great advantage from the adoption of it; for it will prove that upon his principles instead of *too little* being attempted and accomplished in the way of using means, *too much* is done already. Missionary societies need not proceed any longer in the selection of men for actual service in the field of missionary enterprise on the principle of appointing only men fit for their work, and in such numbers as to bear something like an adequate proportion to the extent of the field. The directors of such societies have sometimes, from the scarcity of laborers perhaps, been compelled to send forth men comparatively unfit, according to the common idea of what fitness means; but such men were the best and most desirable instruments they could possibly appoint; and now they may save themselves much expense and trouble in fitting missionaries, by preparatory study, &c. since the laborers employed cannot be too weak and too ignorant. Besides, they may now very safely relax in their exertions to increase the number of their agents either for strengthening existing missions or for forming new ones; for the truth is, there are too many already in the work. Missionary societies have already gone too far: they should have been contented to employ perhaps a dozen or a score of plain simple men with the Bible in their hands. Nothing more should be attempted, if we would give God room for the display of the irresistible force of his arm in overthrowing the kingdom of the enemy, without the might and power of man.* I really feel

* The *worse* and *fewer* the means we use so much the better. Numerical force and intellectual and moral power are of no value, or worse than none; for God can equally effect his own purposes by many or by few.

reluctant to put down in words the monstrous perversions of Scripture, and almost blasphemous conclusions to which this insidious notion leads. I am far from supposing that all who disapprove of the idea of *men-made* missionaries and ministers, as they are scornfully termed, actually carry their theory so far, that they must, to be consistent, either abandon their principle, or submit to be charged with the consequences of it. I have myself heard remarks made in a captious, sarcastic way of the exertions of modern missionary societies, as if by bustle and ado about preparing and sending out so many missionaries, they thought the kingdom of Christ could not come without their helping hand, and so on. Now, if people will take refuge in such a position as that we are now considering, it is but fair to show them its insecurity—that it can neither endure the scrutiny of human investigation, nor will it avail them when God shall bring every work into judgment.

But it is time to turn to a different view of the subject. If so extravagant a sentiment is untenable; if it is absurd, that means are to be approved in proportion to their unsuitableness and insignificance; if it is our sober and decided judgment that means, both as to *quality* and *quantity*, as far proportioned to the work as possible, ought to be used, it will require little argument to prove that as yet we have not done enough; that our means still bear a vast disproportion to the end, and that increased efforts on every hand are called for, both to extend the application of the agency God is pleased to employ for evangelizing the world, to EVERY kindred and tongue, and people and nation; and to render the operations of the missions already established more efficient by such additional sup-

port, by such accessions of numbers, piety, talent, and zeal, as shall prove that we are in earnest in the work.

Into this argument, however, I do not enter. Much has been ably said and written upon it, and could I say anything more and better than has been already said a hundred times, I would gladly do it; for, after all, I fear the Christian world is not yet roused as it ought to be to the paramount claims of the heathen upon the compassion, nay, upon the justice of their Christian brethren. To bestow the blessings of salvation upon sinners is an act of sovereign mercy on the part of God; but to spread the knowledge of that salvation is matter of imperative duty, of bare justice, on the part of the Christian world. And be it remembered, that, while the guilt of non-performance lies heavy against the professors of the religion of Christ in general, in the day of judgment the neglect will be charged home upon every individual who has not done as he was commanded. "Go ye into all the world and *preach the Gospel* to every creature," is the command of Christ—O! who can calculate the guilt of neglecting to obey *such* a command!

But, in the mean time, as the means in actual operation are comparatively small, the ardor and zeal of every laborer ought to be so much the greater. If the number of missionaries that *can* be sent out to the work must fall short of the necessity of the case, this is an additional reason why those who are sent should be men of competent qualifications. When a small detachment of soldiers are appointed to a difficult and important service, they should be all picked men. To commit such an enterprize to raw undisciplined recruits would be sure to draw the public disap-

probation on all concerned ; but the saying before quoted still holds true—"The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of the light."

I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

ON DIFFERENT MODES OF MISSIONARY OPERATION.

My dear Friend,

It is the besetting sin of many theorists to take a view of their subject from one point only. Hence all that belongs to it is seen under a certain aspect ; while, by the simple process of changing his position, the theorist might learn that his subject has more sides than one, and so he might obtain the means of modifying, correcting, and perfecting his views. Perhaps you think I am guilty of this sin in insisting so dogmatically upon the mental and moral powers of missionaries ; as if the great variety of field did not admit, nay require, a similar variety in the character of its cultivators. I freely grant that the Pagan and Mohammedan world, the great field in question, presents a vast variety of soil. There is a wide disparity between the intellectual habits of the learned Brahmin and the wild Caffre—between the philosophical and mystical Soofie, and the American Indian.—As the ground is not every where alike, the mode of cultivation proper in one of these departments of the field will not be altogether adapted to another. Each will require a description of talent in the

laborer suited to the peculiarities of the work. One talent is needful here, another talent is useful there, and a third, different from both the former, is required at a third portion of the field. The deduction then from the fact of the variety of the work is, that a corresponding diversity of talent must be brought to bear upon it; that the laborers must be located according to their respective capabilities of performing work of the description required in the particular fields assigned them to cultivate. But you would not infer, surely, from the circumstance of the comparative learning and civilization of some heathen countries, and the comparative rudeness of others, that in the one case laborers of good abilities are called for, and in the other laborers of no abilities at all, or next to none. I have yet to learn where that country is, and what kind of people inhabit it, where the work of evangelizing them is so easy that the weakest and "least esteemed in the church" may be entrusted with the accomplishment of it.

Consider that with all the acknowledged variety in the intellectual character and external circumstances of men, HUMAN NATURE is universally the same; that it is found in all the inveteracy of its enmity against God, and hatred of truth and righteousness from the line to the pole. And this—this in all the various dresses it wears, is the enemy the missionary has to encounter and overcome. Human depravity is at the foundation of all the opposition made to his efforts—and he is only successful in so far as he obtains the victory over it.

The mention of human depravity brings us then to the very essence of the difficulty of the missionary work. Were it not for this the ministry of the

Gospel among the heathen would be as easy and pleasant as it is arduous, and often painfully discouraging. But here we see also very clearly what it is that is necessary to the success of the undertaking. It is the outpouring of the Spirit of all grace. When the Spirit is shed forth abundantly the difficulty vanishes, the word of God has free course and is glorified, the flame spreads, the converts multiply—while the missionary stands still, filled with wonder and gratitude, and beholds the salvation of God. He sees that the work is carried on by an arm more powerful than his, he feels his own insignificance and gives all the glory to God.

The representation of the subject, perhaps you think, militates against the general strain of my letters, inasmuch as when the Spirit of God descends upon the missionary fields, the characters and talents of the laborers will appear to be of little account.

But I will just ask, if it be warrantable to expect such showers of blessing without suitable previous preparation of the soil? The Spirit of God does not descend like the rain of heaven alike upon the untilled desert and the cultivated field. It is strictly limited to the extent of ground over which the hand of the laborer has previously been in operation. Unless an absolute miracle be expected, we must necessarily suppose that the Gospel has been carried to the place, that the knowledge of it has been communicated to the people by the instrumentality of men; implying on their part the previous study of languages, the translation of the Scriptures, perhaps the formation of schools, and the whole train of means conducted with suitable care, wisdom and zeal. And all this, of course, by

men competently qualified for their respective labors. There is no instance on record of any great spread of the Gospel either in ancient or in modern times, but in connection with a system of corresponding means, to which God, as he has wisely appointed them, is pleased to give his blessing. And there is no reason from the nature of the thing, or any warrant from Scripture, so far as I can see, to expect that the future extension of the Redeemer's kingdom will be effected without the intervention of human agency.

Besides, when the subject is viewed practically, it is most evident that even in the case of a general awakening of a whole district or people to the concerns of religion, while the work is confessedly the doing of the Lord, the labors of ministers or missionaries, so far from being superseded, are rendered more necessary than ever. And if there are any circumstances which call emphatically for the exercise of great wisdom, prudence, firmness, discernment, quick understanding, sound judgment—in a word, for the best energies of mind as well as the best affections of a zealous and devoted heart, it is in the time of such a revival; for then the enemy is busiest; then the danger of mistake is greatest; then the responsibility of the laborer is heaviest; then the greatest good or the greatest mischief may be done; then the work may, humanly speaking, be either greatly promoted by the ability of the agents, or marred by their errors or incapacity.

The accounts of revivals in America, Scotland, and other places, and the recent history of the South Sea islands, will illustrate and confirm all I have said.

But this leads me, in further explanation of my views, to speak of the general plan for conducting

missions to the heathen. Let me then be indulged with your attention a little longer.

There are two general methods, which, if pursued to an adequate extent, promise with the blessing of God to effect the consummation so devoutly to be wished, the universal spread of divine truth through the world. The one is the employment of numerous able missionaries, with a host of followers in their train, as catechists, artizans, printers, &c. to colonize heathen countries and introduce the Gospel with civilization as her handmaid.* According to this plan a very great number of missionaries of various descriptions, must be sent out, and vast resources will be required to support them. In some countries a colony of Christians might support itself in the course of a few years independently of foreign aid. But in most instances the missionary emigrants would require liberal encouragement and support from home, because in the selection of spots on which to form settlements they must be guided as much or more by a regard to their *usefulness* as their temporal advantage, *conveniency*, or *comfort*. They must inquire, not where they have the best prospect of succeeding as cultivators of the natural soil; but where they may be most useful in sowing the word of God, and causing the moral wilderness to flourish and bear fruit. It might seldom be possible to combine these two objects,

* If every schoolmaster and artizan and agriculturist is to be termed a missionary, I have no objection that the name be extended to them, and in that case I concede that attainments inferior to those I have represented as necessary to the character of a missionary, using the word in a more restricted sense, may be sufficient. But I have employed the term missionary to denote the *principals* of a mission, and so understood, I humbly conceive the standard of qualifications has not been raised too high.

and therefore sufficient provision should be made against the probable wants of such settlers, that they might not be under the necessity of studying their own means of subsistence in the countries where they settle, rather than the means of rendering themselves effective promoters of the evangelization of the people.

It would be a noble project if whole churches, pastors, and flocks were to emigrate to other lands, and become at once examples of the power of the Gospel and promulgators of its blessed truths to the heathen nations. Were fifty or a hundred British churches thus "to give themselves to the Lord," and establish themselves in well chosen spots in pagan countries, what might not be expected, with the blessing of God, from such a measure? Themselves strangers and pilgrims upon earth, true Christians would thus exhibit more of their own real character, and would enjoy, it might be confidently expected, in spiritual prosperity an ample compensation for some worldly disadvantages; were the little leaven thus to mingle itself through the whole mass, how soon might not the whole lump be leavened! Surely there are many churches which as bodies have zeal and love and devotedness enough, if the scheme itself were at all practicable. And why is it not? The practicability of it will appear in different lights according to the state of mind in which it is contemplated. Perhaps if it had been proposed to the members of the church in Jerusalem to spread themselves through the surrounding region, testifying to all repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, there might have been many plausible objections started; but the providence of God soon made them glad to adopt the measure which before might seem im-

practicable. When obliged to flee for their lives, they found other places of abode, and, scattered among unbelievers, had the finest opportunities of spreading the Gospel, and were no doubt enabled to say in reference to the persecutions that drove them from Jerusalem, "It is good for us that we have been afflicted." There may be no present appearances that threaten the British churches with a similar fate; they may not be driven into exile: but were persecution for conscience's sake to arise, what would be thought of the *practicability* of colonizing heathen countries? And would not this plan afford the best conceivable means of cherishing and bringing into notice promising talents for the higher departments of missionary labor? Would not the younger members of churches be trained up and excited to regard the service of God among the heathen as a great and most important work; and, seeing with their own eyes the fields white unto harvest, would they not *desire* to become laborers?

I will not anticipate objections, but to prevent being misunderstood, I would only add, that it is not necessarily supposed according to this plan that every individual member of a church, without exception, should embark in such an emigration; some from age, state of health, &c. might be improper persons to join their brethren; but with all necessary deductions the great body of a church might, I am persuaded, with the prospect of doing incalculable good, thus go forth in the name of the Lord, devoted as one man to the promotion of his glory.

Do not tell me that the example of the churches planted by the apostles, and the exhortations addressed to them to abide every man in his own calling, &c. make against the scheme now suggested. It is true the apostles do not enjoin upon the

churches the duty of changing their abode in order to fix their residence among a heathen population. But why? *They were planted* in the midst of the heathen, they were themselves societies gathered from the Pagan and Jewish world, and were on every hand surrounded by those who still continued in the state of darkness from which they had been translated. There was in those days no such thing as a *Christendom*, a portion of the earth distinguished by the general profession of the religion of Christ. The whole world was then, what many parts of it are still, inhabited by unbelievers, with here and there a church of Christ gathered out of the nations. The aim of this, or any other plan of missionary enterprize, is to bring the whole world under the denomination of Christendom.

It has almost passed into a proverb, that with all the devotement of heart, and life, and substance which Christ requires of his disciples, every one is not obliged personally to engage in this work. Admitting the general truth, there is at the same time reason to fear that this convenient proverb is often carried too far, and may help to blind the eyes of some to their duty, suggesting a reason for declining obedience, which is sufficient or insufficient, according to circumstances. This is a serious subject, and requires the solemn consideration of every one who calls Jesus, Lord and Master.

The other general method of conducting missionary operations is to send forth a body of missionaries who shall enter heathen countries, and bend their strength, not so much to the mere raising of congregations of Christians, and attaching them to the missionary settlement, as the Moravians do; but rather direct their resources with a view to the spread of Christianity

through the length and breadth of the land, aiming by apparently slow but effectual measures to sap the foundations of the existing superstition, and introduce Christianity in its room, and contemplating the accomplishment of this chiefly by the agency of the natives themselves. With this view, opening seminaries for the instruction of the youth, training up promising young men to be teachers of their countrymen, making every suitable convert an evangelist; at the same time preparing versions of the Scriptures in the vernacular languages, promoting the cause of general education, introducing useful knowledge, &c. The preaching of the Gospel directly to the natives, as far as practicable, is implied of course. What I mean as to the general plan is, that the missionaries do not *confine* themselves to the communication of oral instruction as their great and only branch of labor.

These two methods have each their advantages and disadvantages. The first is the favorite of some friends of missions, while the second is extolled by others; but it appears to me, that either the one or the other should be preferred according to circumstances. In one country the former may be more effective, in another the latter. And in most places, perhaps, a system of operation combining both, that is, partaking of the first by adopting the plan of partial colonizing, and of the second by laying hold of all the advantages for carrying forward the work to be derived from the employment of natives as catechists, &c. The same mission in different stages of its history may also in part alter or modify the general plan of its procedure: for a mission, at first conducted wholly by foreign teachers, may in the course of time, and

after being blessed with a measure of success, in a great degree dispense with foreign aid, and proceed on the plan of employing natives, till at length, having a sufficiency of internal resources, it may be left wholly to itself,

I am, &c.

LETTER X.

ON THE PREFERENCE DUE TO THE MISSIONARY SERVICE.

My dear Friend,

THE choice of a profession ranks among the most important acts of a man's life, and most of all important, when the profession chosen is the Christian ministry. I have already offered you some thoughts upon the motives, good and bad, which may actuate an individual in determining to assume the sacred character. I seem not, however, to have said all I wish to say, and therefore, at the risk of being tiresome, or even tautological, I must write on, throwing myself upon your friendly indulgence.

When a man determines upon following any particular line of secular life, the chief questions respect the adaptation of his talents and dispositions to the nature of his proposed pursuits, his prospects of success, honor and comfort. His motives, any further than his own interests may be concerned, are of little consequence. But when a man proposes to make the service of the sanctuary the

business of his life, a most solemn and impartial investigation of his motives ought to be made, as in the sight of God, before he advances a single step; as if he is not, in his own conscience, fully satisfied that his motives are such as God will approve, he should relinquish the design, whatever his talents or qualifications in other respects may be. A physician, or lawyer, need have no scruples about the exercise of his respective functions, although he may not be conscious that a disinterested desire to promote the good of his patients or clients prompts him to serve them to the utmost of his ability. If he perform his duty, he is worthy of his reward. To obtain his living may be the ultimate end of his exercising his profession, and he may honorably and consistently avow it to be so. But if a minister of the Gospel is not influenced by a love to the souls of men, and a zeal for the glory of God in their salvation, he is disqualified in the most essential particular for his office. On this account it is, that young men, whose minds are inclining to the ministry, should be directed to give this point their most attentive consideration; and if they obtain proper satisfaction of mind in regard to purity of motive, it will, in most cases, go far towards determining their call to the work.

Most young persons, whose rank in life is such that they must think of devoting themselves to a profession, find their minds leaning towards some particular employment, which is generally such as their connections or circumstances render desirable or expedient; and, consequently, the choice is made, and the matter proceeded in. But many young men of piety, who have not yet made choice of a profession for life, are apt to look

upon all secular professions with equal indifference, or even aversion; and others, whose minds have been brought under the power of religion, after their pursuits for life have been entered upon, become dissatisfied with the employment to which they found themselves bound. They derive no pleasure from the performance of the duties required of them, and long for the moment when they can disengage their hands and their head from the irksome, daily routine of their calling; happy only when they can bid a short farewell to it, and enjoy the society of kindred minds, or taste the sweets of retirement, and indulge in their favorite exercises, undisturbed and unknown. Such persons are apt to look upon ministers as the happiest of human beings. They have little to do with the things of the world; their duties must be their delight, for they consist in studying the word and the works of God, and speaking of them to their people. Their leisure for study, their opportunities of acquiring knowledge, their advantages for self-improvement, all appear most desirable; and the pious young man, thus speculating upon the office of the ministry says with a sigh of longing desire, "O that I were a minister!" Now all this is a speculation of selfishness, and there does not enter into it a particle of the true motive that ought to actuate the breast of a servant of Christ. There may be nothing inconsistent with the love of souls and the glory of God; but when views of personal enjoyment fix the choice, and take the place of higher considerations as principles of action, what must follow when experience shall have taught that these selfish ends cannot be gratified? What shall bear up a man in the actual discharge of duties, which in reality will be found, many of

them at least, very different as to personal gratification from the fancy picture the young aspirant to the sacred office drew for himself? In a word, what shall he do when his principles of action fail him? But, perhaps, if he makes self-gratification the *end* of his ministry, he may have his reward.

But I must come to the point I have more immediately in view, in bringing forward these remarks at present.

As an individual, actuated in the manner above described, will seek for himself a station in the church squaring as much as possible with his love of ease, literary leisure, &c.; so, on the other hand, one whose heart is truly devoted to the *work* of his lord and master, will prefer that station where he has the best prospects of real laborious usefulness, where he may do most good to souls, and most extend the Redeemer's kingdom among men.

In what light, then, ought the several claims of the heathen abroad and the Christian community at home, to appear to the mind of a pious student of divinity, or one who wishes to become a student with a view to the ministry? and what are we to make of the *fact*, that there are many hundreds of young men of this description, studying with a view to the pastoral office in Great Britain, while scarcely one individual is coming forward to offer himself as a missionary?

Is it that they have adopted the opinion combated in another letter, that persons of mean talents are good enough for missionaries? Is it that the young men who crowd our academies and universities, the nurseries of the church, think their abilities too good to be thrown away upon the heathen? Do they modestly leave it to less

gifted brethren, who give no favorable augury of becoming good preachers, to occupy a sphere abroad, where their deficiencies may be less felt by themselves, and less observed by their hearers? I should be glad to find a more favorable explanation of the fact; and I can indeed make a more charitable supposition in the case of a few: but how to account for the great bulk of aspirants to the ministry preferring home service, more honorably to their principles and motives, I confess myself at a loss. It this moment occurs to me, that some may shelter themselves behind the example of the race of ministers of the last century, who seem to have thought very little of the duty of practically and generally seeking the conversion of the heathen. But without attempting to defend or to criminate the ministers of a former period, it is most manifest that those of the present have had their attention drawn to the subject in a way unprecedented, at least in modern times. The claims of the heathen have been so pressed on their notice, the actual state of the heathen so clearly brought to light, the practicability of attempting and effecting their conversion so proved, the facilities so increased, that they who neglect them *now*, are utterly without excuse.

Do students for the ministry really think that their services are so much *needed* at home, that to go abroad would be, at the best, a very questionable course? I doubt whether they can think so. Let me suppose a case for the sake of illustration. Suppose the state of a certain empire to be as follows:—The rightful sovereign in one part of his dominions is generally acknowledged, his laws are respected, and the great body of the people professing allegiance to his govern-

ment, and instructed and ruled by faithful servants of the king, enjoy peace and prosperity. But the rest of the empire, all the foreign possessions of the crown, all the distant provinces, are in a state of disaffection or open rebellion; multitudes of the people have utterly thrown off their allegiance, have chosen leaders for themselves, and trample on the authority of their prince. The king, therefore, desirous of reducing these misguided subjects to obedience, issues a proclamation, inviting his faithful and devoted servants to exert themselves to repress the spirit of rebellion wherever it may be found; to bring back the rebellious to their duty; and not to relax in their efforts till tranquillity be universally restored, and the honor of the king and government be every where acknowledged and supported. The king, however, depending on the fidelity and attachment of those who own his sway, accepts the services of volunteers only, and invites them to enrol themselves in his name. Many do so, accordingly, professing ardent zeal for their king, and compassion for their undutiful fellow subjects; *but they decline foreign service*, where they are most wanted, preferring to parade at home, leaving the honors and dangers of the field, where the rebels are in arms, the field of actual war, to such, forsooth, as may not be able to make a respectable figure in their home establishment. There is a numerous well appointed corps stationed where all is quiet; but where the mass of the population is in a state of avowed shameless hostility to their rightful king, there is scarcely a single man to stand up for him and his cause; and few or none of his volunteer corps at home have the courage, or the self-denial, or the love to their

king, to face his enemies! I leave you to apply this parable.

It is a glory peculiar to the Christian system, that its motives to obedience are as powerful as its precepts and doctrines are pure and heavenly; and so it is possessed of the grand desideratum, the want of which left the boasted ethics of heathen antiquity essentially defective. Their ethical systems, like their celebrated statues, were astonishing monuments of human genius; but they were lifeless. But how is this peculiar character of Christianity illustrated by its professors? Does their conduct demonstrate that they are governed by a religion of motives? Is their performance of the most difficult and self-denying duties it prescribes, but the means of showing the power it exercises over them? or at any rate, are there so many examples of this, that it is no breach of charity to account for the rare cases of neglect of duty, by ranking the few who are guilty of such neglect among mere hypocritical pretenders to the Christian name?

The admission of duty not followed up by corresponding practice necessarily proves one of two things: either that Christianity is deficient in motives, or that the omission of acknowledged duty betrays a radical defect of principle. The question then with regard to those who profess Christianity and yield no practical obedience to some one important duty, is reduced to this alternative. The influence of Christianity over its disciples is as powerless as the systems of Aristotle or Epicurus were over theirs; or, the professor of Christianity who neglects, or deceitfully compromises the duties it prescribes, is a hypocrite.

It is easy to see how these remarks bear upon the duty of Christians to propagate the Gospel. I cannot conceive of a more triumphant proof of the divinity of the Christian religion than would be furnished by its disciples being universally animated with a zeal to extend the knowledge of it through the whole world—not such a partial inefficient zeal as draws a paltry annual contribution to a missionary society—but such a zeal as would lay the whole moral and mental energies of the Christian world as a consecrated offering on the altar of God. *Some* Christians do all they can; and when all Christians shall act as *some* already do, it will be a happy omen for Christianity and for the world. When Christians, instead of replying to the endless quibbles of skeptics and heretics, shall rise up and bend their whole efforts to make the pagan world Christian, they will effectually and for ever silence the infidel, and prove the righteousness of the cause of God and truth.

It is one of the strangest things in the world to hear men talk of the mysteriousness of the ways of God in suffering so great a portion of the world, and for so many ages, to remain destitute of the light of revelation. Is it not more mysterious that God has refrained from pouring out the fierceness of his indignation upon the guilty possessors of that revelation? who, shutting up their bowels of compassion from their perishing brethren, have falsified their own profession of loving God by living in the habitual neglect of the Saviour's command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Had no such command been given to publish the *remedy* of God's providing for the universal disease of sin with all its present and future misery, men would have been less inex-

cusable ; but the command vindicates the character of God, and throws all the guilt of keeping back the sovereign remedy for a perishing world upon those who were solemnly charged with the duty of dispensing it, and the blood of all that have perished through their neglect will be required at their hands ! Let none think that the system of means at present used is at all commensurate with the length and breadth of the undertaking, nor is there yet room for any to conclude that the over zeal of others will make up for the deficiency of theirs. In efforts to convert the world there can be no works of supererogation. The men of this generation are not like children sitting in the market-place and saying, " We have piped unto you and ye have not danced." They expect to see them dance without being piped to ;—they wonder why the world has not been converted long ere now ;—but what is the cause ? The Gospel has not been preached to it. Speak not of the decrees of God. Whatever be thought of them they can never furnish an excuse for disobeying the command of God. It has been said that the effectual enlightening of the world with the beams of divine truth must be as independent of human effort as the rising of the sun. And that is a truth in its own connection never to be forgotten, for it is God's part of the work ; but man has his part assigned him to perform likewise—namely, to call upon the nations to awake and behold the light—saying, " Arise—be enlightened, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

I have elsewhere argued that we may safely leave God to vindicate his own prerogative to convert the nations to himself. He will not give his glory to another, nor share it with even his most

eminent servants; and they have no reason to fear (the very idea is presumptuous) that their efforts will render the power of God less manifest. There was trial made for four thousand years of what the wisdom of the world could do to improve human nature. Philosophy and civilization, and all the resources of human genius were expended without effect; they utterly failed in turning man from sin to righteousness, but the "foolishness of God" accomplished it. The preaching of the cross, derided by the Greek, and stumbled at by the Jew, was the power of God to salvation. But God still retains in his own hands the prerogative of making this doctrine effectual to the salvation of them that hear it; and only eternity perhaps will fully explain why generations of missionaries were suffered to labor almost without success—why societies and churches brought all their energies to bear year after year upon the work of evangelizing the world without accomplishing the object, except to a very limited extent. But one reason of this—if we may without presumption suppose it—may be, that when the Spirit is at length poured out as floods upon the dry ground, and nations are born in a day, all the world may see in that glorious advancement of the kingdom of Christ a grand illustration of the principle, that it is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, who showeth mercy."

I am yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

ON MINISTERIAL FAITHFULNESS TO CANDIDATES
FOR MISSIONARY SERVICE.

My dear Friend,

A YOUNG man, whose mind is turning toward the ministry must think himself happy if he enjoys the privilege of having recourse for consultation and advice to a judicious friend; and tutors, ministers, and intelligent private Christians ought to consider the influence they may possess over any young person of this description as a valuable talent. It gives them opportunities of usefulness which ought to be most anxiously improved; for the amount of good they may do in this way, may extend far beyond the immediate advantage which the young friend or pupil may derive from their attentions. I can scarcely conceive of any circumstances in which the Christian solicitude of a minister or tutor is likely to meet with a richer reward than when it is employed in directing, encouraging, and watching over one who is aspiring to the ministry of the Gospel, whether in a heathen or Christian country. When a judicious Christian friend takes such a young man aside, and enters with him into close, affectionate and instructive conversation, incalculable is the good that may result to the individual from the views and impressions of his future work which he may thus acquire. I believe it is the complaint, in most cases, even of the most serious young men, that their minds are too little affected with the awfulness and responsibility of the vocation they have in prospect,

and that they labor often, as they suppose almost in vain, to have their minds more deeply imbued with feelings and sentiments suitable to the solemn engagements to which they look forward. O how such minds would value the condescending attention and counsel of an experienced Christian friend; how would the tender anxiety, suitable cautions, faithful admonitions, and stimulating exhortations of a venerated minister tend to awaken and keep alive the best impressions in the mind of the young candidate for the sacred office. But if such intercourse might prove so advantageous to the most serious and devoted, how much more needful to others of a lighter cast of mind. Besides, such private intercourse would afford the finest opportunities of acquiring an accurate acquaintance with the character of the individual, and enable the wise and experienced instructor to adapt his strain of address and general behaviour towards his pupil in the way most likely to profit him. Is the young man apparently light and superficial in his views of the real nature of his contemplated work—its duties—difficulties—discouragements—what sacrifices it will require—what anxieties he must feel—what privations he must endure? Let the faithful monitor never cease to sound in his ear the most serious and awakening representations of the evil and danger of entering upon a life of professed devotion to the service of God with a trifling and unprepared mind. Let him manifest the utmost fear lest his young friend should delight himself with vain expectations of honor or ease, or be carried away with false appearances as to the privileges of the station he may fill, or be viewing as a trifle the weight of a ministerial charge. Let him be told that he will take

a very incorrect and improper view of his course of preparation if he thinks all he is to acquire at an academy is a knowledge of a few branches of learning to fit him for the mechanical or merely intellectual part of his future work. Let it be inculcated with all solemnity, and earnest endeavor to make him feel the force of it, that he must now be undergoing a *preparation of heart* for the work; that during an academical course the retirement it affords from the bustle of the world should be carefully improved for the purposes of self-improvement, in a still higher sense than even the acquisition of useful learning. All the leisure he can command from the other parts of his diversified education should be conscientiously employed in furnishing his mind with those principles, motives and desires, which are essential to the character of a faithful servant of God in every situation. And as these are not to be acquired by mere dint of study and natural effort, but are the special gifts of God, he ought to be much in prayer for these right dispositions; and he must meditate and pray over the subject continually, reckoning that whatever may be his other acquirements, if he be deficient in this preparation of the heart he must go forth to his work unqualified for it in the most essential respects, and not likely to acquit himself with honor or comfort when engaged in it. God may in infinite mercy forgive the sin of his past negligence in seeking the "best gifts," and shower down upon him his Spirit in an extraordinary manner; but it is utterly unwarrantable to presume upon any such special interposition of mercy: and the hope of it must not be suffered to encourage the neglect of those most important exercises of mind for which a residence at an academical institution affords such

favorable opportunities. In a word, if the student does not leave the seat of learning more humble, more devoted, more given to prayer, more serious, more consistent in his whole deportment, and more impressed in his general views of his holy calling than when he entered it, he has lost one great end of his abode there. And if tutors have neglected to direct and assist him in growing in grace as well as in knowledge, they have failed in the performance of an important branch of their duty.

It may not be irrelevant to notice, in connection with this, one thing which is as important as it is obvious: namely, that when young men cease to be *students*, in the sense of residing at a seminary of learning, they are not to cease to be students in the sense of pursuing the study of every useful branch of knowledge as they have ability and opportunity. They must study to retain what they have learned, and be continually adding to their stores; and more especially they must consider themselves to be always learners in what relates to their ministerial work—the knowledge of the Scriptures—of their own hearts, and of the duties they owe to those over whom the Holy Ghost may make them overseers. It was a most important, and to all ministers a most instructive, reason assigned by the apostles for the appointment of deacons in the church at Jerusalem—that *we may give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word*. With this corresponds the charge of Paul to Timothy, “Give thyself *wholly* to these things;” and again, “Give thyself to reading, to meditation, to prayer; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.”

It would be easy to say much on such a subject,

but I close with one remark more as to the value and importance of a faithful and judicious friend to a young man of the description referred to in this letter. There are some points to be decided as to fitness for the work which the individual himself is best acquainted with; such as the purity of his motives, the sincerity of his professions, the reality of his desire for the work, and his unreserved devotion to it. But most other things must be left with his friends to decide. He cannot be supposed capable of forming a correct estimate of his intellectual rank, nor of the view others take of his general character: self-conceit or true humility equally disqualify for judging correctly on all such matters.

It follows, therefore, that the duty of advising, encouraging, dissuading, reproof, should be performed by the minister, tutor, or other friend, with the most conscientious diligence and faithfulness. Nothing is more mischievous than the false delicacy or tenderness which withholds needful warning or reproof; and, on the part of the young pupil or friend, nothing is more likely to retard his progress in the acquisition of that which is of the first moment for his true advantage, than a disposition to despise or take offence at the faithful admonitions of an experienced Christian. In short, these things ought to be matter of conscience both with the teachers and the taught. If the reprover is counted an enemy because he tells the truth, or if he be restrained from the performance of his duty from the fear of meeting with such a return—if the reproofed is secretly convinced of the truth of the severe but friendly words of one who seeks his good, yet practically disregards them, in all these cases there must be self-condemnation. The au-

thority of conscience may be slighted for a season, and principles of action in opposition to it may bear sway; but in every such case there must be the inward consciousness of having committed wrong. The accusation is lodged, and no power on earth is able to withdraw or to cancel it. The man, on the contrary, who has the testimony of a good conscience, has within him a spring of happiness which the hand of misfortune cannot touch—safe from the power of every enemy, and proof against all the vicissitudes of time. This happiness is an earnest of the heavenly blessedness, as the good conscience itself is the pledge of acquittal in the day of final judgment: it is a token of the approbation of God, and that contains in it the essence of all felicity.

I am yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

ON APATHY TO THE EXTENT OF THE CLAIMS
OF THE HEATHEN WORLD.

My dear Friend,

IN a missionary sermon, preached about forty years ago before the society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge, the following passage occurs: "To a dark and benighted world at large our efforts cannot extend: new arrangements of providence alone can pave the way for its conversion. But while we feel for the unhappy situation of the vast multitudes of our fellow-creatures remaining in ignorance and idolatry, and lament

our incapacity to bring them relief, let us humbly and earnestly recommend them to the compassionate regards of the great universal Parent. Let us plead with him as arguments his respect to his own glory, and to the best interests of his rational offspring;—let us plead with him his own truth and faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, that by methods known to his infinite wisdom he would enlighten the dark places of the earth with the pure light of evangelical truth, and hasten the happy time foretold when the dominion of Christ shall extend ‘from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.’”*

I have quoted this passage because I consider it as expressing the sentiments of a class of persons among us still very numerous, although, I would fain hope, decidedly on the decrease. Much has been said and written on missionary subjects since the date of the discourse from which the above extract is taken; but not enough, it would seem, to convince some of their DUTY in reference to this point—the duty of making greater exertions and greater sacrifices for the spread of the Gospel.

The leading sentiment of the passage under review is obvious enough; but all its bearings may not be at once perceived. With a view to expose the real nature and tendency of it, I beg leave to offer a few remarks.

Whilst the notion is entertained that our efforts cannot extend to “a dark and benighted world at large,” there may be the full admission that so to extend them, were it possible, would be a noble

* Kemp’s sermon, entitled “The Gospel adapted to the State and Circumstances of Men.” Scotch Preacher, vol. iv. p. 231.

and Christian enterprize ;—one in which every true Christian should rejoice, and assist as far as in his power. But the attempt is too great!

The words I have quoted are immediately preceded by an inference drawn from the adaptation of the Gospel to the state and circumstances of man, to this effect—“that to extend the knowledge, and to promote the influence of this divine system, are the noblest objects of human benevolence.” But alas! with such objects for the exercise of benevolence, and such a field as the world for the display of it, unfortunately for “humanity,” they are beyond its reach! The scheme is impracticable. The world is too benighted; and our means of enlightening it are too limited to permit us to indulge the hope that any efforts of ours can be brought to bear with effect upon “the world at large.” “New arrangements of providence alone can pave the way for its conversion!” and with this sentiment we fold our hands, and sit down, thinking that we are absolved from all obligation to concern ourselves any farther about the matter!

The rest of the paragraph is much in the same spirit with the pious expressions of the rich man who dismisses the starving beggar from his door with “God help you, poor man!” instead of giving him the alms he can very well afford. “Let us humbly and earnestly recommend them to the compassionate regards of the great universal *Parent*: let us plead with him, as arguments, his respect to his own glory, and to the best interests of his rational offspring.” Compare with this James ii. 15, 16. “If a brother or a sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things

which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so *faith*, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Now I leave you to judge what is the worth of that faith which "pleads with God his own truth and faithfulness in fulfilling his promises; that by methods known to his infinite wisdom he would enlighten the dark places of the earth with the pure light of evangelical truth," &c. The deceptive and pernicious sentiment which lurks behind this fair show of concern for God's glory is, that it is God's work and not ours—that it is for *him* to see to it; and, although we must FEEL for the unhappy situation of the vast multitudes of our fellow-creatures remaining in ignorance and idolatry, it is not *our* fault that these evils are not removed! Such a prayer, accompanied with corresponding "works of faith and labors of love" for the relief of the miseries it professes to deplore, would be a suitable acknowledgment of the need of God's blessing to render human means effectual. But when such a prayer is made to supersede all efforts, or offered as an apology for declining them, it is, I apprehend, nothing better than a solemn insult to the divine Majesty—a compound of wretched hypocrisy and impiety.

I conceive that the sentiment upon which we are now animadverting has a most prejudicial tendency, although it be not carried so far as to paralyze *all exertion* whatever—that it operates in a *degree* in the breasts of many who aid by their subscriptions, and it may be, by their general influence and prayers, the cause of missions to the heathen. Where its operation is partial, it allows the individual to think he has done enough when he has done a *little*; whereas a right perception of duty on this point would forbid him to think he

had done enough, so long as by any means whatever he could contrive to do *more*.

It is unnecessary, I should hope, to enter into a formal refutation of the opinion that "to a dark and benighted world at large our efforts CANNOT extend." That opinion is, blessed be God, already *practically* contradicted. The undertakings of missionary societies that have sprung up since Mr. Kemp preached the sermon referred to, circumscribed as their attempts have hitherto been, show that Christians are deterred neither by distance of place nor extent of population from embarking in missions to any part of the world. They distinctly recognize the principle that "the world at large" is the object of their efforts. However disproportionate in point of quantity are the means yet in activity or in preparation for the cultivation of the moral soil—"the field is the *world*."

But the very magnitude of the object occasions a kind of despondency. Many would enter with all their soul into some scheme of benevolence of more limited extent, where the evils to be removed or alleviated are immediately in view, and the effects of exertion subject to personal observation; but the conversion of the world is an object so vast, so distant, so far beyond our grasp, and the effect of any exertions of ours, so utterly insignificant, that when applied to for their aid, they give their money with a desponding sigh, as if they despaired of any greater effect of human exertions, upon the ancient fabric of ignorance and idolatry, than might be expected from throwing so many pieces of silver against the walls of a material fabric of stone and lime, that had resisted all the effects of time for thousands of years.

When an object is viewed as unattainable, or at

least not attainable *now*, except to a very partial extent, it is impossible, according to the constitution of human nature, that men should engage with zeal in the pursuit of it. Or if by any means they could be induced to begin, they cannot be expected to persevere with spirit. On this principle the sentiment against which these remarks are directed is, I think, peculiarly reprehensible; for the tendency of it is to repress all ardor in the best of causes; and the effect of it, so far as it operates, is to unnerve the arms of all who are engaged in it, and then to justify the state of supineness to which it has reduced them.

In this cause we can do nothing aright unless we do all we can. If any one come short of the limits of his ability in aiding this cause, he betrays a criminal indifference which renders all that he does accomplish worthless in the sight of God; and however it may be overruled for good by Him who can make the lukewarmness as well as the wrath of man to praise him; yet such a spirit, considered in itself, must be regarded by infinite PURITY and LOVE, with the loathing occasioned by that which is neither cold nor hot.

I take it for granted then, in opposition to the sentiment of the sermon, that to the world at large the efforts of Christians *can* extend; at least in the same sense in which the merchant can carry his goods, and the soldier his arms to every part of the world, *i. e.* they *can* if they *will*; and therefore the only impossibility in the case resolves itself into our own unwillingness to obey a plain command, to fulfil an imperious duty; and this is the simple view in which the subject ought to be contemplated.

I repeat then that in attending to this duty we

have not done *enough*; so long as by any means whatever we might contrive to do more. Let this view of the matter but possess the mind of Christians generally; let the friends of missions bring the amount of their exertions into fair comparison with the claims that are made upon them; let one and all of them be penetrated with the conviction that they have not yet done all they might. Let them faithfully act up to these convictions, and I will be bold to predict that in the course of a very short period the *missionary world* will wear a very different face. There will be a spirit and an activity, and a devotedness in the work in all its branches, which we have never yet witnessed.

Perhaps the author of the discourse modified the expression of his views as to the conversion of the heathen world, in order to make his argument tell with greater effect upon the immediate object of the society, whose cause he was advocating; for he says, "Although by good wishes and prayers alone, we can express our Christian benevolence to the infidel world at large, yet on behalf of certain corners of it we may certainly employ more active and more immediate exertions. To the remote, uncultivated, untutored districts of our own country in particular, we may; and every principle of religion and every feeling of humanity call upon us to send relief by such means as are within our power."

Now I beg you to observe here three things, 1st—It is admitted to be "a duty, enforced by every principle of religion and every feeling of humanity, to send relief to the necessitous by such means as are in our power." 2d—That we can express this benevolence to the world at large by good

wishes and prayers alone. And 3d—That therefore, it is our duty in effect to confine our exertions within certain geographical boundaries. Now I maintain that the middle term of this syllogism is a mere assumption, instead of a thing rigidly proved, and we have already seen that it is utterly false, consequently the conclusion falls to the ground. But I appeal to you whether the effect of such a representation of the nature and extent of their duty to a Christian congregation, would not be (if they admitted the correctness of the preacher's statements) to make them feel fairly delivered from all obligation to extend their *practical* benevolence beyond the limited bounds he had been pleased to prescribe.

There can be no question as to the claims of our immediate neighbors, our countrymen, upon our compassion; but their claims are not exclusive of those of our "brethren" the Hindoos, or the Caffres, or the cannibals of New Zealand; and surely the man incurs an awful responsibility who takes upon him, by presenting to his hearers partial views of duty, to absolve them from the obligation to listen to the command of Christ to go into ALL THE WORLD and preach the Gospel to every creature. For such in effect is the doctrine of the sermon before us.

You know too well the present state of things in many religious circles, in various parts of our native country, to reckon this an obsolete discussion. Would that the evil had been confined to the date of the sermon, or had at least terminated with the eighteenth century! But I am afraid that many ministers, who, we may hope, know and love the truth, treat the subject of evangelizing the world (at least as to any practical purpose) as a subject which may very consistently be let alone.

When they do allude to it, they will own that they ought to give it their "good wishes and prayers;" but it is rather by their silence upon the subject—by their allowing it to be lost sight of and forgotten, that they tacitly authorize their people (so far as their authority may go) to view it as a matter they may safely leave alone—as, in short, no concern of theirs.

I cannot account, upon any principle more favorable to the parties concerned, for the state of dormancy in which many congregations and churches still remain, in regard to a cause which to all Christians ought to be so dear and important. I know that there are many noble exceptions to this evangelical apathy (shall I call it?); and were all the churches, were all Christians to do as some of them do, that is, to the utmost stretch of their means, this censure would be without an object. But alas! it is not so. The capabilities of the Christian public are matter of numerical calculation, and, much as some do, the amount of all that is done, is but a small fraction of what, according to a very moderate computation, might be effected. I have now in my eye their pecuniary capabilities; but what shall we think or what shall we say of their ability to furnish men? How many fit *men* do all the churches of Great Britain and Ireland furnish *annually* to go out as missionaries to the heathen? Is it the fact that not one church in a hundred, actually sends out a single missionary? Is it a fact that thousands of Christian churches meet week after week, and year after year, for the observance of the ordinances of Christ, and that it never occurs to one of all these multitudes of professing Christians, and is never once suggested to them by their pastors, that there

may be some individuals among them who should go as messengers of mercy to their heathen brethren? If this is the fact, I leave you to draw the inference. Guilt lies somewhere. Is there not ground for addressing such bodies of professing Christians, in words originally spoken in reference to another subject, "Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you."

On this I shall not now enlarge, but I would ask, If such has been, and is the state of things in many Christian churches, ought they to remain so? It is high time for all whom it concerns to consider this question. And unless they can justify their neglect of the heathen, let them repent, pray for forgiveness, and seek grace to "walk henceforth in *all* the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."

Within the period that has elapsed since the publication of the sermon now commented on, the greater number of the existing missionary societies date their commencement. Many foreign missions have been undertaken, and a degree of business-like activity and system characterizes the operations of most of them; and their exertions God has been pleased to honor in many instances with an encouraging measure of success.

But it should be observed, that while Christian benevolence has taken a wider range of exertion, and is now travelling to the ends of the earth, it has not been absorbed by these foreign operations. Christian zeal and benevolence have opened new channels for themselves at home also, and are flowing in various directions through the length and breadth of the land. Consequently the Christian world is not now pursuing, with undivided attention, either the propagation of the Gospel among the heathen

nations, or the enlightening of the dark and long neglected corners of our own country. Both have a share of attention. And these two great classes of objects, the foreign and the domestic, are again subdivided into various minor classes, so that there is a great variety of benevolent objects now demanding the support of the Christian public.

But in this state of things, there is more need than ever to sound the alarm in the ears of professors, lest, deceived by this appearance of multiplied and diversified activity in doing good, they become deaf and callous to the cries and miseries of those to whom they have yet afforded no relief;—lest, thinking only of what they are doing, they forget that there is something they are not doing, and which nevertheless ought to be done.

Is it not matter of notoriety, that many, when the claims of the missionary cause are pressed upon them, crave to be excused lending their aid, on the ground that they assist some other benevolent and religious institution? This, to say the least of it, is surely making the performance of one duty the reason for neglecting another. To propagate the Gospel wherever there are human beings to receive its glad tidings, is either the duty of Christians or it is not. If it be the duty of one, it is the duty of all, according to their ability. But in the case supposed, the plea in effect is *inability*. I grant that a poor man who may give his mite to one object, may not be able to give to two or more, and in his case the plea is valid. But I am supposing the plea of inability to be urged upon insufficient grounds, and the pittance of charity bestowed on one beggar, made a pretence to send away twenty, unpitied and unhelped.

Let me suppose for the sake of illustration, that

in time of war, it were put to the patriotism of the people to furnish voluntarily the necessary contingent for prosecuting the war with vigor; there is good ground to conclude that in multitudes of instances there would be the attempt to evade altogether the payment of the smallest fraction towards the expenses of the war; and in another immense number of instances there would be the attempt to answer the demand made upon their generosity and public spirit, by the payment of a sum far below the due proportion to be expected from persons in their respective circumstances. But all the while these persons would wish to be thought lovers of their country, and contributors to its defence and aggrandizement *as far as they were able*. Suppose now, that instead of leaving the matter to the optional contributions of the people, a levy were imposed upon all, proportioned as far as could be ascertained to their means, would not this tax in thousands of cases fall much heavier than the people, when left to their own view of the duty, thought they were able to sustain? I may here repeat a text quoted before: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." Human governments do not leave it to their subjects to determine how much each shall contribute to the purposes of the state; for if they did, imbecility, inaction, and derangement of the whole political machine would soon be the consequence.

We would not have the expenses necessary for carrying on the war against the empire of darkness, to be imposed in the shape of a tax upon the subjects of the kingdom of Christ; but till they are generally roused to more adequate conceptions of the amount of means requisite, and become more

conscientious in doing and sacrificing *what they can*, it is easy to see that, so far as human agency is concerned, the contest may be indefinitely protracted, and the enemy continue to laugh at the irresolute measures, unwise counsels, languid zeal, cowardice, and imbecility of the confederated, or rather divided, Christian world.

Turn now to the matter of fact. To subdue the whole heathen world to the obedience of Christ, the combined energies of all the Christians in the world are equal to the maintenance of an army of five or six hundred men.* No wonder that they are ready to sink under the burden of supporting this immense body of forces. It is some comfort to think, however, that the enemy must soon be overpowered by such a host, and therefore the oppressive duty of maintaining it is but for a short season! I feel that this is not a subject for irony, but I know not in what way I can better express the feeling of shame and sorrow which the contemplation of this subject excites. It is indeed mortifying to think that the Christian world can do so little, if it *can do no more* than has been done; and it is not less mortifying, if it can do more, *that it does it not*.

I will not repeat the humbling comparisons that have been made between the amount of the annual

* It is true that the separate societies which devote their funds to the translating, printing and distributing of the Scriptures, and other societies, not strictly *missionary*, are supported by the Christian public. These furnish the missionary (to carry on the figure) with arms and ammunition—and may be supposed included in the view we are taking of the hostile operations now going on against the prince of this world. Let therefore the whole accumulation of means be kept in view. There is, alas, no need to hide some part of the means used, in order to make the amount appear small.

receipts of our benevolent societies, and the receipts of one of our London theatres for a short season; the outfit and provisioning for a few months of one of our ships of war, or the equipment of a small armament for the protection or conquest of some insignificant island; but one thing I will say, if we improve not the present advantages which the favorable situation of political affairs, the flourishing state of our commerce, and the extent and credit of our foreign relations, put within our reach, God in his righteous providence may soon deprive us of them all; and the news from England and India that has just reached us, puts a new emphasis on this consideration.

To conclude then, what if the directors of our missionary societies should make a demand for supplies adequate to the equipment and maintenance of four times the number of missionaries at present in actual service, would the demand meet with a refusal as a thing impossible? or, might it be accomplished? By a determined renunciation of a few superfluities—by retrenching a few fashionable luxuries—by the sacrifice of a little taste and a little empty pleasure, it might. This must be obvious to any one who chooses to reflect upon the subject, and that not to *four* times but to ten times the amount of the present scale of operation?

Then why is the thing not done? Either because the object is not of sufficient importance to justify such sacrifices—or——

I leave you to supply the rest.

I am yours, &c.

LETTER XIII.

ON THE BEST MEANS OF CONVINCING THE HEATHEN OF THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

My dear Friend,

THE difficulty of proving to the heathen the truth of Christianity is a subject which has often engaged my thoughts. I have also endeavored to elicit the sentiments of others as to the best method of setting the evidences of the truth before the mind of an unbeliever, but hitherto have met with nothing altogether satisfactory. I now offer you a few observations on the subject, more for the purpose of setting the difficulties connected with it in their true light, than as containing a complete solution of them.

The evidences of the truth of the Christian religion are various and abundant; they are sufficient to carry full conviction to the mind of any one capable of appreciating the force of them. But the historical evidences are from their very nature ill adapted for popular conviction; they are beyond the reach of the great mass of the people; and the internal evidences cannot be felt or understood by those who have no personal experience of the power of the truth on their own hearts, and who have no living examples of it before their eyes. The evidence from miracles (now that miraculous powers have ceased) resolves itself into the testimony borne to the miracles of the first age of Christianity, but the truth of that testimony the heathen may be supposed to have no means of ascertaining.

Thus the great mass of evidence comprehended

under these three divisions is almost wholly inaccessible to the heathen world. That Christianity was attested by miracles—that the commencement of the Christian dispensation was the close and the fulfilment of a prior economy of miracles that had subsisted from the very infancy of the world—that the success of Christianity by such instruments as its first disciples, and in such circumstances as characterized that era, is itself a most stupendous miracle—that the concurrent voice of ancient history, the testimony of enemies as well as friends, confirm the truth of the principal facts recorded in our Scriptures,—that these Scriptures, as we now have them, are the genuine and unadulterated records of divine revelation, handed down to us through a long succession of ages—that the character Christianity claims is established by the *effects* it has produced in millions of instances, in turning sinners from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God—that this evidence is continually accumulating by the additions making to the number of its believers who “have the witness in themselves”—that the purity of its precepts, the sublimity of its doctrines, the holy spirit it breathes, the evils it cures, the joy and peace it bestows, the glory it reveals, the consistency of all its parts, its being so worthy of God, and so suitable to the state of man, all, all bear witness for it as a revelation not of earthly origin—that it comes from God and is “truth and no lie.” This, and much more than all this, the heathen in the first instance can neither appreciate nor believe; they may have the bare *testimony* of the missionary who addresses them on such subjects, that Christianity is supported “by many infallible proofs,” but they labor under a total incapacity of ex-

amining them. It is true that much of the character here given to Christianity might be learned from an attentive and intelligent perusal of its sacred records; but this is supposing a degree of candor of mind and interest in the subject which it is too much to suppose the heathen to possess. They have a religion of their own, and they demand at the very outset some proof of the truth of the new system proposed to them before they will think it worth their while to give it any farther attention.

Missionaries, when they begin to address themselves to a heathen population on the subject of religion, are often called upon to give some visible sign or demonstration of the truth, as the only condition upon which they can expect to be listened to and believed. Could the missionary perform miracles in confirmation of his doctrine, as the apostles and other Christians of the primitive age had the power of doing, the matter would be instantly set at rest: no better attestation could be given, and no more could reasonably be demanded. Though there might still remain in the breasts of the heathen all the resistance of the carnal mind to the pure, humbling and spiritual doctrines of the Bible, there would be little room for cavil against the truth of the "strange things brought to their ears."

But as no Christian missionaries, at least none deserving of the name, now pretend to the possession of miraculous gifts, and must meet opposers and objectors on other ground, it becomes a serious question how they may best accomplish the task of setting before the heathen the Gospel accompanied with such proofs or arguments in its favor as may be convincing alike to the rude and savage, and to the refined and civilized worshipper of idols.

After what I have said at the beginning of this letter you will not suppose that I pretend to dictate to missionaries how they ought to proceed in this case. I conceive that missionaries *ought to be* men capable of wielding the weapons of their own warfare ; for it would be an ungracious supposition indeed, to suppose men sent out in the character of evangelists to instruct heathen nations so ill qualified for encountering the arguments of an acute heathen *intellect*, or the captious objections of a nettled and depraved heathen *heart*, as to be non-plussed at the very first onset. But the remarks now made on the difficulty of reaching conviction to a heathen mind upon the first principles of the Christian scheme, and the consequent necessity of the Christian instructor being prepared to do justice to the cause of truth, and to bring it off with honor when assailed by a cunning and determined adversary, may serve as a corroborative argument to what I have said in another letter upon the "qualifications of missionaries."

I remark then that it is vain to expect that any heathen can obtain conviction of the truth of Christianity without a due degree of attention to the subject. You may place an object in the clear light of the noon-day sun, but in order to any man's perceiving it he must turn his eye upon it. It may be boldly declared to any inquirer that proofs of the truth of Christianity are at hand if he will but attend to them, and that they are sufficient to satisfy him of the truth of its pretensions unless he shut his mind against conviction. A willingness to be convinced is essential to the character of a candid inquirer after truth ; and to be deceived in a subject of so much moment as religion, is a thing so much to be dreaded, that there ought to be the

utmost seriousness and attention brought to the investigation of it. Such ideas strongly pressed upon the mind of a heathen, accompanied with hints as to the most palpable errors of his own system, may, by the blessing of God, dispose him to allow some weight to the arguments that may then be laid before him for the truth of the Christian system.

These arguments are various, and must of course be presented in a shape adapted to meet the peculiar state of mind, opinions, practices, and habits of the individual; and of all this the missionary must be the judge.

The following have occurred to me as a few of such arguments, and they are more or less applicable to all the varieties of heathen systems in the world.

(1.) All men, whatever may be their distinction of birth, country, rank, or profession, are on a level in the sight of God. A religion therefore which comes from God will treat men as naturally equal, and as all standing in the same relation to him. It will not render salvation easier for the rich than for the poor—for the wise than for the unwise—for the learned than for the ignorant. Your religion is not such a system; Christianity is.

(2.) Man is conscious of his sinfulness; his conscience condemns him: and consequently, if he does not altogether banish reflection, must be afraid of death and all that follows it. A religion that comes from God must be fitted to quell such fears in all its true disciples—give them peace and hope in the prospect of eternity, and that upon solid, intelligible, satisfactory grounds. Your system cannot dissipate such fears; it cannot yield such a hope; Christianity does.

(3.) The dictates of natural reason, when calmly listened to, testify of a *God*, and conclude him to be a perfect being, essentially good as well as infinitely great, and infinitely wise. A religion therefore which comes from him must correspond with this idea: a revelation from himself must fill up the faint outline. The Christian revelation does so: yours is at utter variance with it.

(4.) The soul of man is capable of endless happiness; and that a happiness adapted to its spiritual nature, which for the want of better terms may be called intellectual and moral happiness. A true revelation will represent the future state of happiness it promises to its followers as consisting of enjoyments corresponding to the spiritual nature of the soul—a state of intellectual and moral perfection. *Such* is the heaven the Christian revelation makes known. To *such* a heaven it leads believers; for *such* a heaven it prepares them—a heaven of purity and love and blessedness derived immediately from God himself. Your heaven consists of sensual gratifications, the indulgence of base appetites and passions.

(5.) Man's existence on earth is but for a limited period, a few years; but his future existence is endless. The interests of eternity therefore are of infinitely greater importance than those of time. A religion that has come from God will accordingly deal with men chiefly as immortal creatures, and the great burden of it will be the necessity and means of providing for the happiness of the soul in a future state of being.

This is the character of Christianity, but your system represents present pleasure, wealth, prosperity, &c. as some of the chief things to be secured; your system is liberal of promises of all

temporal good to its adherents, and many of your services have no other end or object but present sensual good, the removal of temporal evils, or the securing of temporal prosperity.

This is well expressed by a modern author. "One of the leading characteristics by which the religion of the Bible is distinguished from those systems of philosophy and morality which many would impose upon us in its place, is, that every thing appertaining to it bears a relation to eternity. The object of all other systems is, at best, to form the manners, but this rectifies the heart; they aspire only to fit men for this world; but this, while it imparts those dispositions which tend more than anything else to promote peace, order, and happiness in society, fixes the affections supremely on God and things above."*

(6.) If God be a pure, a good being, the objects of his favor must be made like himself. Approximation to his purity and perfection, so far as creatures may, must be the aim, and ultimately the attainment of all whom he admits into heaven. Therefore a true religion will not merely teach that the divine nature is adorned with every moral perfection, but will inculcate purity, and the exercise of every virtue upon its disciples, both as their duty and their happiness. It will palliate no sin: it will represent the love and practice of iniquity as irreconcilable with happiness; it will represent a course of sin as incompatible with the enjoyment of the favor of God, and inconsistent with the character of one who *hopes* for a happiness whose element is *holiness*, the happiness of a sinless state. Hence a true religion will allow of no indulgence

* Fuller's Essays, p. 257.

of lust, it will furnish no food for pride, no fuel for the fire of wrath, hatred, or envy ; it will come with a sweeping proscription levelled against the entire mass of human corruption. *Such* is Christianity ; and therefore they who love sin hate it. *Such* is not your religion, and therefore they who love sin may have no objection to it. But from this arises a strong presumption that Christianity is true, and your system false.

This is but a specimen of the way of stating the claims of Christianity as a system worthy of farther examination. When the missionary succeeds in fixing the attention of a heathen to the all important subject, a great point is gained ; and if the missionary be well acquainted with the notions and prejudices of the idolaters to whom he is thus delivering his message, he may, by properly availing himself of this knowledge, present the Gospel scheme of salvation in many impressive points of view. The doctrine of the cross of Christ may appear strange. The heathen may hate it, or despise it, or cavil against it ; but this is the grand theme upon which the Christian missionary will delight to dwell. This is the teaching God will bless to the conversion of sinners ; it is indeed emphatically "the word to the heart," which heals and wounds and renovates it. The *love of Christ* may be exhibited in bright and striking relief, against the scowling personifications of *malice, cruelty, terror*, and every abomination, which form the objects of the worship and fear of the deluded votaries of heathenism.

The contrast drawn by a late excellent author, between Christianity and Mohammedanism, may here be quoted as exhibiting the argument for the former, arising from its holy and heavenly character. "Were all men *consistent* Mohammedans," says the

author, "all would be sensual, selfish, ambitious, deceitful, malignant, having a form of godliness but denying the power of it. Were all men *consistent* Christians, all would be piety, purity, humility, integrity, disinterested, liberal, self-denying love. The earth would be full of happiness approximating to that of heaven, and preparing for it; and without any effort to induce them, men would every where beat their swords into plough shares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and would learn war no more."* What is here said of Mohammedanism is equally true of heathenism, only the contrast might be rendered more striking by still farther deepening the shades of the system of falsehood, by adding all the epithets of evil enumerated in Rom. i. 29—31; for the unrestrained indulgence of every evil passion is the natural fruit of systems, which substitute in one form or other outward observances for moral righteousness; which in many instances directly encourage sin, and in others hold out that encouragement by offering the pardon of the most enormous offences at the easy rate of an offering to their bloody gods, or a gift to the priests.

It is not enough to say that the false religions of the world are not incompatible with the wicked lives of their professed followers; they actually render the unhappy beings who adhere to them more wicked and more wretched than otherwise they might have been. The direct contrary of all this is true of Christianity.

Perhaps we are not warranted to expect that Christianity shall ever be absolutely universal, in

* Rev. T. Scott's Answer to Rabbi Crool's Restoration of Israel.

the sense of every individual upon earth being a true Christian. But what a glorious scene would it be if every Christian, wherever he went should find a brother and a friend. The purity, and love, and devotion, and happiness of heaven would be realized upon earth. This is a most transcendently pleasing and glorious prospect. Now, I ask, how does this idea bear upon the question of the truth of Christianity? To my mind it is a most striking proof of the truth of a system that the universal prevalence of it would necessarily produce so heavenly a degree of all that is beautiful and desirable, and holy and happy.

Apply the same test to Mohammedanism, and I shrink from it. A world full of Mohammedans, would still be a world *full of sin and misery*.

Apply the test to any system of heathenism. Suppose that system to become universal, and the world would still most emphatically be a world of sin and misery! The judicious missionary will not fail to make good use of this argument, and there are occasions which enable him to bring it home with striking effect; and there are minds, even among the heathen, quite accessible to this mode of argumentation. Their reason will admit the justness of the statement, however much their hearts may rebel against the obvious conclusion, and their habits present a firm resistance to its practical influence.

But it is needless to attempt to point out any general method of convincing the heathen of the truth of Christianity. The particular manner of dealing with modest inquirers, cavilling objectors, insinuating artful disputants, and open fearless opposers, must be left to the missionary himself; and he would be ill qualified for the office he as-

sumes as a teacher of Christianity among the heathen, were he unqualified to meet all these varieties of unbelievers, and unable "by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers."

But this suggests the necessity of missionaries having their *minds* and *hearts* especially prepared for this difficult branch of their duty. Their entrance among the heathen, their gaining a favorable ear, their being *heard out*, their success in exciting inquiry, or even opposition—all this mainly depends, under God, upon their acting *wisely* in their intercourse with the heathen, and that from the very first. And how are they to do this? I think the great secret lies in our holding "fast the faithful word as we have been taught." In other words, having the Gospel in our hearts; feeling its vital warmth, being all alive to its inestimable worth to our own happiness, and its indispensable necessity to the *happiness* of the sinners we address, as yet ignorant of it, destitute of its blessings, and blind to its glories.

Indeed not merely for a missionary, but for every Christian, the grand secret of knowing how to behave in every situation, and how to speak in every company, is to maintain a spiritual frame of mind. This is the effectual check of levity, censoriousness, vain disputing, and every other evil that stains the beauty, and mars the pleasure and profit of social intercourse. It is better than a thousand maxims. Let the heart be but right, and out of its abundance will proceed only that which is good. If the heart of the missionary be in this state he will "WATCH for souls." It is an obvious truth, but it cannot be too often repeated, that a right disposition of mind is of mighty consequence in the proper discharge of the duties of the minis-

terial work, and I think emphatically so in regard to the peculiar situation of a missionary among the heathen. In his intercourse with them they will often understand his temper and spirit better than his arguments. Or at any rate, if the former do not give weight to the latter, they will appear light indeed, however sound and logical his reasonings may be. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear, *having a good conscience.*" There is a beautiful connection between the several parts of this exhortation.

I will just add in connection with this, that the meekness of spirit here inculcated has a wonderful power over the hearts of all who behold it; and hence it is so often introduced as a grace to be cultivated with unremitting care, and exercised upon all possible occasions. "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all *lowliness and meekness.*" Eph. iv. 2. "Follow after faith, love, patience, *meekness.*" 1 Tim. vi. 11. This is the exhortation of Paul to a missionary, and another is to this effect: "But the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in *meekness* instructing them that oppose themselves." 2 Tim. ii. 25. "Put them in mind to be gentle, showing all *meekness* unto all men." Tit. iii. 2. "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, gentleness, humbleness of mind, *meekness.*" Col. iii. 12.

I am not fond of apologies, but I feel it proper when I think of the difficult subject I have attempted to handle in the former part of this letter,

and the monitory strain of the close of it, to repeat that I disclaim the idea of setting up as an instructor or monitor to those of whom it would better become me to learn. But the communications of sentiment, although it consist of nothing very new or striking, may elicit new trains of thought in other minds, which but for such communications might have lain for ever dormant. "Whosoever hath his mind fraught with many thoughts, his wits and understandings do clarify and break up in the communicating and discoursing with another; he tosseth his thoughts more easily; he marshalleth them more orderly; he seeth how they look when they are turned into words; finally, he waxeth wiser than himself; and that more by an hour's discourse than by a day's meditation."* What is true of discourse is in a great degree true of writing; and I have not been altogether without a view to my own improvement, in "turning these thoughts into words," and if they serve the purpose of "a whetstone of your wits," as the same author expresses himself, "although they do nothing more, I shall not regret having communicated, nor will they be altogether useless." Allow me to borrow another illustration to the same purpose. "Two men in a frosty season come where they find a company of people ready to starve. The one wraps himself up lest he should perish with them. The other in pity falls to rub them, that he may recover heat in them, and while he laboreth hard to keep them, getteth far better heat to himself than his selfish and unprofitable companion doth."†

Thus much in reference to the subjects of this

* Bacon.

† Baxter.

letter, but you may extend the apology if you please to all the others I have sent you.

I am yours, &c.

P. S. A former page of this letter would have been the proper place for inserting what follows. The mode of argumentation which I have supposed to be necessary in the case of cavilling and prejudiced heathen, is not to be viewed as an attempt to remove their objection to the Gospel itself; but rather as suited to convince a heathen that it has come from God, and is therefore "worthy of all acceptance," and if his favorable ear is so far gained, that he listens under this impression, a great point is secured. If he admits that there is ground to believe the message the missionary delivers is from God, there is no disputing about the terms of the message itself.

But as before intimated, the doctrine itself carries in it strong internal marks of its divine original, and while the unbeliever hears, "he is convinced of all, he is judged of all; and thus the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and repeat that God is in you of a truth."

It is of importance to bear in mind that it is in the form of a testimony the Gospel is to be published to the heathen. Now the design of publishing it is to produce a *belief of its truth* in the minds of the hearers. When this is distinctly kept sight of, there will scarcely be room for any material error in the manner of presenting the truth to the attention of the heathen. But it may be remarked in passing, that this gives a striking view of the necessity of the missionary himself being a man who clearly understands the import of the

message he is to deliver. If he mistakes or mutilates his message, he not only leads his hearer astray, but obscures and wrongs the Gospel itself; and in so far as he departs from the genuine spirit of it, in so far he lessens the evidence of its truth, and increases the difficulty of believing it.

But this is not all. If he errs in regard to the real terms of the message he delivers, although his hearers should believe what he says, their faith would not be the faith of the Gospel. It may be one of the many compounds of truth and error current in the world, that go under the name of the Gospel, but which, in various degrees are perversions and counterfeits of it.

I merely hint at this in passing, as suggesting matter of caution as to the employment of men of unsound views; and to missionaries themselves, that they study constantly the genuine records of truth. The Scriptures contain the doctrine they are to publish; let them learn it with humility and prayer from that source, and they will not err.

LETTER XIV.

ON THE REASONS WHICH MAY JUSTIFY QUALIFIED INDIVIDUALS IN DECLINING THE MISSIONARY SERVICE.

My dear Friend,

WHAT reasons are sufficient to justify an individual qualified for missionary service, declining that service, and spending his days at home? This is a question you will say easier to propose than to

solve. I am persuaded, however, that the difficulty attached to the question is not so great as may at first sight appear; and provided you admit the assumption upon which I proceed in attempting the solution of it, I trust you will be satisfied that I have drawn a fair and reasonable conclusion.

It would argue great ignorance of human nature, however, to expect that any solution of such a question could prove equally satisfactory to all who might consider it; and especially to those who might feel themselves more immediately interested in it. *Quot homines tot sententiæ.* The decision of practical questions should be an act purely intellectual—the undisturbed, unbiassed work of the judgment. The passions can be safely admitted to a share of the deliberation only when they are on the right side of the question, but as this is supposed to be yet undetermined, it is generally best to exclude them as much as possible till the affair is decided. The arguments for and against are wonderfully affected by the view the mind takes of one result of the deliberation as *desirable*, and another as *undesirable*; and when the question deeply involves our own interests, or is supposed to do so, it is almost beyond human nature not to lean to the side to which all the affections would push the conclusion.

I think it has been generally allowed by all who are rightly affected to the cause of missions, that when a pious individual, every way qualified, so far as may be known, determines it to be his duty to devote himself to the service of God among the heathen, and follows up his determination, he does well; in other words, that it is HIS DUTY to go. But if he had so chosen it, would it have been his duty to remain at home? Is it his mere willing, that makes it his

duty to go or stay? This, I suspect, is a pretty general opinion, but I think an erroneous one: for upon this principle every one's duty is determined by his own impressions. What he conceives to be duty in certain circumstances, is duty; but if, in the same circumstances, he had determined upon an altogether different course, *that* would have been duty also! Thus one man determines to become a missionary because he concludes from a consideration of his advantages, and all the circumstances of obligation resting upon him, that he is called to go. But if he or another individual in similar circumstances determine to engage in the ministry at home, or to follow a secular profession, he is still in the way of duty.—This seems difficult to be admitted.

Were these different paths of supposed duty equally inviting or equally forbidding, there would be no room to suspect the operation of improper bias in the choice of any one of them. But if one of these paths is fenced up with thorns, and can be trodden only at the expense of relinquishing much that is dear to flesh and blood, we may, without being uncharitable, conclude that many decline from this *path of duty*, and choose another path, which of course to them is *not the path of duty*. This is sufficiently plain, and I endeavor to express myself upon it as plainly as possible.

Nevertheless, with all this acknowledged and lamented weakness, there may be in many instances that honesty of intention and sternness of principle which will carry the question against the combined force of every bias and prepossession and interest leagued to bribe the judgment, and procure the wished-for decision.

Surely there are many such minds of sterling principle among the pious youth of Great Britain, educating for the ministry or other professions, as well as young ministers already engaged in the work, and men in secular life of humble and devoted hearts, and respectable talents and learning. It may not be too late for some of them to sit down to the consideration of this question: and if they think they have already decided it for themselves, and are acting upon the decision by abiding "in their calling," I would humbly yet earnestly press them to review their decision, and if their re-examination of the subject end in the same conclusion as before, a more satisfactory and complacent feeling of rectitude will doubtless reward their trouble. And if upon this repeated trial of the matter they should find reason to reverse their former decision, it will be matter of congratulation that they discovered their error in time to retrieve it.

Had I access to any one of the description alluded to, I should frankly offer my opinion, and give my reasons for it, without any fear of being thought presumptuous or officious in meddling with matters which did not belong to me; for I consider that this would be the very circumstance especially qualifying me for passing a judgment in the case. My being personally unconcerned in the decision of the question would give me an advantage above others of superior information and profound judgment, whose interests or affections might be more concerned in the practical result of a deliberation, which might involve their separation from a beloved friend, or brother, or pastor; and as to the individual himself, he might more safely rely upon the

disinterested judgment of a stranger than upon his own, or that of any of whose advice he could avail himself.

In such a case I would suggest the following general considerations.

1st. The evangelization of the world is given in charge by Christ himself to his disciples *generally*; consequently, while the work remains unaccomplished it is binding upon *all*. And each individual disciple must conceive himself as specifically included in it, unless he be able to show good cause of exemption. The aged, the very young, the weak in bodily health or mental capacity, are, without difficulty, struck off the roll of those to whom the charge applies in the way of personal engagement in the service of Christ. With them we have therefore at present nothing to do. We have before us men qualified for the work, but deliberating whether they ought to be exempted on other grounds.

2d. As Christ does not require any one to put himself into actual service as a minister or missionary by breaking through the established rule of duty in ordinary life, so he cannot *approve* of any one forsaking unwarrantably any part of duty in order to engage personally in the work of an evangelist to the heathen: consequently there is a danger of entering upon it uncalled and unapproved, as well as a danger of criminally declining it. But,

3d. The nature of *this* service is such that there is little reason to fear that more persons will offer themselves as candidates for it than ought to be employed in it. Hitherto the proportion of candidates has fallen miserably short of the number requisite upon any reasonable calculation for fulfilling the *divine charge* to preach the Gospel to

every creature ; while the nature of *home service* in the ministry is such, that there is no danger of there being an inadequate supply of candidates for all its departments. Further, there is every reason to believe that there will always be a sufficient number of secular men for conducting every plan of Christian benevolence or general usefulness at home.

The deduction from this is, that a plea of exemption from foreign service founded solely upon the call to engage in the ministry at home, or to fill any useful station in society, must be viewed as inadmissible.

4th. That as it is the unquestionable duty of a Christian to provide for his own, it follows that in a case where parents or other relatives are dependent on one who proposes himself as a candidate for missionary service, he cannot consistently with duty leave them unprovided for ; but if they may and will be provided for in the event of his leaving them, they cannot justly detain him, nor can he in ordinary cases justifiably decline the service on their account.

5th. That when the affection of parents or other relatives, or their indifference to the cause of Christ, or other hostility to it, or other similar motive, prompts them to oppose a fit person's embarking in this cause, it might go far to ascertain the path of duty simply to consider how such a plea of exemption would be sustained in the case of a soldier ordered by his prince to join a regiment on a foreign station. Would the prince sustain such a plea of exemption ? Would the soldier hesitate whether it were his duty to obey the command because his friends hung upon his neck and entreated him not to leave them, or being disaffected to the government, absolutely forbade him to go ?

It will not avail to say that in the charge given by Christ to his disciples there is no definite command to *me* to engage in this holy warfare against his enemies in foreign lands; for, as has already been shown, this is the particular service upon which men are now urgently *needed*. As in the government of ancient Sparta every subject was a soldier, and whenever or in whatever way their services were required they were bound to come forward, so it is in the kingdom of Christ: it is expected that every one will know and "do his duty." In the contest, then, with the powers of darkness, Christ has made it the duty and privilege of all his subjects, without exception, to engage according to their means and talents the strength to wield the weapons with which he has furnished them; and the service expected and demanded of all who are capable of bearing arms is, to take the field in person against the enemy.

6th. That in the case of persons whose circumstances enable them to render large pecuniary aid to the cause, both by their own contributions and the exertion of their influence over a circle around them, it is to be considered whether personal devotement of such individuals to the service would not materially lessen the means of supporting and extending the operations of our societies. One whose income is derived from the exercise of a profession, or from commercial undertakings, gives at most but a fraction of his gains to the cause; and supposing him qualified for actual missionary labor, might not he conclude that in the event of his relinquishment of the means of befriending the cause as a contributor, others would supply his lack of service? At any rate, that the devotement of his life to the service of Christ among the heathen

would be at least a compensation for the loss of his handsome subscription and his labors as a collector, and even for his annual speech at the missionary meeting of his district. Again, suppose the person to be possessed of an independent fortune, it is manifest he cannot urge the pecuniary assistance he renders as a reason for not yielding personal services, as if the former must cease upon his engaging in the latter. If, however, he makes the circumstance of his being a man of property and influence his plea of exemption, that is a different thing; and (always supposing him qualified for the service), whether he may commute actual obedience to the charge of Christ into a contribution of a few hundred pounds a year, by way of enabling others to labor in his name, I think it not difficult to determine. This is analogous to the case of a man in time of war, providing a substitute to go and fight for him the battles of his country. Now of the two modes of obedience, actual service or the support of a substitute, which is the greater sacrifice? Unquestionably the former—and hence the presumption that it is the more acceptable service, and that which a truly devoted heart would choose to offer. If the requisition upon every one be to do what he can, it is evident that he who does less than he can, deliberately and systematically falls short of doing what he is required to do under the peril of condemnation as a disloyal and cowardly subject, who betrays the glory of his prince for his own ease, and purchases exemption from danger by an extorted and mutilated compliance with the command he cannot altogether disregard. But this question may also be determined upon different ground: be it remembered that in this warfare *there can be no*

sending of substitutes. Every one qualified must go in his own name—must serve for himself. A man qualified for the service of Christ as a missionary, can no more serve by substitute, than he can keep the commandments by proxy; and if no one can become a substitute, no man can lawfully employ one.

When the means of a costly sacrifice are wanting, the smallest offering is not despised by Him who looks upon the heart of the offerer. He that is not able to bring his lamb, may bring his turtle doves or two young pigeons; and he who is not able to present even these, may offer the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour. (Lev. v. 7, 11.) But there is a rigid requisition upon every individual *up to his ability.*

In the days of chivalry, if instead of joining the magnificent train of kings and nobles and warriors of every degree who poured in thousands from England, France, and other countries of Europe, to drive the infidels from the Holy Land, how would the hiss of derision have followed the knight who should have shrunk back from the enterprize while he professed to admire it, and excused his remaining at home on the plea that he was zealous in providing the means to enable others to go, or even equipped and sent out a warrior at his own expense! *We*, knowing the extravagant absurdity and wickedness of those "holy wars," might find some excuse for such a man, although we might not be able to acquit him of cowardice. But we cannot in the same way palliate the want of resolution or devotedness of a fit man in the present day, when the cause of Christ requires his services. Ours is the true holy war: we may easily fall short, but it is difficult to exceed in our estimate of

its magnitude and glory, or in our zeal, or if you will, our *enthusiasm*, in an enterprize which aims at nothing less than to wrest the world from the tyranny of Satan, and set free the hundreds of millions of captives now wearing the chains of his cursed slavery.

We may with a feeling of conscious superiority look back upon the absurd fanaticism and romantic ambition of the chivalrous spirits of the middle ages. We justly regard the cause which is now beginning to put the whole Christian world in motion, as one infinitely more grand and more worthy of our toils, and in the prosecution of which we may exult in full assurance of the approbation of heaven. Yet, on the other hand, does not the contrast in another view put us to shame? The crusaders were in earnest; they were ambitious of death in so noble a cause as they conceived theirs to be. The pursuits of commerce, the beauties of literature, the attractions of a court, the luxuries of a life spent in the bosom of their families and the society of friends, surrounded by all the charms and delights of their native country, were renounced without a sigh. They sprung with enthusiasm at the call of their leaders, thinking of nothing but the glories of conquest or of an honorable death in the hallowed cause.

We readily allow that all this enthusiastic zeal was excessive and absurd, because misdirected. It was wasted upon a vain and impious project, sanctioned neither by the voice of God nor of right reason. But suppose for a moment that all that mighty stir of preparation and equipment, and embarkation of a powerful armament was directed purely against the empire of heathen darkness—that the weapons of their warfare were not carnal

but spiritual—that instead of their accumulated stores of arms and ammunition in the shape of actual instruments of destruction, they had gone out with a grand apparatus of Bibles, printing presses, paper, and, if you will pardon the anachronism still farther, stereotype plates, and all the other requisite machinery for commencing and carrying on the great process of giving the light of knowledge and truth to the people of the whole world;—and, to complete the picture, suppose the warriors clad in armor of steel that followed as the living agents of the enterprize, to be transformed into simple missionaries—men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, “having their feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; having for their helmet the hope of salvation, bearing the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, having their loins girt about with truth, and above all armed with the shield of faith, whereby they were able to quench the fiery darts of the devil.” And suppose all the zeal and enthusiasm that possessed the warlike knights to be transferred into these true soldiers of the cross, but directed towards the sublime and merciful object of preaching the Gospel of peace to men of every country and of every language; and will the magnitude of the preparations or the zeal of the agents employed in it be reckoned excessive? Will not the grandeur of the object now appear adequate to all the sacrifice of life and treasure and talent embarked in it?

I am sure that in the judgment of every one capable of estimating the greatness of the occasion, the glory and the mercy of the design, scarcely any conceivable sacrifice can be an error in the way of *excess*. And by the same rule, all that we are now doing is a lamentable error in the way of *defect*.

O what a different appearance would the church assume, were such a spirit of zeal for the spread of the Gospel now to descend upon it as possessed the minds of all ranks throughout almost the whole of Christendom in the times alluded to! How much more of the character of reality would religion put on, where it is now but a form! How would it operate like a living principle, instead of lying dead as a cold system of speculative belief! How much more of the presence of Christ would be felt and enjoyed by all his true disciples, and how soon might we expect to see the aspect of the world beginning to change—the heathen idols falling—their temples trembling to their foundation—the worshippers deserting them, ashamed of their folly, mourning over their guilt and wretchedness, yet betaking themselves in humble faith to the refuge. Then would the brilliant but bloodless triumphs of the cross begin to be celebrated over the fallen shrines of the east and the west, and the north and the south, and speedily should all nations “be blessed in Jesus and call him blessed.”

But to return to the argument from which we have insensibly digressed. If you comprehend the drift and effect of the observations I have offered on the reasons which may justify a man qualified to become a missionary spending his life at home, you will perceive that the limits of the ground on which many think they stand fairly exempted from actual service are narrowing fast; that many, if they admit our views of the paramount claims of the work of Christ among the heathen, will feel themselves shut up to the necessity of engaging in it, or of doing violence to their convictions of duty.

The claims of dependent relatives will not exempt a man, if those relatives may be provided for

in the event of his going abroad. The opinions or wishes of relatives or other interested persons cannot be sustained as sufficient ground of exemption. The plea of being useful in the cause by pecuniary aid, and the employment of a portion of time and influence cannot be admitted; neither can assistance, rendered even to the amount of supporting a laborer in the field, exempt a man who is qualified to serve in his own person; neither will the plea of intended devotement to the cause of Christ at home, where laborers are abundant, and where men who *cannot* go abroad ought to be stationed. So long as there is a great scarcity of men for foreign service, the obligation to go is doubly imperious.

But what shall we say of a minister of sterling piety, various learning, good talents, of sound constitution, in the prime of life, and without relative ties that forbid his removal? This I feel to be delicate—sacred ground, and therefore I would enter upon it tenderly and with diffidence. But in my humble opinion, there may be cases (perhaps not a few) where a Christian pastor is comfortably settled, beloved by his people, and his labors blessed among them, while, nevertheless, both he and the church would ultimately be gainers by his *forsaking* all for Christ. His place would be supplied—his people would feel themselves more than ever identified with the cause of missions. They would follow him with their prayers, and sympathize in his joys and sorrows as in some sense their own. It would be long before they forgot the joy and the grief of that moment when they were enabled by the grace of God to part with a beloved pastor, and say, “The will of the Lord be done;” when they gave him up in generous love to the

souls of heathen who had more need of such a teacher than themselves; and it would be long before they would cease, "at morning time" to remember him.

It is proper to observe at the same time, that in ordinary cases it is a very questionable step for a minister at home to break up his engagements, which it is to be presumed he entered into after solemn deliberation, much prayer, and entire conviction of duty. But it is possible to conceive, nay perhaps it is not uncommon for ministers to have entered upon their work without ever seriously weighing the question, whether it might be their duty to go abroad as missionaries to the heathen. And this may very easily have happened, since even to this day the subject is kept so much in the back ground, and the duty of properly qualified persons devoting themselves to the service so seldom pressed upon the attention of those whom it concerns. Hence the present suggestion that qualified men, although settled as pastors, may be called to quit their flocks and go to seek the sheep that are wandering without a shepherd, is but a temporary measure; that is, a measure rendered necessary by the error of entering upon home service from a defective knowledge of their duty to serve their master in a different sphere. If from this time henceforth the subject shall be so well understood that no man shall enter upon the work of the ministry at home before he has satisfied his own mind that he has no call to become a missionary—the measure now alluded to of a pastor leaving his people, which, considering all circumstances, is not unlikely to be the duty of some, will never need to be resorted to.

Ought not tutors and others, then, who have in-

fluence over young men preparing for the ministry, to bring this question fully before them—lest they should form home engagements unadvisedly, and begin to think of missionary service when it may be too late, or at least when they must engage in it under disadvantages?

I have no idea however that many pastors will determine to take the step I have ventured to hint at. At any rate, sure I am that there will arise from it no danger of the churches at home being left without instructors by such desertions; and I am equally sure that as to those devoted men who do go as missionaries to the heathen, they will never be suffered to want any good thing the friends they leave can supply, or their prayers draw down from the God of all grace: or should their friends neglect and forget them, the Lord whom they serve will raise up for them fathers and mothers and sisters and brothers, and give them a hundred-fold more than they have forsaken, with persecutions—and, in the world to come, everlasting life.

I know that the attachments of ministers and people are not to be treated lightly. Nor is the argument altogether without weight which might be urged, that the affection of a people to him who labors among them renders his services really of more value to them than they can be to any other people; and, as they think, more useful than the labors of any other individual, however qualified, could be. But I would submit it to the calm judgment, and to the *faith* of such a church, whether their cheerfully giving up the instrument by which God was pleased to edify and comfort their souls, would not warrant them confidently to expect that he for whose sake they had thus “denied

themselves" would not suffer them to be spiritual losers by the transaction. And so far as the pastor himself might be concerned, I would submit it to *his* faith, whether in such a case, whatever might be his feelings in parting with an affectionate people, not however leaving them destitute, but seeing them intrusted to the care of another faithful "shepherd," he might not "assuredly gather" that he might warrantably join the company of them who go "to call the sheep that wander yet:" nay, that it would be shrinking from duty, and declining a noble and generous service to stay behind.

One of our best practical writers says, "The day is near when unfaithful ministers will wish they had never known their charge; but that they had been employed in the meanest occupation, instead of being pastors of Christ's flock, when, beside all the rest of their sins, they shall have the blood of so many souls to answer for." But this observation suggests a query, If any one, in order to shift off the responsibility, and escape the possible guilt of unfaithfulness as a Christian minister or missionary, decline the office, hiding his talent and spending his days in useless security, is he guiltless? or is he chargeable with the blood of the souls that might have been warned and instructed, and for whose salvation he might and should have labored? I doubt not but he is. O! *it is a solemn thing to be intrusted* with a talent! It is not at our own option to employ it or not; nor are we at liberty to employ it where it may gain half a talent more if we might have laid it out where it could have gained double.

The author just now referred to says in another place to the same effect. "It will not serve your

turn to run out of the vineyard on pretence that you cannot do the work. [God] can follow you and overtake you as he did Jonah with such a storm as shall 'lay you in the belly of hell.' Totally to cast off duty because you cannot endure to be faithful in the performance of it, will prove but a poor excuse at last."*

To sum up the whole, I am clearly of opinion that many individuals, ministers, students and private members of churches of various ranks who are staying at home, ought "to forsake all" and follow Christ as preachers of the Gospel to the poor dying heathen. This is an awfully serious subject. It involves nothing less, so far as human agents are concerned, than the question, whether these millions upon millions of idolaters shall live and die, "without Christ and without hope in the world," or whether "they shall hear the Gospel and believe and be saved?" O what a tremendous responsibility rests with them who *have* the bread of life! I make no allusion to individuals. I have no particular body of Christians in my eye. But I cannot help thinking that I see in this want of real practical effective concern for the souls of perishing men—this want of zeal in spreading the Gospel among the heathen—*ONE* reason why the faithful preaching of it is so little blessed at home. Is there not room to suspect that God may be looking with a frown instead of a smile upon the labors of a man, who, faithfully as he may be preaching the Gospel to a congregation of professed Christians, is hiding in a corner among them the talent that might have told with effect against the

* Baxter's Reformed Pastor.

fabric of heathen idolatry?*" Is there not reason to suspect that he may here find the secret cause of his laboring from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from year to year without seeing much, if any, actual fruit of his labors? Is there not reason to suspect that the church, sitting under its own vine and fig tree, but after the example of its pastor, little caring for others, should have little of the presence of God in their souls and little manifestation of his blessing among them as a body? "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet and it tendeth to poverty." If they concern not themselves about sending food to them that are perishing of hunger, is it to be wondered at if God command the clouds that they rain no rain upon their vineyard; and that he withhold his blessing both from their basket and their store?

I am yours, &c.

P. S. It may occur to you that the strain of this letter is at variance with what I have said in another place about a *predilection* for the missionary work as one of the qualifications of a proper candidate for that department of labor, inasmuch as I have now been attempting to show that various descriptions of persons otherwise qualified ought to become missionaries, while, according to the supposition we make of the state of their minds,

* Query, How would it do for a minister in such circumstances to preach to his people by way of accommodation from Acts xiii. 46—"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing you put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, *lo, we turn to the Gentiles,*" and act accordingly? Comp. chap. xviii. 6, and xxviii. 28.

they want this characteristic mark. But I take this predilection to be a thing which may be *acquired*, and acquired simply by a pious and devoted mind being directed with due attention to the consideration of the subject. I have spoken of learning also as among the qualifications of a missionary; but learning is an acquirement, not a natural gift. They possess peculiar advantages who have made this acquirement (*i. e.* learning) in early life, and they stand upon vantage ground who have had their attention early turned to the missionary work, and so have betimes acquired the predilection for it, to which we have given a place among the list of qualifications. But it may happen that diligent study at a later period of life may repair the defects of a neglected education in youth. And the attention of a pious man being at length directed to the nature and obligation of missionary service among the heathen, he may acquire, though late, the preference for the work which a right hearted missionary ought to possess.

The predilection I speak of is not a romantic, enthusiastic feeling, resting upon no sufficient grounds, and for which no adequate cause can be assigned; but a sober, although warm and decided choice and preference of that which recommends itself to the enlightened and sanctified judgment, as well as to the best dispositions of the renewed mind. And the work is one which may well beget such a desire to engage in it—and fully justify the choice made of it, a choice rational and laudable, and as honorable to the head as to the heart of him who forms it.

I think it quite consistent therefore to press upon a suitable person the duty of devoting himself to

this cause; his not already possessing a predilection for it may be owing to want of due consideration of its claims. He may have wanted *light* to see it as worthy of being preferred to certain other objects of pursuit, which hitherto may have appeared to him the best and most important. But by acquiring juster and more enlightened views of *duty*, he may become possessed of the *desire* to engage in this "good work."

This view of the subject will at the same time obviate the objection, that our affections are not at our own command; and that we cannot love and hate, and choose and reject, at the bidding of another. It is sufficient to repel this excuse, should it ever be urged by one who *pleads* the disqualification of not having a predilection for this service as a reason why he should not undertake it, to point to the numerous precepts of Scripture where men are commanded to exercise love, desire, hatred, fear, &c. This of course is to be accomplished with the help of God, and simply by setting and keeping steadily before the mind the objects suited to excite these respective affections.

Should any one possessing the requisite qualifications in point of learning, talent, and, as far as men might judge, piety, and having no reasonable ground for declining this service of Christ, still feel no desire to engage in it—feel no predilection for it, after having the subject properly brought before him, that person, I grant you, is most undoubtedly *disqualified*, and ought by no means to assume a character in which he could at best but act the hypocrite.

LETTER XV.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF SUCCESS ON MISSIONARY OPERATIONS.

My dear Friend,

THE measure of success in a matter of ascertained duty ought not to be made the measure of our zeal in the performance of it. Yet who is not sensible of the general proneness to adopt this standard of measurement. Success, which is at best but an encouragement to persevere and abound more and more, is made the main spring of obedience. This is taking an ultimate effect, and turning it into a primary cause—inverting the natural process of proceeding under a sense of duty, in the *hope* of *final* success, and giving to *present* success the power of an impelling motive; and to the want of present success the power of a prohibition to persist farther in the performance of the duty.

Were this practical error exhibited to view in this naked form, many would disclaim it;—they would admit that they feel encouraged when their labors are successful, and discouraged when they are not: but that they make success or defeat the criterion of duty, and the spring of action, they deny. Be it so, and let their conduct prove that we were mistaken.

These observations are not offered because I think the missions now in operation are, generally speaking, not blessed with success in the degree that might have been expected; but because I think it of prime importance to adhere scrupulously

to principles. A departure from them may seem at first a trivial error, but in the end may produce the most disastrous consequences. And I should have thought it not the less necessary to expose the evil of converting success into a criterion of the favor of heaven, or a chief incentive of zeal, had every plan for the evangelization of the heathen been successful to the utmost extent of the wishes of the agents employed. I should then have thought it equally needful to lift up a warning voice to prepare them for a possible reverse. I should have considered it time to give a serious premonition that it might be well to count upon yet unknown trials of their faith—"a great fight of afflictions"—the withering of their fairest hopes—the defection of converts—the introduction and spread of errors—the blast and mildew of heresy and schism—or the revival of the spirit of idolatry in countries where it appeared to have been utterly extinguished—and to examine how far their *criterion* and *incentive* would stand them in stead in those circumstances.

It is not so much from the view I take of the prosperity or adversity that forms the prominent feature in the history of any particular mission, nor of the progress that has been made in the attainment of the object of missions generally, that I have adverted to this subject, as from a persuasion that the evil against which these remarks are pointed is common to all ages, to all parties, to all circumstances, to the missionary abroad and to the friends of missions at home.

Future ultimate success, as we have the most ample assurance, is *certain*. This we "*believe* and therefore speak" and labor; and hence the work of the ministry is "a work of *faith*," and any pre-

sent tokens of divine power in giving effect to the word of reconciliation are to be improved for *strengthening that faith*, while they cause many thanksgivings to God. But this does not render the ministry, at least it ought not, a work of *sense*; but this is in effect done, if we abuse the present effect of our labors, whether prosperous or adverse, by making *that* the measure and rule of our duty.

Read over the epistles to Timothy and Titus, those rich magazines of divine wisdom in all that relates to the work of the ministry, and mark if they contain a single sentiment that can be construed as favoring the idea that the visible and immediate success of our efforts is to be taken for our encouragement to labor, or the contrary a reason for relinquishing the work, or growing slack in the performance of it. There is much said about the character of the men engaged in this sacred service, much about their duties, their trials, their support, their example, their making full proof of their ministry; but not a word of success as any concern of theirs in the way of motive. Having devoted their lives to the ministry of the Gospel, it would have been preposterous if they had been indifferent whether their labors were successful or not. But feeling the deepest interest in the work itself, and the strongest desire to see the effect of their exertions, they must, nevertheless, assured that the power to "send prosperity" was in better hands than theirs, go on cheerfully and zealously in their work, feeling themselves in a certain sense independent of the immediate results whether as affecting their hearers or themselves. Paul speaks of having "great sorrow and continual heaviness in his heart on ac-

count of his unbelieving brethren the Jews," and concerning the Galatians he says, he "travailed in birth till Christ was formed in them;" but what if they had not believed—would the apostle's zeal have cooled, or his hands grown feeble? By no means. Success drew forth his thanksgivings to God. "Now thanks be unto God who always causeth us to triumph in Christ and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." Over the hardness and impenitence and aggravated wickedness of men he wept, exclaiming, "Of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even *weeping*, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." But I suppose the apostles were not made more zealous in consequence of many becoming obedient to the faith, than by seeing that many rejected the counsel of God against themselves. In a word, they labored not because they were successful, but that they might be so; not *because* they *saw* the fruit of their labors, but in the *hope* of reaping "in due time," if they fainted not—and they *knew* that their labor ultimately should "not be in vain in the Lord."

The same thing might be further illustrated, were it necessary to enlarge upon it by a reference to the manner in which Paul speaks of his own trials. Observe in what light he regards a fruitless attempt to introduce the Gospel into a town or district, how he bears up when the enemy prevails, how he comforts himself in his chains; and on the other hand, how he regards the fact of many sinners being turned to the Lord. In the former case he grieves, in the latter he rejoices; but his determination to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ, seems independent altogether of the things that befall him.

I would not infer from so little being said in the New Testament about success, that the labors of God's faithful servants will not be blessed; but I would conclude from this not being brought prominently forward, as a thing which must visibly accompany the steps and crown the exertions of those who are on the Lord's side, that they are to be mainly concerned about *doing their duty*, doing their part, believing that God in his own time and way will do his. Among the many exceeding great and precious promises given them, there is not one that assures them specifically and individually of prosperity in their undertakings. But there are many promises of comfort, strength, assistance, direction—yea, all grace while they are warring the good warfare. And along with this are exhortations to courage, diligence, patience, perseverance. And so believers, both as to their individual salvation, and the accomplishment of God's purposes of mercy to the world at large, are taught to "be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." We must sow before we reap, we must fight before we conquer, we must suffer with Christ before we reign with him.

This I take to be the "*due order*," and I conceive it to be highly necessary both for ministers abroad and their constituents at home to keep constant sight of it. If missionaries forget it, they must faint under the burden and heat of the day, or retire from their post in despair. If the friends of missions at home forget it, they will grow weary of supporting at a great expense foreign establishments that bring no returns adequate to their expectations.

It appears, then, that to labor and wait, believ-

ing that after they have patiently endured they shall obtain the promise, is the more excellent way. But this is very different from the notion of those who are impatient for tokens of success, from which they may derive a stimulus to farther exertion, and if they cannot perceive such tokens, think themselves warranted to give up what they call the "hopeless struggle."

Viewing the matter in this light, I was very sorry to find that an able and enlightened friend of missions had suffered the following sentence to escape from his pen. "Increase the piety, the intelligence, the enterprize, and the *success* of foreign missionaries, and you increase in nearly an equal proportion the co-operation at home, by which that success must be maintained and improved." The circumstance of success, to be sure, is here classed along with several other conditions of "securing the increase of co-operation at home." And so far I admit that all is well, and I perfectly agree with the author in thinking that increased success would elicit increased interest and support. But this implies that inverted order of procedure I am endeavoring to expose. The co-operation is not to precede, but to follow the success. There may be all the "piety, intelligence, and enterprize" requisite on the part of the missionary, but his receiving increased co-operation is suspended upon his being successful; that is to say, so long as there is no actual success there is to be almost as little support. What would be thought of conducting a common war on this principle? Send a small body of troops to the field against the enemy, and wait till you hear of their having made a successful campaign before you think of strengthening them by necessary reinforce-

ments of men and additional store of arms and ammunition! The author of the sentence I have quoted, represents the increased co-operation, as in order to maintain and improve the success already gained, which it may be said does not imply a deficiency of previous support. But in point of fact it does, and were this the place for showing it, I could remind you of some very affecting instances of a mission being left to languish; the necessary support being denied it, because it was not flourishing and successful!

Present success is desirable. Visible proofs of not laboring in vain are cheering. But the final result is certain, and the path of duty is plain. Let that path be pursued with undeviating and unfaltering steps. The way to give glory to God is to be strong in faith. He who stands still, or looks back, or looks around, anxiously waiting for some signs of God's fulfilling his promise as a rule for persevering in the course or relinquishing it, may expect to be made (without being changed into a pillar of salt, but as effectually as Lot's wife) a monument of God's wrath, and a warning to succeeding laborers to attend to nothing but the command of God to go *forward*.

Much in sorrow, oft in wo,
Onward Christians, onward go,
Fight the fight, and worn with strife
Steep with tears the bread of life!

It is not very gratifying to the readers of missionary intelligence, to receive accounts of untoward events—and accordingly it is thought expedient to withhold such details from them; and perhaps there is wisdom in this, so long as many of the friends and supporters of missions derive their chief stimulus to exertion from the

glowing representations set before them of the triumphant progress of the cause of truth. But I am persuaded, that there is a numerous class of Christians more judicious and better established in the knowledge and feeling of their *duty*, who, instead of being damped or stumbled by a candid exposure of the real circumstances of the missionary undertakings to which they contribute, would be greatly benefited by being put in complete possession of facts. Would they not realize better the situation of the missionary?—pray more emphatically and more appropriately for him, and for the people among whom he is laboring—he sometimes fears—in vain? Would they not acquire a better idea of the real arduousness of the work, and set themselves to help it forward with corresponding zeal and resolution and devotedness? Would they not be better able to judge of the wisdom of plans proposed to be adopted, or might not the wisdom of some suggest hints which might be of the first moment to the efficiency of the work? As things are, many of the most able and judicious friends of missions, unless they happen to be in the direction of a Society, are kept in ignorance of the real situation of missions, and so are disqualified to judge what is for the true interest of the cause.*

The Christian laborer among the heathen, would not, even in very discouraging circum-

* Some of these remarks must be qualified, in their bearing upon the directors of missions to the heathen acting under the appointment of societies in the United States. The cases are believed to be very few, where such details, in relation to American missions, have been withheld from the public.—*Am. Ed.*

stances, be justified in quitting his post while he could retain it and perform its duties. His constituents would justly consider him as betraying an impatient and presumptuous spirit, were he hastily to leave the service of his Master because he did not succeed in accomplishing the work undertaken so speedily, or to so great an extent as he wished and expected. Perhaps, however, it would be allowed to such a laborer to feel keenly in such a situation, to be filled with deep concern, dwelling in the midst of a gainsaying people, mad upon their idols, and after all his efforts remaining impenitent, unaffected, hostile to the Gospel, or caring nothing about the matter. But if so, has not the laborer, in the circumstances supposed, a peculiar claim upon the Christian sympathy and prayers of his brethren at home? And as they would have him to continue to labor and not faint, should not they continue to encourage him, strengthen his hands and cheer his heart, by the assurance of their interest in his welfare and prosperity, by their kind words and good offices?

It is granted that the want of success may sometimes be traced to the missionary himself. He may be chargeable with some fatal error in judgment or practice, which may provoke God to withhold his blessing. But ought it not to be likewise considered that the Christian societies, under whose sanction the missionary acts, may come in for a share of such guilt? Is it not possible that the want of faith, prayer, zeal in the professed friends of the missionary cause *at home*, may be one cause of the small success of their missionaries *abroad*?

If lukewarmness is emphatically displeasing to

God, and calls forth the severest expressions of his abhorrence, if he threatens utterly to reject the Laodicean and his heartless service, is there no room for inquiry, whether God may not find this character adhering to many who rank themselves with the promoters of the grand design of "preaching the Gospel to every creature?" May not the many at home who constitute the *body* of a missionary society, if they are neither "cold nor hot" in this cause, have the effect upon the labors of their agents abroad, which a paralysis of a vital organ has upon the limbs?

But I have wandered from the thing I intended to say, which was this—that Christians at home of a right spirit will be equally disposed to sympathize with missionaries in the failure of their attempts, as to rejoice with them in their success; and although the latter is of course the more pleasant duty, the former will be no less recognized to be *a duty*.

In short, I repeat that it is not the success of their efforts, but the express command of God that must be regarded as the great and unchangeable stimulus to exertion; and the use to be made of success is to "thank God and take courage," while the use to be made of partial defeat is to learn from it to pursue with more devoted zeal, humility, and prayer, the solemn and arduous work, "praying with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." Especially, let the friends of missionaries pray more fervently for them, "that utterance may be given unto them, that they may open their mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the Gospel."

I feel it difficult in handling such a subject as

this to keep clear of one error, while endeavoring to expose its opposite. To prevent misconception, therefore, I will merely state before I conclude, that to represent it as wrong to make the measure of our success the rule of our duty, does not imply either argumentatively, or in real experience, that we are to be indifferent as to the result of our labors. On the contrary, the man who utterly disclaims the idea of the visible happy effects of his exertions being made his reason for continuing to exert himself, may, whether successful or not, have the most earnest, longing desires for a blessing upon his engagements. Nay, unless he feel deeply concerned about the issue of all his pains, and toils, and watching, and prayers for the conversion of souls, I cannot conceive how he can be earnestly engaged in the matter. If his heart be thus set upon the success of his work, the want of it will but prove the greater trial of his faith and patience; but these will be strengthened by the trial. "He never had the right ends of a preacher in view who is indifferent whether he obtains them or not, who is not grieved when he misses them, and rejoiced when he can see the desired issue."

In a word, we must "walk by faith, not by sight," and with the eleventh chapter of Hebrews in your eye, I leave you to judge whether faith be not a principle that can animate an obedience more devoted, universal, and persevering, than can even spring from the sight of the eyes, or the hearing of the ears.

I am, &c.

LETTER XVI.

DEFECTS IN THE MODE OF ADVOCATING THE
CAUSE OF MISSIONS.

My dear Friend,

I HAVE just turned over some volumes of missionary sermons for the purpose of ascertaining what are the principal things generally insisted on, in order to stimulate Christians to exertion in the cause. It is truly refreshing to the spirit to contemplate so many just, striking, and able exhibitions of Christian truth as these productions contain—to mark the catholic spirit they uniformly breathe—the expanded Christian charity that glows in them for the salvation of the whole family of man. But I confess it has been with disappointment and grief I have noticed a certain defect in many of them. With all the prominence given to many arguments, and the ingenuity displayed in selecting and applying them, there is *one* argument in not a few discourses not even once alluded to, and scarcely in any treated as it ought. I mean the command of Christ to preach the Gospel *universally*, and the consequent duty of obedience.

Do not mistake me—I do not find fault with the arguments used in the compositions referred to. Many of them are most forcible and weighty and appropriate; but it appears to me that the matter of *DUTY*, as resulting from that command, has not been pressed so strongly or so frequently as it ought.

A preacher may be regulated by a regard to the taste of his audience in the selection and treatment

of a particular topic of discussion for a missionary sermon. He may be naturally led from the nature of his subject to insist on some special motive, encouragement, direction or warning, bearing upon the work of the evangelization of heathen and Mohammedan nations. And this may preclude the possibility of his making the *obligation to labor founded upon the command of Christ*, a part of his plan: but I conceive that *this argument*, like the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel in an ordinary sermon, should be implied in the whole frame of the discourse, and although not formally enlarged upon, sufficiently intimated to be perceived in its true importance.

It is not less undeniable than humiliating, that many professed Christians are more effectually wrought upon by a rhetorical appeal to their passions, than by a sober truth accompanied with its evidence, submitted to their judgment, or a solemn duty charged home upon their conscience. And it must be confessed that preachers, knowing the character of a great proportion of the people whom they address, seem to act wisely in making use of that method which is able to produce the greatest effect. It is trite to observe that man is a being possessed of passions as well as reason. But the legitimate way of dealing with him, is to address the former through the medium of the latter—first to inform the judgment, and then call in the affections to aid and invigorate the conclusions of reason.

I see no cause why the *first* place ought not to be given to that which, in the judgment of the truly enlightened and judicious, is first in importance; and this I conceive would be paying a better compliment even to the less enlightened, than the

plan of treating them as if they were incapable of being stimulated by anything else than pleasing images presented to the imagination, or by passionate appeals to the sympathy, &c. of the heart.

The apostles furnish us with the best models of the method of enforcing duty, as well as with the matter of instruction as to duty itself. We find in them no empty declamation—no attempt to influence the conduct by heating the imagination without informing the judgment—no exhibition of motives in an inverted order—no exhortation without a *wherefore*—no doctrine without a *therefore*. In other words, there is no duty inculcated by those inspired teachers, without the exhibition of the ground on which it rests—and the place it holds in the scheme of Christian obedience. While on the other hand doctrines are uniformly shown to be practical in the spirit and tendency of them. Hence, as there are some heretics who find it necessary to twist and bend scripture, in order to force it into something like a correspondence with their sentiments—there are others who, disjoining doctrine and practice, find it necessary to cut and hew scripture in pieces, picking up the detached fragments that suit their purpose, and throwing the rest away. But this by the bye.

To return then to the point.—The cause of missions is not recommended to us merely on the principle of *gratitude*, and yet it has here a most powerful claim. If we are not grateful beyond expression for the Gospel, we neither understand nor believe it. If we do not express that gratitude by exerting ourselves to convey the blessing to others, how shall we prove it? The cause of missions is not recommended to us merely on the principle of *humanity*, and yet we violate every

feeling and dictate of humanity if we neglect to disseminate the Gospel.—This cause is not recommended to us merely on the principle of *justice*, and yet we are most evidently unjust if we withhold from others a blessing to which they have an equal right with ourselves. If we have not an *exclusive* right to the Gospel, we are fearfully unjust in not communicating the knowledge of it to the ignorant. May we be delivered from the guilt of this “crying sin,” ere it shall be said in accents of vengeance, “Let him that is unjust be unjust still!”

The cause of missions is further recommended to us upon the principle of *consistency*, and concern for our own best interests ;—as the best use we can make of our peculiar privileges and advantages as a nation, and the most hopeful means of securing the continuance of them. But not any one of these considerations, nor all of them put together, constitute the main strength of our obligations to carry the Gospel to the idolatrous pagan—the deluded Mohammedan—the unbelieving Jew. To all of them we should be bound to carry it although we had no other motive to constrain us—no other consideration to warrant or influence us than this, that Christ has said, “Go and teach (disciple) all nations”—“Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” The *αυτος εφη* of our Master is of infinitely greater force than the precepts of the Samian philosopher. His disciples sought no further proof or authority for any opinion or practice than the voice of their master. How much more ought the disciples of Christ to hear, believe, and act as *He* enjoins.

We before borrowed an illustration of our subject from military affairs. Let me take another

from the same source. Suppose an order issued from the highest authority in the kingdom, requiring certain faithful subjects to perform a specific service in the character of soldiers, and commanding all faithful subjects generally to be aiding to the utmost of their power in the execution of the will of the sovereign. In urging the people to obedience what would be the most obvious, and we might almost say, exclusive topic that could present itself in the way of argument? unquestionably the *authority of the command*. It must not be resisted. It must not be neglected.—It is at the peril of the sovereign's displeasure and the loss of character—and, it may be, under the pain of condign punishment, if it be not fulfilled. It would be self-evident that no one could justly retain the character of a loyal subject if he disobeyed; and he must forfeit the esteem and confidence of his better affected brethren if he not merely should refuse obedience, but should attempt to justify his conduct.

But again I ask, what would be the effect and what would be the inference if, instead of the authority of the sovereign being insisted on as the first and greatest reason of obedience, the pleasing nature of the service—the gratifying prospect of success—the great good that would result from the enterprize—its accordance with the best feelings of the heart, &c. should be represented as the chief inducements to set about performance? The *effect* must be that while many did not choose practically to feel the force of these reasons, those who did would not be able to trace their obedience to the only source that could render their conduct a proof of loyalty and love to their prince, viz: reverence for the authority of his command—while the *in-*

ference might be, that as such topics were brought forward to induce their compliance, the sovereign author had not interposed his authority, or that it was not sufficient of itself to warrant or to produce obedience.

I feel that this illustration, as indeed every illustration taken from earthly and sensible objects, must fall short of the paramount authority of the command of the King and Head of the church, in reference to the extension of his kingdom and the subjection of all nations to *Him*. An earthly king is a mortal man, and he may err through ignorance or passion. His commands may be the dictates of cruelty, or imbecility, or ambition, or a wanton exercise of power; but even allowing his will to be in all respects accordant to the principles of the strictest justice and highest honor and universal benevolence—his subjects can never be under such obligations to obey him, as Christians are to “bring every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ.” And if any one should disregard *his authority*, I would not endeavor to work upon that man’s mind by any other consideration. I allow other arguments a place, but that place is a lower one than the authority of Christ. His words are illustrative and confirmative of the declared purpose of God from the earliest age, to bruise the head of Satan by the seed of the woman, and to make that seed his salvation to the ends of the earth.

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is expressly taught in the volume of revelation. There are many other collateral proofs of the doctrine, but that derived from revelation is not only one of a primary order, but it gives strength and coherence to all the rest. In like manner the

command to "preach the Gospel to all nations," is the prime motive and warrant to attempt the conversion of the world; and not only so, but it is this that gives cogency, appropriateness and effect to all the reasons that can be adduced for zeal and perseverance in the glorious project. Had we a Gospel to preach to the angels that kept not their first estate, and had we access to them, all the considerations of benevolence—the misery of their state—the happiness to which they should be raised—the advancement of the glory of God in the reduction of a portion of his rebellious creatures to obedience—might be urged as so many incentives to zeal in preaching to them; but all these considerations go for nothing, because *we have no command* to preach "good news" to them. But so far as regards sinners of the human race, all these motives, and others which might easily be set in array before the eye, *have* their own weight, and ought to have their own influence in connection with the divine command, and as deriving from it their chief value.

It is high time that it be fairly put to every Christian, and to every Christian church in the world, to vindicate their profession by a truly Christian zeal for the extension of the Gospel; otherwise their sincerity must fall under suspicion. Nay, they ought to be considered as guilty of a glaring dereliction of Christian duty, if it be not concluded that they entirely belie the Christian character. Their orthodoxy of creed—general correctness of conduct, and usefulness in their immediate spheres, or even their noisy zeal each for the peculiarities of his own sect, will not suffice when HE shall come who will bring in against many who think themselves guiltless, a sentence of

condemnation upon this ground, "Inasmuch as ye *did it not* unto the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me." It is high time that the false and pernicious maxim should be exploded, that the profession of Christianity is easier now-a-days than "in the beginning of the Gospel"—that we can be true and obedient disciples of Christ at less expense than forsaking all we have for him, or at least being ready to do it. But let this readiness be brought to the test by going round with the demand for the sacrifice of superfluities in order to supply with the bread and water of life the perishing millions of the heathen; and blot the name of every recusant from the list of them who bear the yoke of Christ.

I know not any thing that might by the blessing of God sooner or more effectually bring back the purity, the spirituality—the love—the life—or, to sum up all in one word, the "blessedness" of primitive times, than the general prevalence of the idea, that every one who is converted from the error of his ways should seek the conversion of others also, and that by all proper methods which zeal and love, tempered and directed by wisdom, dictate—that the disciple of Christ ought to seek to make *more* disciples—by word and deed—by earnest and self-denied endeavors, as well as by persevering prayer.

Many find the profession of Christianity easy because they make it so. Instead of that profession implying any remarkable sacrifice of fortune or ease, it is in many instances the direct road to credit, wealth and fame. The gate of the church is wider than the narrow way that leadeth to eternal life, "and many there be that go in thereat," and the professing world tacitly consen

to have it so; and so men compliment one another upon their liberality. They bless themselves in their nests, and think themselves happy that they can be followers of Christ on so easy terms; forgetting all the while that he is testifying against them as having in them neither the love of God nor man—for that they love not their brother whom they have seen (or may see if they open their eyes and look abroad) is evident from their unconcern about his miserable situation, and their neglecting to help him; and this involves in it the proof that they are also destitute of the love of God. 1 John iii. 17. iv. 20.

What was it that made the profession of Christianity so self-denying—so dangerous in primitive times?—The merciless hatred of the Jews, and the angry opposition and contempt of the Gentiles. But think you Christians in Great Britain at the present day would meet with no persecution, although enjoying the protection of the law, if they were equally bold and zealous with the first fruits of the Gospel in India, Samaria, and the surrounding countries? There is as much secret malice in the breast of formal professors of Christianity against its true disciples, as existed among the Pharisees of old against the first disciples; and there is as much aversion and scorn harbored in the breast of our skeptics and contemners of God and godliness, as ever were displayed by the pagan enemies of the Christians. But we take care not to provoke them, and the hatred of the one and the contempt of the other are buried in silence, because our polite neutrality and careful avoidance of all offensive measures obliges them to repay the compliment by refraining to assail us. A Christian may pass very quietly through the

world, and live unmolested all his days in the midst of unbelievers, if he only takes care not to trouble them with his opinions. But let him attempt to deal faithfully with all, as he may have ability and opportunity, and he will soon find that his situation and the trials and duties of it are not so different from those of the Christians of the first ages as he once supposed.

But the Christian's sphere of usefulness extends, or should extend, beyond his own immediate neighborhood. If he enters fully into the missionary spirit he will be an active and useful friend of the cause, however humble his station or limited his means; and he will prove that his concern for those at a distance does not lead him to neglect the spiritual welfare of those nearer his own door. But in proportion as he rises above the common standard of activity and consistency in these things, in the same proportion he will be spoken against, hated and perhaps persecuted, both by friends and enemies. The true cross of Christ is too heavy to be worn as a charm or an ornament about the neck. It is so heavy that nothing less than the strength *He* imparts could enable any one to bear it.

It is now considerably upwards of a century since societies were formed and incorporated among us for the propagation of the Gospel: and the just praise of those bodies must not be denied them. But in how small a degree did the object of those societies become a general concern—and even to this day, how inadequate is the feeling and interest of multitudes in this work! Annual sermons have been preached these hundred years before the “venerable” and “honorable” societies now alluded to, and younger Institutions of the same kind—and many admirable sentiments

have been expressed, and heard no doubt with due attention.—But it strikes me that after all, our preachers of missionary sermons in general have not taken the high ground their theme warranted and demanded. It may be an uncharitable thought, but it has really occurred to me again and again, that the preacher has seemed to be very tender in pressing upon his hearers the real extent of service and sacrifice those hearers should render to the cause by personal devotement or pecuniary contribution, lest offended and stung to the heart by so close an appeal, they should retaliate upon the preacher and hint, that upon his own principles he should leave all and become a missionary.

If this has not been the feeling of the parties, why that measured, hesitating manner of *applying* the truth or argument of an appropriate text and able sermon? After an eloquent demonstration of the excellence, obligation to labor, and benevolence of the work—the certainty of success, &c. from which it might have been expected that the preacher would deduce the duty of all who admitted his premises, giving “their hearts—their lives—their all”—to the service of the Lord—he falls utterly short of the mark; and the whole evaporates in an exhortation to greater liberality in contributing, and greater diligence in collecting subscriptions by pence and sixpences and shillings; with perhaps an intimation of his hope that some *one* of the assembly may make up for the lack of service of all the rest by consecrating himself to the work of an evangelist.

You will not construe what I have just said as if I lightly estimated the services of the patient and indispensable coadjutors of the missionary

cause, who week after week and year after year replenish the treasures of our missionary institutions by the accumulated offerings of thousands of nameless benefactors—the mites of humble piety, sanctified by the willingness with which they are offered, and the prayers by which they are accompanied. But while this is the sphere of many, it is not the sphere of all, and he who can do more and does it not, to him it is sin.

I am, &c.

LETTER XVII.

OBJECTIONS TO ENGAGING IN MISSIONARY SERVICE.

My dear Friend,

AN admired author of a former age says, “We set up our own opinions in religion and philosophy as the tests of orthodoxy and truth, and we are prone to judge every practice of other men either a duty or a crime, which we think would be a crime or a duty in us, although their circumstances are vastly different from our own.” There are innumerable examples of the truth of this observation: but it is sometimes made use of as affording an easy way of getting rid of a troublesome argument. I have no doubt that many, were these letters to meet their eye, would think they might sweep away half of the practical conclusions of them by a forced application of it. “The writer,” they would say, “sees every object through the medium

of a prejudice in favor of missions. He would break up the whole frame of society; he would prove that half the ministers and private Christians in the world should immediately become missionaries; he would have men to dissolve all the relations of civil life—break the ties and trample on the feelings of duty, love, and friendship; and care not though every other concern were neglected or abandoned if only his favorite work were carried on.”—But to all this, and much more in the same strain, that I can imagine might be uttered by a disaffected heart, or even by a well meaning, though ill-informed friend of Christianity, as sufficient to put down all I have said without being at the trouble to prove any one of my statements or inferences to be erroneous—to all this an answer might easily be found.

I shall not however tire you with a lengthened reply to this anticipated objection; but I would just say, before concluding that *that* must be wrong which would disturb the present constitution of Christian society, and compel many to adopt another standard of action than they have been accustomed to measure themselves by;—I say, before concluding that *that* must be wrong which draws such conclusions after it, it is first necessary to prove that the existing state of things in the Christian world is right—is just what it should be.

But besides, it is obvious to reason that the language I have put into the objector's mouth is overstrained and false by any application to the doctrine of these letters; and it is needless to say more upon it at present—only be it remembered that it is not *my* work I am advocating. It is not any rule of *my* devising I would have men go by. I appeal to “the law and to the testimony,” in

which there is no obscurity in what relates to the obligation to propagate the Gospel of Christ. If I speak not according to this word, let whatever I have presumed to say go for nothing—but if I have spoken the truth, let them see to it who yet find fault.

At any rate, if I have attempted to bring home the command of Christ to the “business and bosoms” of some men to whom it has been thought hitherto but indirectly to apply, so far am I from apprehending that any will go beyond the line of sober duty in consequence of these suggestions, supposing them to be published—my fear is, that many, without laying the matter properly to heart, will continue to go on in their accustomed road, neither proving that my deductions are wrong, nor practically owning that they are right.

In matters of mere speculation, or in matters of practice that fall in with the current of men’s corrupt inclinations, *pensées outrés* may do harm. But when the question is practical, and the conduct to which it leads is directly opposed to all worldly and selfish ends, there is little danger of the strenuous inculcation of duty producing bad effects;—except in the way the Saviour himself says his own coming would operate: “I came not to send peace but a sword, for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in law, and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” And may it not be considered rather a presumptive argument that my views are in perfect accordance with the design and tendency of the pure Gospel of Christ, since the effects may be thus similar. I can easily conceive of the outcry of relatives and friends, religious

and irreligious, against the *enthusiast* who should break away from respectable connections, perhaps from a scene of apparent usefulness—perhaps at the risk of the loss of all things, that he might preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and still more if he should by word as well as by example endeavor to persuade many others also, who are wasting life to little purpose, so far as doing good to the souls of men is concerned, that they should listen to the call of the heathen to come and help them. I can conceive of many arguments derived from every source but the right one—the word of God—employed to show this enthusiast that it is his duty to remain at home himself, and let others remain at home too. Ought not a young man to be suffered to stay till he has buried his father? and if in the mean time he marries a wife, does not this excuse him wholly from engaging in any such service? It may be so, or it may not, according to circumstances; but to all such individuals as may be opposed in the way of DUTY by friends or enemies, I would merely suggest, that instead of being careful to answer their accusers in that matter, they should seriously ponder the words which follow in immediate connection with those above quoted: “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.”

While we urge the duty of *many* able and devoted men leaving their home and friends and labors in the midst of a Christian people, in order to bear the name of Christ to the uncalled Gentiles,

there is unhappily one argument that cannot as yet with any propriety be used in opposition to it—namely, that there is a due proportion of foreign laborers already gone or preparing to go. Yet some people are either so uncandid, or so hostile, or so ignorant, that they really throw out hints to this effect, and they think their argument is very plausible, if not irrefragable, when they suggest that the missionaries already sent out, if they act wisely, and “teach teachers,” instead of wasting their strength in teaching scholars, may soon raise up so many coadjutors from among the heathen that they shall have no need of any further reinforcements from home.

The attention of the friends of missions has happily been turned to the importance of establishing native schools in connection with every missionary station, and with reason they are looked upon as in all probability the nurseries of the church in those parts of the world. The training up of select individuals in the hope of their becoming Christian teachers is one of the first duties of a Christian missionary. But the Christian public ought to beware lest this system of missionary tactics should lead them into a practical error in calculating the number of men and apparatus necessary to carry this system into effect with promptitude and spirit. The comparison of the missionary harvest to an extensive field covered with waving corn from the reproduction for a succession of years of a single grain, may easily be perverted so as to occasion serious mistakes in regard both to the means and measure of the increase of the kingdom of God. The word of God, and not the missionary, is the seed of the kingdom. The missionary, as the servant of the “Son of

Man," sows it, and by the blessing of God is sometimes employed in the joyful toil of reaping. Be it known, then, that the field is the world, and that to sow, labor, and reap in so wide a scene of exertion is not the work of a few. So far from the greatest conceivable success superseding the necessity of the labors of faithful men, that very success, as I have elsewhere shown, would give a new emphasis to the call to send out many, and those of the ablest description.

We should gladly employ thousands and tens of thousands of native teachers in as many circles around our missionary stations, but where are they! They must first themselves be converted, taught, and fitted for their office—and who must do this? And how many heads and hearts would find ample employment in this department alone!

It was when our Lord had his eye immediately upon the fields of Judea that he said to his disciples, "The harvest truly is GREAT, but the laborers are few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that he would send laborers into his harvest." "But when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." It was *then* that he said to his disciples "the harvest truly is plenteous," &c. and it is worthy of notice that at that very time, as we may gather from the history, our Lord himself was exemplifying that which he enjoined upon his disciples. It was on the night previous to his calling the twelve apostles (the transaction recorded immediately after the words above quoted) that *he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.*" Compare Luke vi. 12, 13, and Matt. ix. 37, 38, x. 1, 2. Our blessed

Lord repeated the same solemn words upon another remarkable occasion: "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come. THEREFORE he said unto them, The harvest truly is great," &c. If seventy laborers, in addition to the twelve previously appointed, were not too many for the towns and villages where Christ exercised his personal ministry, what number should be sent out in obedience to his command to "go *into all the world?*"

When the magnitude of the work is pressed upon our notice, and we are told of the SIX HUNDRED MILLIONS of heathen to whom the Gospel is to be preached, we find it sufficiently difficult to grasp the idea of that multitude.* But this numerical statement does not convey the full notion of the amazing subject.

I observe, then, that we are not to conceive of this vast multitude as collected upon the stage of the world, and *standing still*, waiting till we are able or disposed to make known to them the way of salvation. They are not standing still; they are moving along the stage; and as thousands of them enter every hour on one side of it, as many disappear on the other side; so that the number perpetually fluctuating is still kept up: but twenty millions of them pass away every year—pass away, and are beyond our reach for ever!

* Were the number of men here mentioned collected together, and placed as close to each other as they could conveniently stand and move, they would form a mass of living beings a mile in breadth, and upwards of a hundred miles in length! Think of this assemblage of heathen on the march to eternity!

When such a representation as this is made, there are some who remind us that God can work "by many or by few," and that he may be pleased to put honor upon the feeble and despised labors of a comparatively small number, to effect that which all Christendom combined could not accomplish without his effectual blessing. I have replied to this in another place, but I introduce it here for the purpose of remarking, that these same objectors to the employing of many laborers among the heathen, on the ground that God's work can be carried on without the help of human agency as well as with it, are the very persons who, at another time, question the duty of pious ministers, divinity students, and other Christians of talent and approved character leaving their native country, on the ground that the cause of religion at home would suffer from the want of their services! I pray you admire this consistency—a few scattered laborers occupying a field altogether disproportionate to their physical and moral strength must remain without farther assistance, that there may be room left for the display of God's sovereignty in effecting his purposes of mercy without corresponding human means; but at home, where human means are abundant, no deduction must be made from them, lest God could not dispense with their aid! To solve the mystery of sentiments so contradictory being held by the same individual, we have only to remark, that in the one case the welfare of *others* only is at stake; in the other case his own. The selfishness of human nature explains many a moral enigma: it gives edge to arguments or blunts them *ad libitum*; and "makes the worse seem the better reason."

When I look at the moral mass of the world, my

eye is attracted by the light that shines in a little spot called Great Britain. *There* I observe the means of Christian instruction comparatively abundant; I see its ten thousand churches, and tens of thousands of schools, and tens of thousands of Christian ministers and teachers, and thousands more preparing for the work and eager for employment within the precincts of the beloved island. I then turn my eye to other countries of Europe, and see some of them approximating to Britain in privilege and not far behind in practice; but other regions I see bedimmed with Roman Catholic superstition. I next take a wider range of observation, and see skirting the western shores of the Atlantic "a goodly land," which already vies with the foremost of the civilized states of the old world in all that is good and promising; and she too is blessed with a numerous body of Christian teachers, and her schools and colleges are yearly sending out more laborers to the American vineyard. But I cannot be detained longer by the contemplation of these brighter scenes, and here and there a spot of light and moral fertility. I turn to the black and dreary shades of all the chief portions of the rest of the globe, and see that "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." And seeing this I cannot question the propriety of inviting others to consider it; but if they should be unwilling to do so, what must be done? would it be wrong "to use sharpness?" I have no desire for such an office, nor must any thing I have said be construed as if I had usurped it; I leave it to those who can fill it with a better grace.

I am, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

REMARKS ON A SENTIMENT OF DOCTOR
BUCHANAN.*My dear Friend,*

MISSIONS to the heathen are either deserving of more general and decided support from all classes of the Christian community, both in the way of furnishing men and money, than they have hitherto obtained—or they are not. If they are not deserving of greatly enlarged encouragement, the subject, as treated in these letters, has been unduly magnified. Enthusiasm has exaggerated the proportions of that part of the spiritual temple not yet built, and truth refuses to sanction the misrepresentation.

But if Christian missions are deserving of so much more liberal support and universal countenance, how is it that they have not received it?

Among other causes, I am sorry to particularize *one* which has been pressed upon my notice by the perusal of the sermon of the late Dr. Buchanan, preached before the Church (of England) Missionary Society, in 1810. When I allude to this author also, as I have done to several others in the course of this correspondence, for the purpose of reprehending sentiments expressed by them, perhaps you may think I have become a very captious reader and judge of what other men write. But I shall not be deterred by the fear of any such imputation, from plainly showing you my opinion; and especially when I see cause to differ from

writers who are highly and justly respected, and whose names carry with them an authority sufficient to give weight and currency to every sentiment they choose to publish. I could have descanted with more ease, and with far greater pleasure, upon the excellencies to be found in the authors I have referred to; but what is good, speaks for itself; what I would therefore attempt is, to prevent the bad which I conceive to be mixed with it, from passing unsuspected because found in connection with much that is unexceptionable.

What I refer to at present, as one cause of the small measure of attention and respect paid to the subject of missions, especially by Christians of superior rank, wealth, and learning, is the idea that it is an undertaking to be carried on chiefly by persons in the lower walks of life; and that men of that class are the most proper to be employed as missionaries. Hence there is a character of meanness and vulgarity thrown over the whole affair; and a man of superior station, or of a high character for learning, is taught to feel himself degraded by any immediate contact with missionary societies or their agents. I know that many most distinguished characters, both at home and abroad, have shown themselves to be above this prejudice, (for a most absurd prejudice assuredly it is,) but I confess myself somewhat surprised to find Dr. Buchanan abetting this false sentiment, or at least compromising the truth, in such a passage as the following—"If you look around, you may observe that few of the rich or learned of any society of Christians, however small, and however zealous to diffuse Christianity, are disposed to go forth as missionaries; and it is true, that if the rich and learned did go, they could not assimilate with the

poor and ignorant among the heathen, so easily as their brethren of inferior station. They could not so easily suit with their poverty, nor tolerate their ignorance."

The fact here stated, that "few of the rich and learned are disposed to go forth as missionaries," is indisputable, nor am I disposed to question that they must make greater sacrifices were they to go. But if I mistake not the meaning of this quotation, taken in connection with the passage that immediately follows it, the "rich and learned" have to thank Dr. Buchanan for giving them in the first place, a dispensation altogether from actual engagement in missionary service; and in the second place, such of them as are so disposed may extend the dispensation to exertions at home also, in such a cause, pleading that they do not find it *easier* "to assimilate with the poor and ignorant" mass of Christians at home, than with the same descriptions of heathens abroad; and, therefore, keep aloof from their associations, meetings, and, in short, from all social connection with them, for the purpose of spreading the Gospel.

Is not this sentiment exceedingly calculated to lower the tone of devotion to the cause, among all the best and most learned and able of the Christian part of the population, to say nothing of its injurious influence upon men already disposed to pour contempt upon the whole subject, as the vain projects of vain and low minds. No one likes to be classed with the poor, and ignorant, and vulgar; and say what you will of the humble and sober estimate Christianity teaches us to make of our circumstances and acquirements, there is nothing either in the letter or spirit of its precepts on this subject, that inculcates it upon an indi-

vidual who chooses a sphere of usefulness that requires him to "associate with the poverty, and tolerate the ignorance of the heathen," to submit because he has made such a choice, (and that to the manifest prejudice of the cause,) to be reckoned a man of "inferior station"—neither respectable for his learning nor for the rank he holds among his countrymen. Let but the notice spread among the heathen, that the teacher sent to them is a man of no account in the place he came from; and you throw a most formidable bar in the way of that missionary's success;—and let this idea, already too prevalent, be carefully kept alive and disseminated at home; and I will answer for it, that instead of the flower of our churches presenting themselves to this glorious service, the very dregs of the churches (forgive the harshness of the expression) shall think themselves too good to be thrown away upon the heathen. Neither do I see any thing in Christianity that teaches the rich and learned of the followers of Christ to consider themselves, *on the ground* of their wealth or erudition, exempted from services, which, notwithstanding the opinion of Dr. Buchanan, I believe *they* could perform in very many cases, with more ease, acceptance, and success, than their brethren in an inferior station and of more limited education.

Dr. Buchanan goes on to say—"If you cannot find rich men of your own body to go forth to enlighten the world, you must send men of humble condition; and if you cannot engage learned men, you must send men of inferior attainments." But if men of humble condition be the more eligible class, as the passage before quoted seems to imply, why seek the rich and the learned? Indeed, from the loose and undecided manner in which the

Doctor expresses himself on this point, I suspect he either did not advert to the inference to be drawn from his previous statement, or meant something else than his words strictly taken express.

The question may be brought to a short issue, thus—"Rich and learned men" should be sought "to go forth to enlighten the world," or they should not be sought. If they should not, why say, "If then you *cannot find* rich men to go," &c. do so and so. This surely implies a search for that which is deemed desirable; and upon finding it unsuccessful, the Doctor advises, as the best alternative, to send men of humble condition and inferior attainments. That is, if you cannot, in the first place, find what is *best suited* to your purpose, you must be content with what you can find. This seems to be the obvious interpretation of the passage, and yet Dr. Buchanan had said immediately before, that the rich and learned could not so "easily" do what would be required of them, as inferior men could. Hence, I presume, he considered the latter to be preferable.

But if, on the other alternative, rich and learned men *should* be sought, what is the best method of conducting the search?—Is it not to press the duty of such men to engage in the work—to show the call made upon *them*, to explain how much the cause needs the services of the very best and ablest men that can be procured—that if they decline, the cause must suffer, both in the public estimation, and in regard to the real efficiency of its operations, because, in that event, only weak and unsuitable instruments may be employed, "men of humble condition," and "inferior attainments;" but the best that could be procured, since able men would not come forward?

But has this method been adopted? If it was Dr. Buchanan's opinion that rich and learned men, "zealous to diffuse Christianity," should go forth to enlighten the world, why did he not use his eloquent tongue and pen to urge upon them the performance of the Christian duty. No one who reads the "Christian Researches in India" can doubt the author's *courage*, and yet I am tempted to ask, was he afraid of the disapprobation of some of the reverend and learned personages before whom his sermon was preached, lest he should seem to censure *their* supineness?—Why does he turn it off with a flourish of his pen, "if you cannot find rich and learned men of your own body to go forth, send men of 'humble condition,' and 'inferior attainments?'"

But I must add one question more.—If the Doctor thought these inferior men good enough, what becomes of his statement, and of the argument founded upon it in a preceding part of the same discourse?—"I have sometimes been ashamed to see the Christian missionary put to silence by the intelligent Brahmin, on some point relating to the history of the Eastern nations, or to the present state of mankind. I have felt anxious for the credit of Christianity on such occasions."

It really seems invidious to be finding fault with so many things, but I think Dr. Buchanan's wish to spare the "rich and learned," because they might not find missionary service so "easy;" and his willingness to accept of inferior instruments in their room, on the one hand, and his conviction of the usefulness of learning on the other, have led him into several odd contradictions. For instance, he says in one place, "Every branch of knowledge which a good man possesses, he may apply to some

good purpose. If he *possessed the knowledge of an archangel, he might employ it all to the advantage of man and the glory of God.*" This is nobly said; and I wish this sentiment, unfettered and unqualified, were received as an undoubted maxim, and followed up to its legitimate consequences in the great concern of maintaining and promoting Christianity where it has got some footing among the heathen, and extending it to places where it is yet wholly unknown. It might have been expected, surely, that Dr. Buchanan's induction from this, taken along with the instances he referred to of ignorant missionaries being put to shame before intelligent heathens, would have been that missionaries could not possess too much learning—too much knowledge of *every* kind. But his inference dwindles into this—"Some portion of learning is therefore indispensable to insure even a tolerable degree of success in preaching to the heathen world." But then he goes on to except mathematical and classical learning. He allows "a knowledge of the original languages of Scripture to be indispensable to missionaries who are to be translators;" "but for missionaries in general, who preach to uncivilized nations, classical erudition *is not necessary!*" Only compare this with, "if a good man possessed the knowledge of an archangel, he might employ it all to the advantage of man and the glory of God!"

But why is mathematical and philosophical learning less necessary than the knowledge of history, and of the present state of mankind? Dr. Buchanan happened to see a missionary put to silence by a heathen on a question of this latter kind; but if he had seen him put to silence on a question concerning some of the phenomena of nature which

can only be explained on scientific principles, would there not have been equal occasion to "feel anxious for the credit of Christianity?"

It is curious to observe how different men, attaching peculiar importance to some one branch of knowledge, think all others may be dispensed with, if their favorite science is not neglected. Dr. Buchanan's missionary might be qualified to deliver lectures on history or geography; but Mr. Douglas says, "Even in the colleges of India, where learning is most required, only two branches of instruction are especially required—a knowledge of the English, and of *Chemistry*, in its simplest form, as applicable to daily phenomena, and daily uses."*

Is it not better to hold that missionaries may, profitably for themselves and for others also, possess knowledge as much as they may, and not have too much. A man's stock of knowledge is easily carried about with him. It is neither burdensome nor dangerous, and is sometimes *far cheaper than ignorance*.

But to divest the question of all ambiguity, I think it should be stated in this way:—

(1.) It is allowed on all hands that missionaries, although possessed but of limited knowledge, may be useful and honored laborers; but if their range of knowledge were widened, and their uncultivated talents better improved, would they not in all probability be more successful, as being more fitted for their work? We know that the blessing of God is equally necessary to render efficacious the labors of the learned and ignorant, the wise and the unwise of his servants; but we

* Hints on Missions, p. 83.

are here speaking of them simply, as comparatively better and worse adapted to their work, from the possession or want of ordinary qualifications.

But if a missionary is not better fitted as an instrument from his ceasing to be illiterate, and becoming a man of various learning and general knowledge;* then this cultivation of his talents, and storing of his mind, must be of *no use*, if not positively injurious. And neither of these doctrines do I consider tenable.

You must here distinguish between two things—the **INDISPENSABLENESS** of learning to a missionary, and the **ADVANTAGE** of learning to a missionary. For the former I do not contend: for the latter I do. That is to say, extensive erudition is not indispensable to the success of missionaries, because many highly honored servants of God, destitute of all such pretensions, have been, and are, abundantly useful and acceptable. Such men have been, and will be, sent out; and, especially in connection with others of higher intellectual power and more extensive acquirements, *with great advantage to the cause.*

But I think that knowledge of every kind, as much as may be procured, is always *advantageous*—and never injurious. Hence I infer that the friends of missions should give to every man they send out, the means of acquiring as much learning and knowledge as circumstances will admit. And my quarrel is with those who, inconsistently as I

* A remark of that keen observer, Richard Cecil, deserves to be remembered. "Ignorance in ministers is an occasion of exciting enmity against Christianity. A man may betray ignorance on almost every subject, except the way of salvation. But if others see him to be a fool *off* his own ground, they will think him a fool *on* that ground.

conceive, admit the advantages of learning, yet do not use the means to make missionaries learned; and shift off the duty of procuring learned men by pretending that they cannot be obtained, and then comfort themselves that "inferior men may do as well, if not better!" This, I repeat, is lowering the claims and character of the missionary cause, and injuring its interests not merely in the eyes of the world, but by rendering its operations less effective and successful than otherwise, there is reason to conclude, they would have been.

(2.) If it be admitted that learned and able missionaries, other things being equal, are to be preferred to men of inferior attainments, ought not all proper means to be used to procure men of the former description? Is it not wrong to rest contented with inferior instruments, and palliate or excuse, or even justify the men of superior station and learning, who might prove more effective instruments, merely because they do not choose to go, or do not find it so "easy" to make the requisite sacrifices? And is it not wrong in a professed friend of the cause, (and the more eminent that friend, so much the greater his crime,) to sanction and teach the "rich and learned" to scorn the missionary work as beneath *them* to take any actual share in it, leaving it to men of learning so limited, and station so mean, that they may charitably be supposed to be good for nothing else?

I know not whether most of the arguments against the employment of highly qualified persons may not be traced to an underrating of the office of the ministry. It was truly observed by one,* concerning the apostle Paul, that "his life

* R. Cecil.

and death were one *magnifying of his office*. His object was to win souls;—to execute the will of God.” And it was profoundly added, “*As the man rises in his own esteem, his office sinks; but as the office rises in his view, the man falls.*” So when men are regarded as very rich or very learned, they are thought too high for the office of a missionary. The *office sinks* before their wealth and wisdom. But the right view of the office shows that, while men are evidently unfit—*too low* for it, *none* are too great, too high for it. “Who is sufficient for these things?” is the exclamation of one impressed as he ought by a sense of the weight and difficulty of the office.

I thought that Christianity taught its disciples to condescend to men of low estate; that it taught the rich to rejoice in that he is made low, while it taught the brother of low degree to rejoice in being exalted; but if we are to adopt the principle of excusing the rich man, because he cannot “assimilate with the poor,” and “associate with their poverty, and tolerate their ignorance,” politely assigning him a good place at home, where he will not be shocked with the contact of poverty and ignorance, are we not “having respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, saying unto him, Sit thou here in a good place: and saying to the *poor*, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool?” See the whole of the second chapter of the epistle of James, and try if you can reconcile it with the doctrine here animadverted upon. I suspect you will find it to be more difficult than some have found it to reconcile James with his brother apostle Paul.

I am, &c.

LETTER XIX.

ON THE MEANS TO BE USED IN RAISING UP
MISSIONARIES.

My dear Friend,

IT must have struck you in perusing certain books, which profess to give a general view of the doctrines and duties of revelation, how little the missionary character of Christianity has been brought forward. Indeed, so obscure a place does this subject hold in some systems of divinity, whole duties of man, &c. books, otherwise sound, judicious, and comprehensive, that a reader might peruse the whole, and scarcely be able to tell if the duty to propagate the Gospel was not wholly left out of the system. The duty of *praying* for the coming of the kingdom of God, is of course introduced in the exposition of the Lord's prayer, and the duty of love to God and man naturally embraces every object, which is a proper expression of love; and among the rest, the promotion of the divine glory, and the welfare of our fellow-creatures, by disseminating the truth of God. But this is treated as a subordinate topic, while doubtful questions and strifes of words occupy many pages, and call forth all the zeal of the authors.

But if some writers have made too little of this point, perhaps you may think that I have made too much—that I have spoken in too unqualified terms on several topics connected with the spread of Christianity—such as the obligations resting upon properly qualified Christians (*nil obstante*) to become missionaries to the heathen—the *quantity* of

exertion and sacrifice to be made by Christians, in order to fulfil the command of Christ, &c. But I think the advocate of such a cause need not feel much uneasiness, although he may have neglected to qualify in every particular his representations. They whom it concerns will supply his deficiency, and practically make sufficient abatement of the demands. There is no danger of too many well qualified candidates offering themselves, in consequence of any such calls upon them. There is unhappily no cause of alarm at present, lest the Christian world should err in the way of excess in contributing to the missionary cause.

On the contrary, if experience and observation may be at all regarded, there is ground to conclude that such statements of the case as have been made in these letters, supposing them to be sounded in the ears of the very men to whom the strictures apply, would, in a great majority of instances, leave them in a very complacent frame of mind, as to what they had been doing in this cause, and what they should in future do.

Still, however, some might hear, and consider, and repent, and in the spirit of Zaccheus give fourfold for what they had *kept back from the cause of God*, and henceforth be its devoted and consistent friends and supporters.

It is not by one stroke of the battering ram the walls of a besieged fortress are made to fall; but a repetition of strokes may at length make a breach. These letters are but a few strokes at various points of the wall of the castle of Indolence; and if perseveringly followed up by heavier and more skilful blows from engines of greater power, the effect will doubtless at last be produced.

In this view, every missionary sermon, every

missionary meeting, every missionary publication, does something towards its accomplishment. And O it will be a glorious state of the church, when every Christian, in every church, prompted by the mercies which he has received of the Lord, and knowing the terrors of the Lord which hang over a sinful world, shall be earnestly asking, "Lord, what wouldst thou have ME to do?" and ready to do *whatever* the answer communicated by "the wisdom" that is "profitable to direct," shall point out.

If so, let means be used generally and systematically, to rouse the attention of Christians to this subject more than has ever yet been done.

Let me suggest—

1. That all ministers and pastors of churches bring the subject fully and *frequently* before their people. Let them show the missionary character of the New Testament dispensation.* Let them urge the duty of every one who has received the truth, to communicate it *in some way or other*. It is the duty of all to give their prayers and influence—it is the duty of some to give their money and time—it is the duty of some to give *themselves* to the cause by actual service.

Has any Christian minister hitherto neglected so to urge the claims of the heathen upon the con-

* The Jews were not commanded to go into all the world and preach the law of Moses, to proselyte every people to the observance of the rites of Judaism. But if they had received such a command, and neglected to fulfil it, how should we have descanted upon this as *one more* to be added to the black catalogue of the sins of that people? But the Jew might have retorted upon the Christian, and say, "Who art thou that judgest? for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

sciences of those over whom he is an overseer? Let him candidly own his error, and immediately begin practically to amend it. It is matter of common remark, that a congregation acquires in a great degree the views and disposition of the minister. If he is of an inactive, contracted spirit, caring little, at least in the way of exertion, for what is beyond his immediate sphere, this will, generally speaking, be the character of his people also. If a minister seldom or never leads the attention of his hearers to the wants of others, it is no wonder if they as seldom think of them, and do nothing to help them. But can this be considered a right Christian spirit?

Let us suppose in the first and best age of Christianity, a church planted by the apostles, enjoying the stated ministry of the Gospel, and walking in the ordinances and commandments of the Lord. They have been called out of darkness into marvellous light; but many around them are in that darkness still. These Christians, however, enjoy their ordinances, from week to week, from year to year; but none of them go forth to tell their heathen neighbors what a Saviour they have found—to what hopes they are begotten again—from what a death they have been delivered—and to represent the need of these blessings to every sinner. Does it not strike you as something very incongruous, to suppose that a primitive church should be so indifferent about the spread of the Gospel? Indeed they could not have been described in the terms I have quoted—"walking in all the ordinances and commandments of the Lord **BLAMELESS**," if such was their character; for in that case they were neglecting at least *one* commandment.

2. That all Christians, whether ministers or others, who have proper views and feelings on this subject, form the distinct purpose of doing every thing in their power, according to their several abilities, to fan the missionary flame around them. Christians of learning and ability should take every proper occasion to bring the question before their friends and fellow Christians.

In furtherance of this idea, some might turn their minds to a comprehensive and thorough investigation of the nature, obligation, motives, means, and certain results of the evangelization of the world. Here is a list of a few grand desiderata on this most interesting subject.

(1.) A missionary survey of the world.

(2.) A missionary estimate of the resources, moral, literary, and physical, of the Christian world, for attempting the conversion of all nations.

N. B. This estimate should be formed not on the idea of such a gradual increase and multiplication of means as may possibly, in the course of four or five centuries, amount to something adequate to the extent of the work; but on the supposition that it is *our* work—*our* duty to attempt the whole. I do not entertain the enthusiastic idea, that all the heathen will at once become docile, reasonable, ingenuous, believing, as soon as they behold a host of missionaries come to convert them; or that the effect of one unprecedented effort shall operate with the effect of magic on the world. But on the other hand, I think exertion to such an extent would warrant high hopes that God was about to pour out an extraordinary blessing, since he had caused his own people to make a devoted and simultaneous movement in obedience to his command,

to make known his salvation to every tribe, and kindred, and people, and nation.

(3.) An inquiry into the most proper and effectual means of providing a supply of suitable men for the missionary office, and preparing them for its duties. And in connection with this, the best means of assisting native converts of promising abilities in every part of the world, to give themselves to the work of instructing their countrymen. There is reason to conclude, that in many cases, from not following up partial success at missionary stations, by employing hopeful converts, the work has, humanly speaking, been much retarded.

(4.) A series of popular tracts on missionary subjects, embracing descriptions of the state of heathen nations, the character of their superstitions, the effect of attempts to convert them, the *causes* of the failure of such attempts, where they have been unsuccessful—the extent of the field of missions—want of laborers to cultivate it, &c.

This object is in part met by the monthly papers of some of the societies; but they are chiefly confined to those who are already subscribing to the cause—such tracts should be universally circulated.

(5.) A periodical publication, in which might be inserted all such information of a literary, scientific, and general nature, as may be transmitted by missionaries from their several stations, and which it does not consist with the plan of any of the existing Missionary Chronicles, Reports, &c. to insert.

I have long thought something of this kind very desirable. It has been said, and truly, that it would tend much to interest the friends of literature in general in the labors of missionaries, if

their communications embraced matters of general interest respecting the countries in which they sojourn, as well as intelligence more specifically of a missionary character.

Missionaries have been loudly complained against, that they have paid so little attention to this subject; but the best apology for them is, that there has been no proper channel through which these communications could be brought before the eye of the public. The missionary periodical papers find their limits small enough for containing information strictly relating to their missionary work, and as this deservedly holds the first place, articles of a more general nature cannot be admitted. And missionaries knowing this, think it needless to furnish them. But I am persuaded, that were some publication devoted to this branch of *missionary intelligence*, it might both be rendered subservient to the interests of the cause, by securing more universal attention and respect, while it contributed important additions to the stock of human knowledge; and might also, under judicious and spirited management, be made a source of considerable annual revenue to the missionary societies.

The details of the plan it does not belong to me to enter into; but if the hint be attended to, it may become a means of no small efficacy in promoting this best of causes.

It would not be difficult to increase the list of *desiderata*; but if these few be supplied, they will operate in their own way, and may lead to the suggestion of other things conducive to the same glorious end.

I am, &c.

P. S. Since the above was written, I have observed that in the *Evangelical Magazine* for 1810

and 1811, is inserted a series of papers on the state of evangelical religion throughout the world, which in some degree meets my idea of a missionary survey of the world, as stated in the foregoing list of desiderata. Perhaps there may be other publications extant, of which I am not aware, in which these subjects are treated of. If so, means should be taken to give them the widest circulation. Many excellent papers, which have appeared in Magazines and Reviews, or extracts from them, might with great advantage be reprinted.

LETTER XX.

ON THE SPIRIT OF THE MISSIONARY
ENTERPRIZE.

My dear Friend,

HAVING given you my thoughts upon a variety of subjects connected with the missionary work, it may not be improper to say something on the *spirit* in which the whole ought to be conducted. It ought not to be a self-sufficient, worldly-wise, or enthusiastically daring spirit—but a spirit of humble, yet resolute faith—meek devotion—enlightened zeal, animated and directed by love to God and man.

This may seem so obvious as not to require distinct notice; but it may not be wholly unnecessary to state it. To pass it in silence, when so many other topics may have been insisted on, might be construed into inattention to a point of the most essential importance.

The whole undertaking is unspeakably solemn. It is a matter of life and death. It involves the salvation or destruction of all who are engaged in it, whether as preachers or hearers—dispensers or receivers of the word of God. They that preach must deliver their own souls; and the sincere faithful laborer will: but the careless unsanctified instrument, after having preached the Gospel to others, shall himself be cast away. The hearer of the word, who mixes faith with the hearing, who believes with the heart unto righteousness, and makes confession with the mouth, shall obtain salvation. As to him, the preacher is the savor of life unto life; whereas, the wicked who turns not from his evil way shall perish, but his blood shall be upon his own head.

But this responsibility, and the consequent guilt of unfaithfulness in doing the work of the Lord, ought to be viewed as attaching not merely to the immediate laborers in the field, but also, in a degree, to all at home, who are required to set their hands to the cause, and may be assisting in it even in the humblest degree. The sin of doing the work of the Lord deceitfully is not peculiar to the laborers in one department only. Lukewarmness may be the sin of the weekly or annual contributor, as well as of the missionary. I do not say that the guilt is equal; but the least degree of it will be found heavy enough one day. It were awful in a missionary to be pampering himself, and living at his ease, and neglecting the souls of men perishing around him—his fellow men, whose extreme wretchedness was making the most touching appeals to his humanity, to say nothing of his Christian benevolence and imperious obligations! But does it argue no guilt to live at ease in Great

Britain, and not concern oneself about who is perishing, who is calling for help, who is tossed with the tempest of an alarmed conscience and not comforted? It were an instance of depravity almost as great as could be found in the heathen world itself, if a man sent on purpose to distribute the bread of life to the perishing, should go to them, but neglect to fulfil his commission!—Keep his stores locked up, and suffer them to perish for want before his eyes! But is there no depravity in the case of those who know that there are millions upon millions thus perishing, and scarcely move a finger to help them?—Who never once denied themselves one sensual indulgence—never made one sacrifice—never put forth one hearty self-denied exertion to communicate of their abundance?

When men unite in a commercial enterprize, or for the purpose of prosecuting discoveries in natural history, or any other favorite branch of human knowledge, there is seldom room to complain of want of devotement to the object. The common interest all the parties feel in it, is a sufficient guarantee for each member of the society acting his part. They imbibe the same sentiments and feelings—they breathe one spirit, and their success in general corresponds to their willing, unwearied exertions. This is as it should be—we neither decry such pursuits, nor envy the reward of such exertions; but we may learn a lesson from the spirit of devotedness to their object which the men of this world, we may say, *uniformly* display.

But O how little (I had almost said how childish) are the most dignified and praiseworthy exertions of human intellect and human passions for the attainment of some earthly transitory good, when

brought into comparison with the godlike, beneficent design of changing the face of the moral world, by the extirpation of ignorance and idolatry, root and branch, and filling the earth with the knowledge of the Lord! If the generous philanthropy of this design should fire every breast with zeal in the prosecution of it, the unspeakable misery of the objects of our compassion, the danger of failure from mistake or inactivity, or from engaging in it in an improper spirit, should give double emphasis to the obligation we are under to seek grace from God to be faithful and diligent in obeying his own command.

If these things be so, what manner of persons ought we to be in serious devotedness to this cause! When a plague is raging in a country, there is little thought of diversion; there is no heart for merriment; and in devising and employing means that the plague be stayed, there is deep solemnity in every countenance. The image of death every where presents itself. Hearts are lifted up in secret to the almighty Disposer of life and death. There are earnest cries for the display of his mercy, for direction as to the use of means, and strength and courage to fulfil the melancholy but necessary duty of those who go between the living and the dead. Such a calamity as the plague, makes people forget their little differences and private interests. And they who are mercifully delivered from it will feel it to be the most proper expression of their gratitude to God, to do all they can, and that *immediately*, to help the unhappy persons who are still exposed to the pestilence. An hour's delay would be felt to be criminal—the total neglect of the sufferers, while a remedy was at hand, the most preposterous and inhuman cruelty.

Such, I conceive, is somewhat like the spirit of solemnity, diligence, dependence upon God, gratitude for his mercy, and humility before him, which should characterize all who are concerned in the *great work* to which these Letters refer. While it is not shaded with the gloom and despondency that hang over the scene of a pestilence, concerning which we have no intimation whether it may be stayed, or whether all means will be alike ineffectual, we have but the greater reason to labor in hope. We have the gracious assurance that "our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord," if we set ourselves in good earnest to the work of saving souls. Right impressions of the duty will lead to deep seriousness in the performance of it. A work, to which the proper introduction is "fasting and prayer," ought to be prosecuted in a corresponding spirit of self-denial and devotion.

The consideration of the partial success of missions in general, and an intense feeling of the need of divine influence, have of late years excited many to the duty of more frequent, special, earnest prayer for the Spirit of light and life to be poured out on all flesh. The church, "the garden walled around," needs these influences—and they are needed on the barren wastes of heathenism. That many have thus been stirred up to pray, is a good sign, so far as it goes. But I have always thought that, unaccompanied with other signs of improvement, there is room to question how far such impressions of the need of divine aid practically affect those who profess to be under them. With regard to such a blessing, if we really ask it, we have it; and if we have it, we have also its necessary concomitants. What I mean is, that if there be so deep and universal a feeling of the importance of obtaining a more abundant measure of that

Spirit of God, the residue of which is with him, the blessing is already in a good degree obtained. But as these influences are not to supersede, but to animate, our labors, the enjoyment of them implies more zealous exertion—more unreserved consecration—more simplicity of aim—more heavenliness of temper in all we say and do. Hence, to prove that this spirit of supplication, which has been in some degree manifested, has come from God, and is not mere animal excitement, produced by the call addressed to us to engage in it, seconded by our own conviction of the propriety of the exercise, there must be a corresponding spirit of zeal and activity in working. If we pray, and only pray, IDLY expecting an answer, and attempting nothing till we think we have received it, there is something wrong. The prayer that is sincere is followed by the immediate effort of faith to realize the blessing prayed for. If prayer be not so followed up, the meaning of it “being interpreted,” it is just that God, by exerting his own divine power, in converting the heathen nations, would spare us the trouble of making any farther exertion—or at least so remove difficulties and dangers, that the performance of the duty would be to us all that was gratifying and soothing; and be in all respects more the joy of harvest, than the weeping labor of them that till and sow.

I do not by any means say, that the influences of the Spirit can be dispensed with, or that prayer for them is out of place in the present state of our progress in the work of evangelizing the heathen nations. This is impossible. Indeed, I think there is no hope of much good being done, either at home or abroad, till we see more of that heavenly influence pervading all ranks of contributors to this

work, and all laborers in every department of it. But I say that we must not rest in merely praying for this blessing. Praying must be followed with doing, and labor must be sanctified by prayer. Let us "believe we have the petitions we desire of him," and act accordingly. Till we do so we ask amiss, if not as to the subject of our prayers, at least as to the spirit of them.

I am well aware that not a few contribute to the missionary cause, just as they do to any other benevolent institution, without thinking much about it. When we have gotten such people's money, we have gotten all we have to expect from them. The cause is not helped by their prayers, for they are not given to prayer. It is not helped by their example, for their conduct is not exemplary. It is not helped by their persuasive arguments in its favor, in their respective circles, for they are unable to reason in its defence. They neither understand its claims, nor appreciate its importance.

O when the spirit of power and love, and of a sound mind, shall descend upon these; and upon all the professed friends of the missionary and *Bible* cause, there will be a change indeed! For this let us pray, and in the mean time be doing what we can with the limited means we enjoy.

True Christians have a most exalted idea of the glory of their unseen Saviour. But as his glory, while he was upon earth, was obscured by the veil of humanity he chose to wear, so his glory is still in a great degree holden from the world, because the number of his professed followers is comparatively small, and the light of many of them is hid under a bushel. They form but a small portion of the inhabitants of the world, and multitudes of the number of those that call him Lord, bring no glory

to his name; for their character disgraces the religion they profess. We believe indeed that the heathen are given to our Saviour "for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;" but we see not yet "all things put under him." I sometimes endeavor to realize the feelings of a Christian of a future and happier age of the church, when the far greater part of the world shall have been subdued to Christ, and be full of "people made willing in the day of His power." How will the heart of every Christian of that happier age expand, when he looks around to the east and west, and south and north, and contemplates the crowding millions of every clime and of every language, ranked among the humble and joyful followers of Jesus!—their idols thrown away—their cruel rites abolished—their wars all over—their cup of prosperity as full as it can be on earth, and CHRIST the theme of every tongue, and the supreme object of love and devotion of every heart.

Great is the joy of loyal and affectionate subjects, when the king they venerate, and who has been long deprived of his crown and the enjoyment of his just rights as the sovereign of an extensive empire—a king who has long been confined to a narrow spot as to actual dominion, and has had but few devoted to his cause and sharers of his fortunes, and supporters of his honors and majesty,—I say great is the joy of such a people, when their king is restored to the full possession of his kingdom—when the hearts of all are opened to revere him, and bowed in dutiful submission before him. So it will be with the faithful followers of Christ, in that day when he shall be glorious in the eyes of all nations. For although his true friends *know* that

he has a right to universal empire, yet there is still a difference between merely having a right, and being actually put in possession of it. It is one thing to contemplate the kingdoms of this world as Christ's in reversion, and another thing to see them rejoicing in the blessings of his reign. Let us cheerfully give our life and labors to accelerate this blessed era.

I am, &c.

LETTER XXI.

SOME OF THE CAUSES OF INDIFFERENCE TO MISSIONARY EXERTIONS.

My dear Friend,

WHAT is the reason why so many professing Christians render so little efficient aid to the cause of the blessed Saviour in the heathen world? This is a question that forces itself upon us when we think on the one hand how much aid that cause requires, and on the other how practically indifferent many are whom in charity we are bound to consider as sincere Christians. This indifference is to be traced to a variety of causes, and it may not be unuseful briefly to glance at some of them.

(1.) The burden of supporting the ordinances of religion among themselves presses heavily upon some bodies of Christians. It seems to require their utmost exertions to provide for their own; and so many, because they feel that they can do very little, absolutely do nothing in the way of contributing to the spread of the Gospel.

(2.) The pressure of the times also is severely felt by many. But when will this cease? Shall the heathen be allowed to live and die without Christ till the "hard times" are over? It is admitted that in the course of providence the circumstances of individuals may be so reversed, that however willing and even zealous to help the "good cause," they cannot, consistently with the claims of justice, contribute even the smallest sum. Such are, of course, absolved from the guilt of withholding assistance; but so long as men have what they can call *their own*, of that they are unquestionably bound to impart a share to those who are poorer than themselves. Let them imitate the churches of Macedonia, of whom it is recorded that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality; for to their power, yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves. They would say, "We are very poor and the times very hard, we can ill spare any thing from our small stock; but our bowels yearn over the poor heathen around us—with them it is *hard times* indeed! They are destitute of the Gospel, while we are rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom; let us live upon the coarsest fare, and strip ourselves of every superfluity, rather than leave them to perish."

(3.) The calls for help at our own doors—the support of preachers in remote and destitute parts of our own country—seem to possess a prior claim upon our liberality. Heathens at home have as much need of the Gospel as heathens abroad. This is a perfect truism, and so is the converse of it; heathens abroad have as much need of the Gospel as heathens at home. And what is the inference?

Neglect one of them? Surely not. Aid *both* according to your ability. But the very circumstance, that the heathen at home are so much within sight and within hearing, give them so greatly the advantage over heathens abroad in competing for a share of Christian beneficence, that a man of consideration, adverting to this circumstance, may I think very safely give the latter the *first* place in his regards; persuaded that the heathen at home will attract the regard of many who will never think of the heathen abroad, or only think of them as having a secondary and distant claim to attention. According to the views of some, the worshippers of the gods of Hindoostan, China, Africa, &c. should be left to their idols till there are no remains of ignorance and idolatry among ourselves. When any one argues in this way it might not be improper to advise him to adhere strictly to his own principle, and abstain from teaching the ignorant, even of his own countrymen, till he has nothing more to learn himself; to correct no errors till he has left no error in his own heart uncorrected; not to concern himself with the spiritual dangers and wants of his brother till he himself is beyond the reach of danger, and has no wants unsupplied—for “Charity begins at home!”

Such sentiments are sometimes harbored in a latent form, where nothing of the kind is openly avowed; but so far as they operate, they cut the sinews of exertion in the most glorious of causes—the conversion of the whole world to the faith of Christ, that *He* may reign, and all his enemies be put under his feet.

(4.) Prejudice against the publicity and activity of missionary and other societies has a very unfavorable effect upon their interests in some

quarters. There is a class of Christians who profess much in a certain way, but who speak and think in a slighting manner of the active exertions of some of their brethren. "We do not approve," say they, "of so much bustle and stir; we have no taste for 'public exhibitions.' A good sermon is better than a missionary meeting at any time: we see some who make a great figure at your meetings that would be better employed attending to the concerns of their own families, or to the examination of their own hearts. It is nothing but pride that prompts all this display of zeal." Such is their language, and consistently enough they refrain from lending *their public* support to the cause that calls forth such displays of unhallowed zeal. "I know the pride and the naughtiness of thine heart," said Eliab to his younger brother David; and whether such language as that now quoted be not dictated by a similar spirit deserves consideration.

But although these humble retiring Christians disapprove of "public exhibitions," they might be zealous in the cause itself in their own way; and I have no doubt that many of them aid it most efficiently, while they are too modest to let their liberality be known. In other cases, however, I am afraid the objection to the publicity of missionary proceedings rests on other grounds; they would be thought the friends of Christianity at less expense than taking an active share in societies for its promotion implies.

The class of disapprovers of "public exhibitions" contains not a few individuals who discover much of the true spirit of Christianity in their private life. They are exemplary in their attention to relative duties—the religious instruction of children and

domestics—their love of the pure Gospel and attachment to the ministers who preach it. Their disrelish or disapprobation of the zealous attempts made in the present day to excite and keep up a spirit of active Christian benevolence may be owing to their fear lest this outward zeal should be made a substitute for the less obstrusive, but not less essential, virtues of the Christian character. It is true that efforts to promote the prosperity of the vineyard of others may be made at the expense of the welfare of our own. But this is not necessarily implied; and instead of retiring from the scene of exertion from an apprehension of danger to ourselves, and instead of censuring the conduct of those who incur the risk, would it not be more Christian-like to stand forward with our example and influence to encourage every sincere attempt to promote the good of our fellow-creatures? and at the same time exhibit an example of the power of religion in our own heart and life, *in connection* with such exertions. Surely this would be manifesting more of the spirit of Christ than to stand aloof from the contest of benevolence, and find fault with them that engage in it.

A keen observer could see pride lurking in the folds of the tattered garments of the old cynic, who professed to despise all the pomp and vanity and “pride” of the world. We judge not individuals, but reasoning from the nature of things, perhaps it is not too much to affirm, that there is room to suspect that the fair show of humility that hides itself from the scenes of public and active exertion in the cause of missions and other similar “walks of usefulness,” may serve to conceal that which is the opposite of true humility. If some who stand openly forward in such causes seek the praise of

men for their zeal, may not the others be seeking the praise of men for their retiring modesty and humility? "Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."

But whatever may be thought of the respective character and motives of persons belonging to the class referred to, their conduct and spirit have a very unfavorable effect upon the prosperity of the cause of missions. Their *conduct* in withholding, at least publicly, their countenance and aid, is an example to others still less friendly, who, under that example, shelter their neglect and contempt of such societies and their supporters. Their *spirit* is equally prejudicial to the cause, for as they (at least some of them) are thought to reside in an elevated calm, the unruffled atmosphere of pure Christianity, and see the busy bustling crowd far beneath them, they who are thus active are represented as occupying but a lower place in the scale of Christian attainment—much engaged about outward things, but negligent of the higher and heavenly exercises of Christianity.

It is far easier to decry good things, because there is a mixture of imperfection in them, than to exhibit an example of doing good, purged of every improper alloy, and chargeable with no weakness. And it may be added that it is easier to stand still, doing nothing but condemning them that are attempting to do something, than to do that something, and shows less of a Christian spirit than some would be thought to possess. If they cannot approve of the plans of their brethren, let them at least show them a more excellent way. If they can accomplish the conversion of the world without

making any noise or stir about it, let them show how this can be done; but if they would leave it undone rather than make any ado about it, we are of a different opinion; nor will we alter it although they should place us on one of the lowest forms in the school of Christianity for our activity.

There have been men who thought the summit of Christian perfection consisted in a total seclusion from the world and all its concerns; and in that seclusion pretended to devote their days and nights to acts of devotion. They were disposed to rank very low the religionists who lived in the midst of a wicked world, and by their example and labors tried to reform it. It was, however, somewhat unaccountable that the sublime pitch of devotion to which those men attained was found in hearts that never sighed for the moral miseries of the world they had forsaken, and that their hands never opened to an act of beneficence except the periodical and ostentatious charity which cost them nothing but a trifling deduction from the munificent charity of others, which enabled them to live in luxurious indolence in their monasteries. That this is true of one and all of them I by no means say; but in saying that this is a correct view of the great body of the monks of former days, I think I shall be borne out by the voice of impartial history. And it is somewhat curious to mark the similarity of principle between those *recluses* and certain high professors of the present day, who perhaps never suspected that they bore any family likeness to the monastic orders.

But a theoretical mistake into which they have both fallen has led to a practical error with which they are both chargeable. They have thought that to be dead to the world, and live a life of com-

munion with God, it is necessary to go out of the world, avoid all contact with the men of it, and, in a word, attend exclusively to their own salvation. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil," was the prayer of Him whose will was that his disciples should live in the world and seek its good, although, like himself, they should incur its hatred, by testifying that the deeds of, it are evil.

In the days of Martin Luther, some perhaps charged that eminent reformer with a taste for bustle and noise and disturbance, and accounted for all the stir he made upon the principle, that he was weary of his cell and wanted to appear somebody; and this to many would appear a very plausible account of the matter. But doubtless the great Judge himself at the last day will reverse that uncharitable sentence, and acquit his active servant of the base motives imputed to him; and Christian charity whispers us to beware lest we also censure and condemn upon equally false grounds the servants of Christ who are zealous in his cause in the present day.

Were we furnished with such a history of the primitive churches as would give us as intimate a knowledge of the character and opinions of their members as we have of some existing religious communities, we should better perceive the force of such injunctions as these: "Let all your things be done with charity: let not your good be evil spoken of: it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing: be careful to maintain good works: be not wise in your own conceits;" and many more that might be quoted. These dictates of inspired wisdom had a special reference to the state of

things in the churches at Rome, Corinth, and other places; but they are applicable also to the state of manners and opinions, the spirit and conduct of professing bodies at the present hour. These precepts never become obsolete; nor will the neglect of them be attended with less serious consequences now than at a former period. Perhaps there were persons in those early days, as there are doubtless some of the present race of Christians, who were persuaded that fervent public zeal and humble consistent piety can never be found united; and it may be admitted that the conduct of some might have given countenance to the opinion. According to the natural process by which prejudice is generated, the imprudent behavior or unchristian spirit of a few zealots gave rise to a sweeping condemnation of all zeal and all public show of religion. The conduct of inconsistent zealots certainly showed that a high profession is not *always* the product of a holy spiritual mind; and this is all the length the inference ought to have been carried. But, instead of assuming merely that great zeal is not an infallible criterion of great piety, it may have been put down as an undoubted axiom that they are rarely, if ever, united in the same person.

It is difficult to make a classification of the professing world sufficiently comprehensive to embrace the whole, and sufficiently distinct to mark the shades of difference between each class; but without aiming at this, which indeed is not necessary for our present purpose, I would direct your attention to two or three manifest gradations in the scale of character. The mere frequenter of the church and mere observer of the common decencies of life censures what he terms the pharasaical stiffness

and morose piety of his neighbor, who rises a little above his standard by being a strict observer of the Sabbath—regular in the performance of the duties of family worship and private devotion. And this one finds fault with his neighbor, who, in addition to these duties, manifests a concern for the spiritual welfare of those about him; or, if his zeal prompt him to take a wider range, and his talents fit him for more extensive usefulness, he is zealous for the diffusion of religion at home and abroad, willingly giving much of his time and attention to these matters, suspicions are immediately hinted that there may perhaps be *too much* outward religion about him, and *too little* inward; but this “perhaps” is merely introduced, at least in some instances, to cover the uncharitableness of the heart that utters this grave concern—for the meaning is, that they fear it is even so, and justify their own inattention to the good of others, by throwing out injurious hints against those who do more than themselves.

In making these remarks I am not writing at random, nor descanting upon imaginary characters. The insinuations I have ventured to expose I have repeatedly heard thrown out in conversation, and they have also been expressed in letters addressed to myself. If you ask where such persons are to be found, go to some of our great towns—advertise a missionary or Bible meeting—and when the crowded assembly are listening to the proceedings of the day, slip away and call upon professors, whom you will find in their shops or houses, and who perhaps never attended such a meeting in their life. These are the persons, and perhaps they are more numerous than you suspected; they move in another circle, and seldom come in

contact with the active members and agents of your societies.

I have been very diffuse on this subject; but I cannot refrain from adding yet a few more remarks. There may be such a thing as spiritual selfishness—a disposition to indulge ourselves, if I may so express it, in the luxuries of devotional reading, the delights of select Christian society—the enjoyment of every exercise congenial to the spiritual mind—wrought up in the contemplation of our own happiness, and shutting ourselves up from the unwelcome intrusion of the cares and distractions of time. And if we had nothing to do upon earth but sit still and indulge our own meditations, they could never, if of the right kind, be carried to excess, or interfere with important duty. But if a Christian thinks only of his own things, and leaves the world to perish, he is surely not fulfilling *all* the will of his Lord. He cannot be a Christian who has no taste for the enjoyments of secret devotion; and he cannot be a growing, prosperous, heavenly-minded Christian, who does not habitually cultivate the spirit which they tend so directly to cherish. But our great Exemplar himself, who is our perfect pattern in this as in all things else, while he gave his nights to prayer, gave his days to “going about continually doing good.” We must, therefore, if we would be perfect, proportion the time spent in seeking our own spiritual improvement and gratification, so as not to infringe, even for those enjoyments, upon the active duties we owe to the world in which we live.

It may be thought there is little occasion for such a caution to Christians of the present day, who are generally suspected of being more deficient in the duties of the closet than of the market and the

church. But it may not be quite out of time, or out of place just to hint that the deceitfulness of the heart may be sometimes detected in feeding ourselves with Christian dainties, forgetful, as to all practical purposes, of our poor neighbors, who are perishing of hunger. If any one ask, "And who is my neighbor?" he may be referred to the parable spoken upon the occasion of the same question being proposed, and intended to illustrate the commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, &c. and thy neighbor as thyself."

Whether in pretence or in truth attention to our own spiritual concerns is pleaded as a reason for declining to take our share of labor and expense along with the zealous promoters of the cause of Christ, it is a plea which I am persuaded will not stand the test of an enlightened investigation. It sounds well to say, "All my time and pains are little enough for keeping things right at home; I leave it to those that are stronger and wiser than I to lay themselves out for public usefulness." This may be the language of humble sincerity—but it may be something the very reverse; and we need have no hesitation in saying that it is so when the speech is closed as follows—and we have heard it so closed once and again: "And it might be well if some of your public advocates would learn before they teach, and practise before they profess. There may be more outward show and less private devotion among some of them than among those who keep themselves quiet, and make little ado."

They who have taken up their cross and bear it through a gainsaying and scoffing world, are consoled with the promise of support and comfort in

all their trials. But perhaps it is a species of trial which some of them were not prepared to expect, that for their very activity and zeal in attempts to do good, they should not only have to bear the brunt of the world's enmity, but become the objects of the supercilious frown and illiberal insinuations of some of their own brethren, from whom they might rather have expected every countenance and encouragement; and if needful, friendly counsel and warning as to the best way of doing their Master's will, and overcoming the temptations to which their services exposed them.

I hope I shall not be understood as justifying the neglect of any private duty for the sake of public usefulness. But as it is insinuated that zeal for the cause of Christ outwardly may be loudly professed, where there is a great negligence in the performance of other Christian duties,—I would say, if the charge be well founded in the case of any one individual, let him see that henceforth he gives no occasion to any to speak reproachfully of the best of causes, and the most benevolent exertions, by any inconsistency between his public profession, and private deportment; and so cut off occasion from them that desire occasion, as well as remove a stumbling block out of the way of sincere friends to the cause of God and truth. And to meet the objections of those who are averse to show, and noise, and compliment, let all things of this kind, beyond what is proper, be avoided as much as possible.

“Fas est ab inimicis doceri.”

These appear to me to be some of the causes why many professing Christians are indifferent to the work of missions, and even prejudiced against it.

There are some persons, however, whose indifference may be otherwise accounted for. They have no illiberal prejudices against Missionary and Bible Societies, and similar institutions, but their attention has never been called to the subject by their pastors and others, to whom they look up as their proper guides and directors in all such matters. But I have touched upon this in another place, and to add any thing further here would be superfluous.

THE general design of these Letters has been to illustrate and enforce the duty of zeal in the missionary cause, and it has been more particularly my object to press the obligation resting upon qualified individuals to come forward in the way of personal devotement as missionaries. But the question might be put—"Suppose missionary candidates in great numbers were to offer their services, where could funds be procured to carry on the work on so enlarged a scale?" It is easy to answer, "Just by a corresponding augmentation of liberality on the part of those whose offerings to the cause of their Redeemer must be made, not in personal services but in pecuniary contributions."

It is not my purpose to descant on the ways and means of raising sufficient funds.* If the represen-

* See an excellent sermon by the Rev. J. Brown, delivered before the Missionary Society a few years ago.

tations contained in these letters shall, by the blessing of God, be made instrumental in exciting a missionary spirit in the breasts of some who ought to devote themselves to the work of the Lord among the heathen, I have no doubt but that a spirit for making liberal contributions will be excited in the breasts of others, sufficient to meet the expense of equipping and maintaining such missionaries. On the other hand, if these letters fail to excite such a spirit in candidates for the work, in like manner there is reason to suppose they will fail also to excite to augmented liberality. That is to say, my view of the matter is, that the true missionary spirit, when it becomes general, will produce its due proportion of missionaries and missionary contributors, so that the one will always bear a due proportion to the other.

The apostolic days exemplified the true missionary spirit. And what did the disciples do then? They that had houses or lands sold them, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. And what then? Were they fools and enthusiasts for so doing? Had they formed an extravagant estimate of the *riches* in glory by Christ Jesus? Were they carried away with vain hopes of the *inheritance* of the saints in light? Did they think too much of the *exceeding great reward*? Is the example of Zaccheus not to be imitated, who gave the half of his goods to feed the poor? Is there not one rich Christian in Great Britain—are there not ten—are there not a hundred—yea, a thousand, who ought to say, "The half of my goods I give to the poor heathen?"

Much has been said by some, of churches upon the scripture model. I wish there were more ambition to be followers of the first churches in

their unreserved consecration of persons and property to the cause of Christ. These would be scriptural churches indeed! Every thing in its own place, and in its due order—but I say, avaunt boasted scriptural order and simplicity, where this spirit is wanting.

Let but the true spirit of zeal to promote the cause of Christ fully possess the hearts of the Christian part of the population of Great Britain, and there will be no want of missionaries and no lack of funds to support them. It is not the pressure of the times that hinders. In the case of individuals, it may and does; but in the case of multitudes, the hindering cause is the want of the spirit of dedication of *all* to the service of their Lord and Master. Compare the amount of the contributions made to the various religious societies a few years back, when the country was in a state of commercial prosperity, with the years in which it has been suffering by stagnation of trade, and when many of the people were starving. Compare, I say, the contributions of these different years, and the result will convince you that it is not national prosperity which will secure the requisite means, nor is national adversity the cause why so little is done for the evangelization of the heathen.

I am not sure if I have said anything in former letters upon the subject of missionary prayer meetings—I shall sum up, in a few words, what occurs to me on that theme. They should be increased ten-fold. If a right spirit pervade the frequenters of them, I would augur great things to the cause. But I think one great purpose of such meetings is by many almost wholly overlooked. They pray for missionaries. They pray for the heathen.

They pray for the influences of the Spirit to descend upon teachers and the taught. They pray for success to the work at large—and so far so well. But they forget to pray that they themselves may be enabled to know and do their duty in helping the work. A man fallen into a pit, and another at the pit's mouth, praying to God to help him out, is a fit emblem of a prayer meeting, where the members never think of their having anything more to do in the work. If the perishing man overheard such a petitioner offering up his prayers, and then going away about his own business, he would surely question his sincerity. But if he heard the man praying for courage to descend into the pit, or for wisdom and zeal to find out and employ proper means for his deliverance, he would conclude he was in earnest, and believe that such a prayer would undoubtedly be heard and answered. I should like, therefore, to hear the members of missionary prayer meetings making this a prominent part of their supplications, that they, themselves, and others, also may be stirred up to devise, and act, and suffer what they ought, that the heathen may be brought out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel.

Whatever may be thought of some of the reasonings and opinions contained in these letters, I apprehend that the general tenor of them must be approved by all who really love the truth. That Christians should exert themselves to lead others to the knowledge of the Gospel is so indisputable, that the enforcement of the duty cannot be considered wrong; but as to the *manner* and *measure* of performing the duty, men will think differently. I can conceive that many who would not undertake to disprove any of the positions advanced in these

sheets, may nevertheless think that matters have been pushed too far, and a degree of self-devotement contended for, greater than the general sense of the Christian world will warrant. At any rate, when the subject comes to be considered practically by individual professors of Christianity, each one may persuade himself that he finds some peculiarity in his own case, which renders the performance of the duty less imperative upon him, and that he may, upon justifiable grounds, excuse himself from doing *so much*, as, no doubt, *some* may and ought to do. It would be a vain attempt to anticipate and reply to all such excuses. But there is one thing that occurs to me, which I will just notice before concluding. It relates to actual engagement in the missionary service. This appears so awfully solemn an undertaking, that many shrink from the thought of it. The responsibility involved in becoming a missionary to the heathen, appears so fearfully great, that they dare not venture to take it upon them. And they make this overwhelming sense of its importance the excuse for declining it. It is a mistaken view of the matter, however, to suppose that to decline engaging in the service of Christ among heathen nations, frees us from all responsibility on that head. It must never be forgotten, that we are accessory to the guilt and condemnation of the heathen, if we neglect to use the means God has appointed for their conversion and salvation. If, therefore, we tremble at the thought of the responsibility of the missionary character, we have no less reason to tremble at the thought of refusing to sustain it when duty calls, and no insuperable difficulty forbids. More than one instance is recorded in Scripture of prophets declining a post of honor and responsibility, or wishing to excuse

themselves from engaging in an arduous service, but in no instance do we find that their objections were sustained. The command was repeated and enforced, with the assurance of all needful grace. These examples are recorded for our instruction, and the application in the present case is obvious. The same general principle extends to all the other departments of the service of Christ, as well as the one now specified.

I repeat, that when Providence points out to us any particular service, it is ours to undertake it with all its attendant responsibility, depending upon the all-sufficient grace of God. But if we decline the duty, thinking that thereby we escape the responsibility it brings along with it, we most egregiously err. For in that case we are guilty of disobedience, and become accessory to all the guilt and misery, which, but for our criminal neglect, might, as far as human agency is concerned, have been removed. O, it is dreadful to think of the multitudes that have already gone to perdition because no man cared for their souls. Their blood is to be traced to the doors of Christian churches—to the closets and the studies of Christian ministers—to the shops and families of Christians in secular life! In churches and closets, and shops and families, the idol-serving nations “have been forgotten,” and alas are still practically forgotten to an extent which we dare not calculate.

“ARISE, O LORD, AND PLEAD THINE OWN CAUSE.”

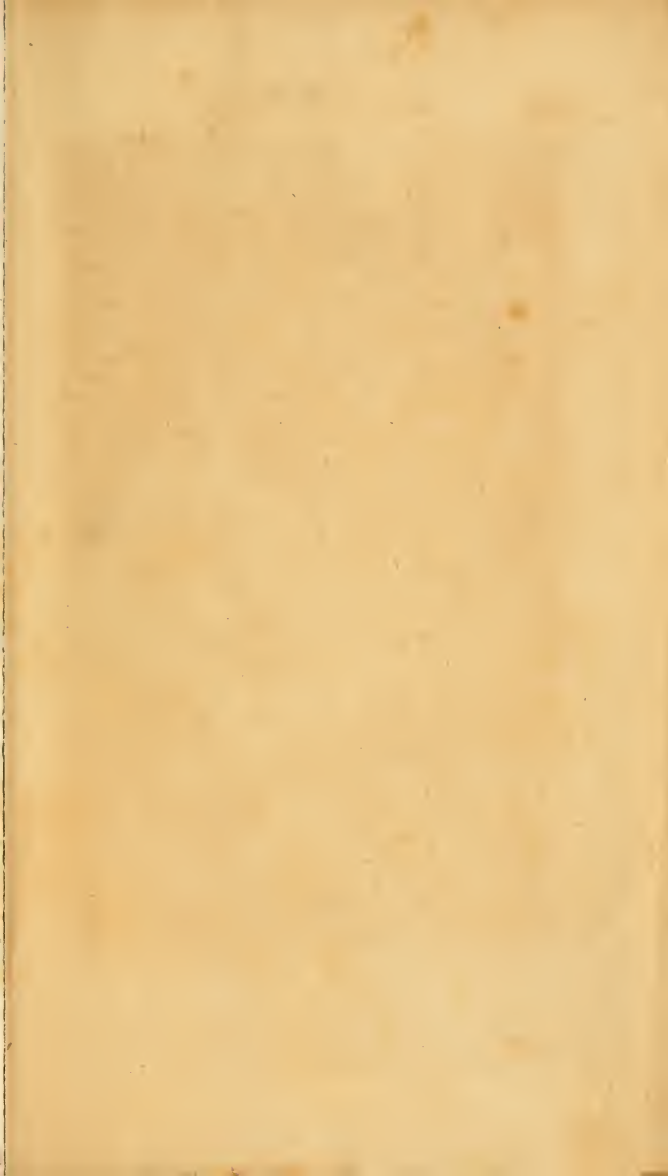
GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE
GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.—*Mark* xvi. 15.

[From a Sermon by the Rev. ISAAC BIRD, Missionary in Syria.]

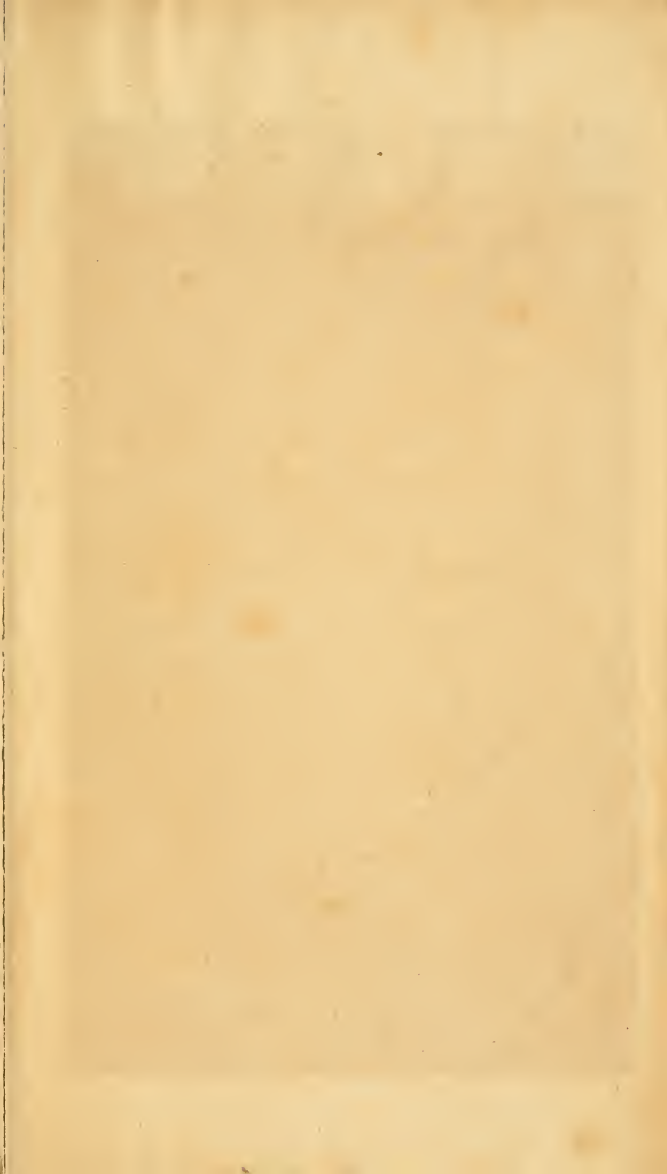
THIS is one of those commands, which involve relative duties; duties which can be fulfilled only by the co-operation of two or more parties, and in which case, a command addressed to one party is necessarily and equally binding on the other. And as the command resting on the head of a family to *rule* his own house well, imposes on his household the relative obligation to *obey*, and as the command to some to *preach* the Gospel, involves the corresponding duty in others to *hear* it, so also the command to some to *go* to the heathen, involves in others the corresponding obligation to *send* them; for “how shall they preach except they be sent?” In the great work then of spreading the Gospel, *going*, and *sending*, and *preaching*, are duties that are inseparable, duties dependent on each other, duties therefore which necessarily are all alike enjoined in this command of Christ. The command requires not only that auxiliary labor, which is *directly necessary*, and which is the obvious result of relative duty among brethren, but it lays a demand on *all* auxiliary labor. It claims not only what *must* be done, but what *can* be done. It is binding on all persons who can obey it *in any way*, and by any means within their reach. It is binding, and with an equal force, on all who can *preach* the Gospel, and on all who can *cause* it to be preached; on all who can go, on all who can send, and on all who can *assist* in sending. It is addressed, then, with equal emphasis to man and woman, to minister and people, to saint and sinner, to all who have substance to give, or influence to exert, or hearts to pray, for the perishing heathen.

Has any one of you, then, my brethren, heretofore thought that you had nothing to do with this command of Christ? Know then that you have *everything* to do with it. If *you* have nothing to do with it, then neither has any other person. Prove, if you can, that this command has no binding application to *you*, and you may prove that it has no binding application at all. Prove that *this* command has no such application, and you may prove the same of every other command like it; and you ab-

solve yourself and the world together, from all obligation whatever in the case. Then have we no requirement left to spread the Gospel. Salvation in abundance, like floods of milk and wine, has been purchased for the heathen, but here it lies upon our hands, with no provision made to send it to them. But if such provision has been made; if Jesus Christ not only left a remedy for the corruptions of the heathen, but solemnly commanded its application; if this command of his did not die with the Apostles, and cannot die while heathenism lives; if it requires a work which we can all engage in, and therefore we are among the number to whom it is addressed; then let us stand with open ears and hearts, and bid it welcome. Let it fall as with a voice of thunder upon the conscience that has hitherto felt nothing; and, come what will, and cost what it may, let it be obeyed. We have here no distracting variety of motives. The consideration which urges us on to duty is one of the simplest kind. We have not come to contemplate the poverty and guilt, the actual and the threatening miseries of the heathen. We have not come to contemplate the zeal of others, nor the probabilities of great success in the work of missions. We have come to contemplate simply a *divine command* upon the subject. No matter, for the present, whether the heathen are rich or poor, happy or wretched, safe or ruined. No matter what others will or will not do for their salvation. No matter what the prospect—whether the heathen desire or detest our Gospel, and whether all our efforts for them will be blessed or lost: the simple question is, *Shall we acknowledge the authority of Christ?* Shall we *obey*, or shall we *break*, the solemn, plain command of him who said “*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*”?







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