

52
71
57100

DR. TYLER'S



MISSIONARY SERMON.

1832.

A. Shirley,  Printer.

THE PROSPECTS OF THE HEATHEN WITHOUT THE GOSPEL.

A

S E R M O N ,

PREACHED IN PORTLAND, ON SABBATH EVENING,

FEBRUARY 26, 1832.

BY BENNET TYLER, D. D.

Pastor of the Second Congregational Church in Portland, Me.

PORTLAND:

PRINTED BY ARTHUR SHIBLEY.

1832.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Several ministers, in Portland and the vicinity, have agreed to sustain a monthly Missionary lecture, to be preached on the last Sabbath evening in each month with a view to excite a deeper interest in favor of foreign and domestic Missions. The following discourse was preached on one of these occasions. It is given to the public, at the earnest request of many who heard it; and with the hope, that through the blessing of God, it may contribute something, at least, towards promoting the grand enterprize of evangelizing the world.

S E R M O N .

ROMANS X : 13--15.

FOR WHOSEVER SHALL, CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD, SHALL BE SAVED. HOW THEN SHALL THEY CALL ON HIM IN WHOM THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED; AND HOW SHALL THEY BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD; AND HOW SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER; AND HOW SHALL THEY PREACH EXCEPT THEY BE SENT?

ONE principal cause of the apathy which extensively prevails in regard to the Missionary enterprise, is a total misapprehension of the character and condition of the heathen world. Many profess to believe, (and among them, some who bear the christian name,) that although the gospel is a blessing, it is by no means essential to salvation; and that the heathen, although, in some respects, less eligibly situated in the present life, have, on the whole, as fair a prospect of happiness in the life to come, as those who are favored with the institutions of christianity. It is not surprising, that those who entertain these views, should take but little interest in the cause of missions. Whether these views are correct, is a question of momentous interest. If they are, let us sleep on like the generations before us; and let the heathen live and die in their blindness, ignorant of Christ, and trusting in their vain superstitions.

But if we have reason to believe that they are in a state of sin and condemnation, and are exposed to everlasting perdition; let us awake to a sense of their condition, and let us consider no labours and no sacrifices too great, to bring them to a knowl-

edge of that Saviour, who came to seek, and to save that which was lost.

Without attempting to decide the question whether it is possible for any of the heathen to be saved; my present object will be to follow the spirit of the text, and enquire how they can be saved without the gospel. *How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed; and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?*

In the verse preceding the text, the Apostle says, *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him.* He had before proved that both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin;—that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified; and consequently, that the only way in which any one, whether Jew or Gentile, can be saved, is through the atonement of the Lord Jesus. This point he assumes in the chapter from which the text is taken. He begins the chapter by expressing his ardent desire for the salvation of his brethren the Jews, *who being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted to the righteousness of God which is by faith.* He then draws a contrast between the righteousness of the law, and the righteousness of faith; and comes to the conclusion, that *whosoever believeth on him* (that is, on Christ,) *shall not be ashamed.* *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek.* Both stand precisely on the same ground in regard to justification. Both are included under sin. Neither can be justified on account of their own righteousness—And to both the same door of hope is opened in the gospel. *The same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.* Whosoever—of whatever nation, or character, in a penitent and believing manner, shall come to Christ for mercy, shall obtain it. *But how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed; and how shall they believe in him of whom they have*

not heard ; and how shall they hear without a preacher ; and how shall they preach, except they be sent ? These enquiries, demand the serious attention of all those who are opposed to sending the gospel to the heathen.

But if the heathen are sincere, and live agreeably to the light which they enjoy, will not a righteous and merciful God, overlook their errors, and receive them to favour? Undoubtedly he will. For if they live agreeably to the light which they enjoy, they are not sinners, and stand in no need of pardon. They will consequently be justified on the ground of their own righteousness. They have the same claim to the favor of God that the angels have, or that Adam would have had, if he had not apostatized. But the question arises, do any of the heathen live agreeably to the light which they enjoy, and in this way, secure a title to eternal life?

This will be our first enquiry. Let it be borne in mind that the heathen will not be judged by the written law. It is contrary to all our ideas of justice, to suppose that a moral being should be condemned for not obeying a law, of which he is necessarily, and unavoidably ignorant. But the heathen have no knowledge of the written law, and no means of knowing it. Still, however, they are under law, as the Apostle has decided. *These having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts ; their conscience also bearing them witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile, accusing or else excusing one another.* The great principles of the moral law are exhibited by the light of nature ; and so far as the heathen are capable of discovering their duty by the light of nature, they are under obligations to obey. *As many as have sinned without law, (that is, without the written law,) shall perish without law. And as many as have sinned in the law, (that is, under the written law,) shall be judged by the law.* The Apostle you will perceive, takes it for granted, that those who have not the written law, may sin, and perish.

They are, of course, under law, for *where no law is, there is no transgression*. Where there is no rule of duty to be violated, there can be no such thing as sin, or desert of punishment. Those who are not, in some sense, under law, are not accountable beings; for accountability implies obligation, and obligation implies duty, and duty implies a rule of duty. What then is the rule of duty to the heathen? Evidently that, and that only, which the light of nature discloses. This, so far as it is discoverable at all, exactly corresponds with the written law. It must be carefully kept in mind, that the heathen and those who live under the light of revelation, are not placed under different laws. The moral law is unalterably the same. It is more fully and more clearly revealed in the Bible, than by the light of nature, but still so far as the light of nature points out to man, his duty at all, it is the very same, as that which is enjoined in the written law.

God has not left himself without witness to the heathen. They have light sufficient to enable them to discover that there is a God, and to form some correct notions of his character. *For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead. The heavens declare the glory of the Lord and the firmament showeth his handy work. Day unto day, uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.* Since, therefore, the heathen are capable of discovering, to some extent, the character of God, they are capable of discovering, to some extent, their duty; and so far as they are capable of discovering their duty, they are under obligation; and so far as they fail to fulfil their obligations, they are guilty and justly condemned—as truly so, as those who have the written law and have transgressed it. It is true, their guilt is not so great, nor their condemnation so aggravated; because they have not sinned against so great light. But so far as they fail to do, what they know or might know to be their

duty, they are as really guilty, and as justly condemned, as any sinners on earth.

This then is the state of the heathen. They are accountable beings. They are under law, and stand precisely on the same ground in regard to justification with those who enjoy the light of revelation; that is, they are both bound to obey perfectly the law under which they are placed, in order to be justified on the ground of their own righteousness. If one who is favored with the Bible, should obey the whole law and not offend in one point, he would be justified by his own works: and if a heathen should live agreeably to the light which he enjoys, and not fail to perform a single duty which the light of nature discloses, he would be justified in the same manner. He would be as truly without sin, as Adam was in Paradise, and as the angels are in heaven. But if one who has the Bible, does not *continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them*, he is pronounced accursed. And if a heathen does not live, in every respect, agreeably to the light which he enjoys, he is also accursed. Both are sinners, and stand condemned, and cannot be saved without the intervention of pardoning mercy.

Now the question returns, do any of the heathen live agreeably to the light which they enjoy? If they do, they stand in no need of mercy, and cannot be saved by grace. They have a perfect righteousness of their own, and can claim eternal life, as the reward of their obedience. But do the scriptures teach us that any of the human race will be justified on the ground of their own righteousness? Do they not, on the contrary, declare, that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God—that there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not—that all flesh have corrupted their way, that they have together become unprofitable: and that there is none that doeth good, no not one?* Has not the Apostle declared, that he had *before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they were all under sin; and that by the*

deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified? If these declarations are true, it is certain that none of the heathen can be justified on the ground of their own righteousness. It is equally certain that none of them do live agreeably to the light which they enjoy.

This truth is also evident, from the history of the heathen world. The Apostle has given us a description of the heathen world as it existed in his day. After mentioning that the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, even his eternal power and godhead; he adds—*So that they are without excuse;—Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves—Who changed the truth of God into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature, more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters; haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful; who knowing the judgment of God that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

Such was the heathen world in the days of Paul, and such according to the most authentic information, it is now; and

such we have reason to believe it ever will be, till it shall be illuminated by the light of the glorious gospel of the Son of God.

Besides.—Why should it be thought that any of the heathen are more likely to live agreeably to the light which they enjoy, than those who have the Bible in their hands, are, to live agreeably to the light which they enjoy? It is admitted, that those who are favoured with the written law, are, without a single exception, transgressors. And what reason is there to suppose that the heathen have not universally fallen short of their duty; especially when it is considered, that they are all descended from the same progenitors, and possess essentially the same native character. But the Apostle has decided the point. He has assured us, that *all are concluded under sin, and are by nature children of wrath*. The heathen therefore cannot be saved, on the ground that they have lived agreeably to the light which they enjoy; for none of them have thus lived. Let us enquire

Secondly—Whether the heathen can be saved on the ground of their sincerity. That they are sincere in some things, there is no reason to doubt. They doubtless really believe it to be right, to practice many of their superstitions. But to believe a thing to be right, does not necessarily make it right; and if it did, in order to be a ground of justification, it must be universal; that is, to be justified on the ground of sincerity, a man must sincerely believe, that every thing which he does is right. He must not knowingly do wrong in a single instance. But is this true in regard to any of the heathen? Can they sincerely believe it to be right, to be *filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, to be full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, to be whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful?* But such is their character, as drawn by the

Apostle, and as verified in the history of all heathen nations, ancient or modern, civilized or savage.

Suppose, then, that the heathen are sincere in the belief and practice of many of their superstitions; and suppose that this sincerity so far as it goes, furnishes an ample excuse for their errors;—still, it cannot cancel the multitude of known sins, of which they are guilty. If we admit that they are not blameable for their abominable idolatries, because they are sincere in them; still it will appear that they are blameable for numberless other things in which they cannot be sincere. So that on this ground they will still be condemned.

But we do not admit that their sincerity is a valid excuse for their superstitions; because they have light sufficient to teach them better. Saul of Tarsus verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth; but his sincerity furnished him with no excuse, because he had the means of being better informed. If he had not shut his eyes to the light that shone around him, he would not have fallen into such a delusion. So with the heathen. It is not for the want of light, that they have fallen into such gross idolatries and superstitions; but because they love darkness rather than light. The Apostle has assigned the true reason. *Because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, he gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient.* We see then that the heathen cannot be saved either on the ground, that they live agreeably to the light which they enjoy; or on the ground of their sincerity.

We are brought therefore to the conclusion, that the heathen are justly condemned; and if saved at all, they must be saved through the intervention of pardoning mercy. It is easy to see therefore, that no injustice will attach to the character of God, if they are not saved. They will perish as justly as those who reject the gospel. Their condemnation, it is true, will not be so aggravated, because they have not violated so

great obligations; but to the extent of their deserts, they will suffer as justly as any transgressors in the universe.

It may be asked, however,—How can God justly punish the heathen, if they are never presented with the offer of pardon? This question involves a principle which tends to subvert the whole system of the gospel. It supposes that God cannot justly punish sinners, till he has first offered them pardon. On this principle he cannot justly punish the apostate angels, for no mercy has been offered to them. Nor could he justly have punished one of the human race, if he had not provided a Saviour. On this principle the gift of Christ is not an act of grace; nor is the offer of pardon an act of grace. The whole system of grace is overthrown. But let us put this principle to the test. If it is sound, it will hold good in all cases. Suppose, then, that a man is convicted of murder. Can he not be justly punished, until he has had the offer of pardon? Whoever thought of admitting such a principle in the administration of justice? But if the principle is unsound, the objection which is founded on it, is groundless.

The heathen, it is true, cannot be justly punished, for rejecting offered mercy; nor can they be punished for disobeying the precepts of the written law; any farther than they are inculcated by the light of nature. But they can be justly punished for all the sins of which they are guilty; and that they are sinners has been made already sufficiently apparent.

If, then, any of the heathen are saved, it will not be, because God would be unjust not to save them. They must be saved on the ground of mercy. But mercy cannot be extended to sinners except through an atonement. **WITHOUT THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD, THERE IS NO REMISSION.** *And there is no other name given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ.* He is the *propitiation*, and the only *propitiation* for the sins of the world. *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

BUT HOW SHALL THEY BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD? It is impossible for them to exercise faith in a Saviour of whom they have no knowledge. AND HOW SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER? The news of a Saviour must be published. AND HOW SHALL THEY PREACH EXCEPT THEY BE SENT? With these interrogations of the Apostle before us, what opinion must we form, in regard to the prospects of the heathen?

I will not undertake to decide that none of them are saved. I know that God is able to change the heart of a heathen, and to communicate to him all that light in regard to the way of pardon, which is essential to salvation. I cannot say but there are such instances. But to suppose that this is a general fact, or a fact which exists to any considerable extent, is inconsistent with the tenor of the Bible, and with the whole history of the heathen world. "The kingdom of God, is a kingdom of means;" and the gospel is ordained as the grand means of bringing sinners to repentance, and preparing them for heaven. *After that the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.* God might, if it were his pleasure, sanctify and save all his people, without the instrumentality of any means. And he might also, if he pleased, give us food and raiment without the use of our labour. But such is not the plan, which his wisdom has devised. He might have changed the heart of Henry Obookiah in Hawaii, and made to him a special revelation of the Saviour; but this would not have been according to the economy of his providence. No—Obookiah, must traverse the ocean, and come within the sound of the gospel, in order to be made a vessel of mercy prepared unto glory. And to say the least, what evidence have we that any of the heathen, have been converted and saved without the gospel? But admitting that there may have been individual cases, we cannot rationally suppose that they have been very numerous.

If the gospel is not, in all ordinary cases, necessary to the

salvation of the heathen, why were the Apostles commissioned to preach to them the gospel? The heathen of that day needed not the gospel, any more than those of the present day. Why, then, did the Apostle Paul, perform so many tedious journies, encounter so many perils, and endure so many hardships, to preach Christ among the Gentiles. If they might be saved as well without, as with the gospel; why all this waste of time and labour?

Besides—What was the object, for which Paul was commissioned to preach to the Gentiles? It was *to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from THE POWER OF SATAN UNTO GOD, that they MIGHT RECEIVE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, AND INHERITANCE AMONG THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED.* This commission implied that the Gentiles were under the dominion of Satan, and stood in need of forgiveness—And that they must be evangelized, in order to receive forgiveness, and an inheritance in heaven.

And further—What was the tenor of the Apostle's preaching to them? Did he take it for granted that any of them were interested in the favour of God? On the contrary, did he not invariably address them as sinners justly condemned, and inculcate repentance and faith as the only conditions of pardon. And in his epistles to the Gentile churches; in what one instance, does he intimate that any of the members of those churches were in a state of justification previous to their conversion to the Christian faith? How often indeed does he intimate the contrary.

Again. If the gospel is not, in all ordinary cases, necessary to salvation, why was that grand commission given to the Apostles? *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not, shall be damned.* Does not this imply, that the gospel is the great instrument which God employs for the salvation of men; and that those who are not favored with the gospel, in all ordinary cases, at least,

remain under condemnation? Agreeably to that divine declaration, *where there is no vision, the people perish.*

REMARKS.

1. This subject reminds us, how highly we are exalted, above a great part of our fellow men. Upon us the light of revelation has shone, while a large portion of our race, are groping in pagan darkness. While they have never heard of the Saviour, and never seen the Bible, and are trained up, in all the ignorance, superstition and cruelty of pagan idolatry; it has fallen to our lot to be born and educated in a Christian land. *We hear the joyful sound.* To us the gospel with all its glad tidings is proclaimed. And why is it that we are thus distinguished? It is not, because we are better than others; but it is owing entirely to the distinguishing merey of our Creator. How great then the weight of responsibility which rests upon us. Of those to whom much is given much will be required.

2. How aggravated will be the condemnation of those who perish from under the light of the gospel. If even the heathen, with that glimmering of light which is furnished by the light of nature, are without excuse; how great must be the condemnation of those who enjoy the gospel and abuse it. While the former will be beaten with comparatively few stripes; the latter will be beaten with many stripes. The heathen will not be called to answer for rejecting Christ, and despising the blood bought salvation; and if even they die without merey, *of how much sorer punishment shall those be thought worthy who have trodden under foot the Son of God?* Of all sinners who dwell on the face of the earth, there are none who will experience such a fearful doom, as those who shall perish from under the light of the gospel. It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, and for Sodom and Gomorrah than for them. Far better, not to have known the way of righteousness, than after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered

unto us. Far better, to be brought up in all the ignorance of paganism, than to go down to perdition, after having abused such privileges as we enjoy.

3. This subject teaches us very strikingly, the duty of sending the gospel to the heathen. If the gospel is a blessing of such infinite value, as has been shown; how can those who enjoy it, answer it to their consciences, or to God, if they refuse to do all in their power, to disseminate it through the world? It is estimated that there are at this moment, not less than 600,000,000 of our race, sitting in darkness and in the region and shadow of death. All these, my brethren, are immortal beings, like ourselves. They are descended from the same progenitors—are polluted with the same depravity,—and are hastening to the same eternity. Each of them has a soul infinitely more valuable than ten thousand worlds. And how are they to be saved? To whom shall they look for mercy, but to a crucified Saviour? But *how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?* It is amazing, that the Christian world have so long slumbered over the state of the heathen. Eighteen hundred years have elapsed, since our Lord gave the command, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* Since this command was given, sixty generations of the heathen have gone down to the grave, and even now, but a small part of the world is evangelized. Do you ask, why this has been permitted in the Providence of God? The question admits of the same answer with numberless others. You might ask, why God permits thousands who hear the gospel, to reject it and perish? You might indeed ask, why God permits sin and misery to exist at all? And the true answer to all questions of this sort, is, *Even so Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight.* But if you inquire for the criminal cause, why the heathen have not been evangelized, it will be found in the apathy and inexcusable neglect of those

who enjoy the gospel. The apostles did what they could, to publish the gospel to every creature ; and had those who came after them, prosecuted the object with the same diligence and zeal, the world would long since have been evangelized. To the shame of the Christian world, whole centuries have elapsed while this great object has been forgotten. But blessed be God, a new era has commenced. The Christian world are waking from the sleep of ages, and are beginning to exhibit some of that spirit which characterized the apostolic age. They are beginning to feel a deep interest in the welfare of those who are perishing for lack of vision ; and to make efforts for their salvation. Missionary Societies have been established in this country and in Europe ; and not a few have offered themselves to the Missionary service, and have bidden farewell to their country and kindred, that they might preach Christ, where he has not been named. Numbers more, are ready to go, so soon as adequate means shall be obtained for their support. *How shall they preach except they be sent ?* Who shall transport them to the distant heathen, and support them there, if those who enjoy the gospel, and who are blest with abundance of this world's goods, refuse their aid ?

Now, my hearers, are you all disposed to enlist in the cause of missions, and to lend your aid to the mighty work of evangelizing the world ?

That this is a cause which God approves, I have no doubt. Nor have I any doubt, that it must eventually commend itself, not only to every disciple of Christ, but to every friend of humanity. What is the great object of the missionary enterprize ? It is to ameliorate the condition of the human family—to dispel the darkness which covers the earth, and the gross darkness which covers the people—to rescue from ignorance, superstition, and vice, the degraded pagans, and to extend to all men the blessings of civilization, and the richer blessings of the Christian religion.

Who can be the enemy of such an enterprize ? Is he a

Christian? A Christian opposed to the spread of that gospel which he presses to his bosom as his choicest treasure ; and which contains the charter of all his hopes ! A Christian, opposed to the spread of that gospel which his Lord and master came down from heaven to teach, and which he commanded his disciples to publish to all nations !—that gospel which brings life and immortality to light, and which points a fallen race to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world ! A christian,—one who has imbibed the spirit of his divine master, who has been taught to love his neighbor as himself, and to pray for the universal reign of righteousness and peace, opposed to the extension of Christ's kingdom on the earth ! There cannot be a greater paradox than this.

Is he a philanthropist ? Let him look over the heathen and Mahometan world, and survey those dark places of the earth which are full of the habitations of cruelty. Let him contemplate the degradation, pollution, and wretchedness of pagan nations ; and then turn his eye to those more favored portions of the globe, upon which the light of revelation has shone. Let him contrast our present condition with that of our pagan ancestors, and contemplate the happy changes, which the gospel has never failed to produce, where it has been disseminated in its purity. Let him ask himself, what nation since the Christian era, has emerged from a state of barbarism without the gospel ; and into what barbarous nation it has penetrated, where it has not carried with it all the blessings of civilization—Where it has not struck up the light of science—introduced the useful arts—elevated the character of the female sex—tempered the spirit of the government—mitigated the horrors of war—ameliorated the condition of the poor, and spread a benign influence over the whole face of society. And can he be a philanthropist, who is opposed to the spread of that gospel, which never fails to carry with it such a train of blessings ?

But I rejoice that the open enemies of this cause, are fast retiring from the field. And well they may retire, for it is too late in the day, to oppose the cause of missions with any hope of success. God has purposed, that the world shall be evangelized, and if the voice of prophecy and Providence be not entirely misunderstood, the time has come, when this purpose is about to be executed. A mighty impulse has been given to the church, and a series of efforts has commenced, which we hail as the sure harbingers of a brighter day than has yet shone upon the world. The king of Zion is marshalling his hosts, and leading them from conquering to conquer. *The heathen may rage, and the people imagine a vain thing:—the kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed*—Infidels may scoff and oppose, but all their efforts to arrest the progress of the gospel, are like the puny efforts of an insect, to stop the planets in their course. They might as well undertake to dam all the rivers in the world, and dry up the ocean; as to stop those streams of charity which are making glad the city of our God.

It is interesting to look back and trace the events of the last thirty years, and then to look into the book of God, and survey the opening prospects of Zion. The church, hitherto small and despised, is not destined to live always in such obscurity. This world was made for Christ, and it shall one day become the habitation of his church. The promise is sure, that *he shall have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*. The little stone cut out of the mountain without hands, shall become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. *The kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High*. And we believe that the time is not far distant, when these things shall be realized. Already we see indications too plain to be misunderstood, that the redemption of Zion draweth

nigh. We live in an eventful day. Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things which we see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things which we hear, and have not heard them. The events of the last thirty years, have so far surpassed our expectations, that we dare not conjecture what thirty years more may bring to pass.

But while we rejoice in what has been achieved, let us not forget that we are engaged in a stupendous enterprize, and that the work is but just begun. Three quarters of our globe are still covered with pagan and Mahometan darkness; and of the other quarter, more than one half is still under the dominion of the man of sin. And even in Protestant Christendom, how small a portion of the people are imbued with the spirit of the gospel. The true church is still but a little band, few in numbers, and feeble in strength; and what can she do towards conquering the world?—a world long held under the dominion of the prince of darkness—a dominion which he will not relinquish without an obstinate and formidable struggle. When we contemplate the magnitude of the undertaking, and the weakness of the instruments by which it is to be achieved; if we looked no farther, our hearts would fail, and we should sit down in despair. But our confidence is not placed on human efforts. There is an invisible hand concerned in this enterprize; and while human instrumentality is not to be dispensed with, the excellency of the power is not of men, but of God. We can employ means: we can disseminate the scriptures, and send forth the heralds of salvation. And these means simple and powerless as they are in themselves, are mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of Satan. God can bless the means of his own appointment. He can clothe his word with divine energy, and make it the power of God unto salvation. Yes, my brethren, God can convert the world. He can bind the prince of darkness, and confine him to the prison of hell, that he shall deceive the world no longer.

He can bring the nations to bow to the sceptre of his son. He can cause the Jew to embrace that Saviour whom his fathers crucified, and whom he has been taught from his childhood to revile and blaspheme. He can bring the pagan to cast his idols to the moles and to the bats, and to sit down at Immanuel's feet. He can bring the Mahometan to forsake his Koran, and renounce his prophet, and to embrace a religion which breathes not blood and carnage, but peace and good will to men. He can purge away the corruptions of christendom, repair the waste places of Zion, and bring the thousands who hear the gospel and reject it, to fall down and sue for mercy. He can renovate this sin polluted and sin destroyed world, and fill it with his praise. And because he has promised to do it, we believe he will.

We need not therefore, be appalled at the magnitude of our undertaking, nor shrink from the work under a sense of our impotence. Let us set our hope in God, and rely on him to bless our feeble efforts, and rejoice that we may be allowed the privilege, and the honor, of being co-workers with him in the great work of evangelizing the world. And who of us is not emulous to have a part in this noble enterprize? Who of us can wish to stand idle in such a day as this, and look with cold indifference on the perishing millions of our race? Do we, my hearers, esteem the gospel a blessing, or do we consider it a curse? Should we be willing to exchange places with the heathen, or to be set back to that state of darkness, in which the gospel found our ancestors? If so, let us burn our Bibles and demolish our sanctuaries. Let us send into exile the ministers of religion, and abolish our schools. Let us sweep away those Christian institutions in which our fathers gloried, and which they deemed the richest legacy which they could leave to their children. Let us set our carpenters, and our masons, and our smiths to work, to make us gods of wood, and of stone, and of iron. Let us fall down be-

fore our senseless idols, and cause our children to pass through the fire unto Moloch. Let us erect our swinging posts, and our funeral piles, and burn our widows with the dead bodies of their husbands. Let us degrade the female sex to the condition of slaves, and wallow in all the pollutions of the heathen world.

But if we are not willing to return to this state of barbarism—if we prize the gospel as an invaluable blessing, let us think of those who have it not; and remember the words of the Lord Jesus,—*Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even the same to them.*

And while we weep over a world lying in wickedness, and do all in our power to ameliorate their condition; let us rejoice in the opening prospects of Zion. When I look through the glass of prophecy, and down the vale of time, I see the church coming up from the wilderness leaning on her beloved. I see the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. I see Satan's kingdom falling as lightning from heaven, and the church all glorious, rising on its ruins; looking forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners.

Yes, and without the prophetic glass, I think I see the king of Zion, coming to take possession of the earth. I see the isles waiting for his law, and Ethiopia even now stretching out her hands unto God. I see the man of sin fast passing to perdition, and the false prophet following after, and the altars of paganism crumbling to ruins. I see an angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues. And I hear songs of salvation rising from the plains of Hindostan, and echoing from the isles of the Pacific.

Yes, my hearers, the darkest period of the church is past. The millennial day begins to dawn upon the world. Already

streaks of light begin to guild the eastern horizon ; and though neither we nor our children may live to see it, our children's children may, perhaps, see the sun of righteousness rise, in full orb'd splendour upon the world.

