

Sermons

before

London Missionary Society

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*The Recollection of the Miseries of a Pagan Condition, a
Motive to Zeal in the Missionary Cause.*

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

AT

Surrey Chapel,

ON WEDNESDAY MORNING, MAY 9, 1821,



BY THE

REV. GEORGE CLAYTON.

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1821.

A SERMON,

8c. 8c.



EPHES. ii. 11, 12.

Wherefore remember, that at that time, YE were without Christ.

IT very generally happens, that when persons have been extricated from circumstances of obscurity, indigence, or misery, and introduced into a condition of advantage and superiority, they so far lose the recollection of their former state, as to avoid all recurrence to it themselves, and to take offence at every allusion which may be made to it by others. At what pains are they to conceal their humble parentage and lowly birth! With what marked avoidance do they shun the mention of the cottage or the common, the alley or the garret, in which they first drew the breath of life! How brief are the glances which they take of their first struggles with an inhospitable world, their youthful enterprises, and their earliest associations! Their former friends are quite forgotten, they are estranged from their poorer relatives, and they labour to effect a total obliteration of those impressions which might serve to revive the memory of their original selves. All this is pitiable, and, in its application to the affairs and interests of the present life, may justly provoke the contemptuous sneer of the moralist, and sharpen the sting of the satirist. Such a spirit as this, even in men of the world, demonstrates the ignorance, vacuity, and pride of the heart. But what shall we say, when those who profess and call themselves Christians, under the influence of spiritual pride, (of all other kinds the most disgusting and detestable,) lose the recol-

lection of their base original, and retain no abiding and affecting sense of the meanness of their extraction? This was the sin of the ancient Jewish Church. Unmindful of the enslaved and outcast state in which God found them, they grew vain of the favours conferred upon them, and, giddy with the elevation to which they were advanced, looked down upon the Gentile world with supercilious disdain: "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we"—"Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou." In like manner the Christian Church has, in too many instances, seemed to forget the rock from whence she was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence she was digged, and has required a remembrancer to suggest the seasonable and wholesome admonition, "Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou has not received?" "Remember that at that time ye were without Christ." Such a memento appears to me appropriate to the present occasion, which, for solemnity and interest, can be exceeded by nothing, short of the final close and consummation of all things. Assembled as we are from all parts of the British empire, and indeed from all quarters of the globe; drawn together by one common object, and that the grandest which man can propose, or Deity achieve; urged forward by an impulse which, I trust, without presumption, may be pronounced similar, in some humble measure, to that which brought Jesus from the skies, and apostles and martyrs to the stake; it will be salutary to remember what we ourselves once were, in order that our motives may be invigorated, our resolutions confirmed, and our compassions awakened in favour of those who are still "without God and without hope in the world," and whom we are determined, by the assistance and blessing of the Most High, to place on an equal footing with ourselves, in all the light and liberty and joy, of which Christianity is the parent and the source.

Let us consider,

I. The affecting condition which the text describes, "At that time ye were without Christ."

II. The duty of cherishing a distinct and constant remembrance of it.

III. The practical effects which ought to flow from such remembrance.

I. The affecting condition described: "At that time ye were without Christ." It is quite clear that the reference in the text is to a state of unenlightened, unregenerate paganism, in which the Ephesians had been long immersed, and from which they had recently been delivered by the free and sovereign love of God, quickening them from a moral and spiritual death, and raising them to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. In allusion to this period of heathenish darkness, the Apostle says, "Remember that at that time ye were without Christ;" and this short, but comprehensive delineation, contains in itself a finished picture of human wretchedness. We can conceive of no worse predicament for a rational, immortal, sinful, perishing being, than to be without Christ. It is well known that "Ephesus was the chief city of Proconsular Asia, which was a part of what is called Lesser Asia; it was particularly famous for the temple of Diana, a most magnificent and stately structure, which was reputed one of the seven wonders of the world; and its inhabitants were noted, in their Gentile state, for their idolatry and skill in magic, and for their luxury and lasciviousness."* This, however, was at once the cause and the climax of their wretchedness, that Christ was not amongst them. They had no knowledge of a Saviour, no interest in him, no participation in the blessings and privileges which he descended from heaven to bestow. And tell me, if you can, whether there be any thing in the whole range of creation, in the material or intellectual universe, that can compensate for such a privation as this? They were not without the finest productions of nature, and the most exquisite works of art—the embellishments of science, and the smoothness of civilization—the discoveries of philosophy, and the temples of religion; but what availed it, seeing that they were *without Christ*? This was precisely

* See Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor.

the case with your remote ancestors, the original inhabitants or colonists of the British isles. Yes, those who trod on the very soil upon which you now stand, and were nourished by the productions of the same climate, and some of whose blood has, possibly, descended into your veins, were in the same unhappy state.* Whether we deduce our origin from the Kimmerian or Keltic settlers—from the Trojan colony, said to have visited our isle—or from the Roman, or Saxon, or Danish, or Norman conquerors,—it is equally true of them all: they were at that time without Christ. Let us then trace the bearing and influence of this mournful deficiency upon the nature of man.

1. Upon his *understanding*. This has been called the leading faculty of the soul; because the other powers, when they maintain a regular and orderly movement, act in obedience to the dictates of the understanding. But if the light that is in us be darkness, how great is that darkness! Christ is the only source of spiritual illumination. “I am,” says he, “the light of the world.” As all natural light is derived from the sun, so all spiritual and divine light emanates from Him who is styled “the Sun of Righteousness.” Desirable, and even necessary, as it may be to gain a satisfactory acquaintance with the being and character of God—the actual condition of our nature—the way of salvation—and the future and eternal world,—it is impossible, while we are without Christ. The utmost that reason and philosophy could do, was to feel after God, if haply they might find him; but their researches were vain, and their efforts ineffectual. And truly, my brethren, I know of nothing more deeply affecting than to contemplate the human intellect left to itself, and toiling, in its entangled march, through all the trackless labyrinths of speculative uncertainty—to behold a mind once adorned with the likeness of God, but now void of knowledge, spending its strength, wasting its energies, and wearing out its courage,

* See the History of the Anglo-Saxons, by Sharon Turner, *passim*, to whom the preacher avails himself of this occasion, to express, once for all, his obligations, for many of the historical details to which he has referred.

in the anxious pursuit of that which satisfieth not; in spite of all that is intense in application, and profound in investigation, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, panting towards the goal, but never reaching it; bewildered—deceived—disappointed, and “in endless mazes lost;” this is, and must ever be, the case so long as men are without Christ.

2. Consider this subject as it affects the *conscience*. “The whole world is guilty before God.” Guilt is the parent of uneasiness, and though the cause may not be generally understood, the effect is manifest and undeniable. The Apostle Paul expressly asserts the operation of conscience, even in minds unenlightened by the Christian revelation: “their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another.” You have, in these words, a representation of the mental process which is the true cause of that inward disquietude which racks and convulses the moral world. Oh, there’s a deep and festering wound in the conscience of every sinner, which no balm can reach, but the balm of Gilead; no hand can heal but that of the Physician who is there. This hidden misery is sometimes betrayed in the sigh which involuntarily escapes the bosom, the tear which falls when no external calamity presses, the cry of wretchedness which is extorted when no visible cause seems sufficient to justify it. There are certain mystic characters inscribed on the conscience of fallen man, which, though like the handwriting on the walls of the Babylonish palace, they may not be readily deciphered, are the occasion of the most unwelcome forebodings and of unutterable consternation; under the influence of them, the countenance is changed, the thoughts are troubled—the joints of the loins loosed, and the knees smite one against another. It is true mankind have been accustomed to seek relief from this uneasiness in their religious rites, and the forms of supposed expiation; but these have had no power to remove the heart-sickening qualms, the terrifying apprehensions, the unappeasable anxieties of the disturbed, the guilty conscience.

3. As it affects the *character*. Where Christ is not, morality sheds but a dim, a feeble, and often a delusive ray. The fact, in its application to this part of the subject, is so fully established, and so perfectly ascertained, as to form an argument altogether irresistible. What were the Ephesians—the Corinthians—the Romans—the Cretans, as long as they were without Christ? “Earthly—sensual—devilish—hateful and hating one another—serving divers lusts and pleasures—always liars—evil beasts—slow bellies.” What is now the state of morals in unenlightened Africa, in unregenerated India? Why—blood toucheth blood; rapine and cruelty, oppression and violence, injustice and deceit, and all the hideous brood of unnatural abominations, exist and triumph.

The delusive representations of deistical writers on this head, have been detected, refuted, and exposed; and it is now known to all the world, that, without Christ, the state of the human conduct is so bad, that we cannot well imagine how it can be worse: all real virtue is the effect of the Gospel of Christ, when crowned with a divine blessing; where this is not, therefore, we shall look in vain for virtuous conduct.

4. As it relates to the *happiness* of man in the present life. The religion of Christ opens to the human race an abiding spring of comfort, individually, and in their social relations: it sweetens every enjoyment, softens every care, and soothes every sorrow: “her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” Much of our comfort here, depends upon the possession of some adequate provision, which may screen and defend us amidst the visitations of trouble and the storms of adversity. For the outward constitution of things is unalterable, and every man must of necessity, in a greater or less degree, encounter the ills of life, sorrow, pain, and death. It is impious and unavailing to contend against the irreversible ordinations of Providence; but if you can bring any thing to act upon the mind of man, which shall calm and comfort him, which shall arm him with constancy and fortitude, and prepare him to enter upon the conflict, not only with

composure, but with an acquiescing and submissive spirit, you do much for him. To bring all events into conformity with the human will, is an enterprise of impossible achievement; but to bring that will into a state of subordination to the arrangements of God is practicable; to reconcile man to the chastisements of heaven is of hopeful experiment, but not without Christ. It is the discipline of his school, the force of his example, the all-sufficiency of his grace, which alone can induce us to receive the bitter draught, saying, "The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" Without Christ, you leave man, as a sufferer under all the unmitigated weight of trouble; you leave him to grapple, unaided and unsustained, with the fierce and uncontrolable calamities of life, destitute of any alternative but a morbid sullenness of resentment, or an irritability which goads and chafes itself to death.

5. We must, in justice to our subject, trace its operation on the *civil* and *religious institutions* of human society. All countries have found it expedient to form laws and governments for the safe and beneficial regulation of social intercourse; but, without the benign and salutary influence of Christianity, when has this object been secured? The very end of Government has, in too many instances, been perverted and defeated; and instead of being the means of protection and happiness, it has been the instrument of oppression, the engine of tyranny, the very shadow of death. The rights and liberties of mankind have been little consulted, especially as pertaining to the conscience, so that where Christianity has been allowed no scope for action, the institution of the magistracy has proved a curse rather than a blessing. But where the doctrines and laws of Christ, and the spirit of his religion, have been introduced, and permitted to operate, there have all the relations of civil society been improved, and carried forward towards perfection. Under her auspices, marriage, that bond of honourable distinction, that source of the most refined friendship and the dearest charities of human life, has always been regarded with respect and encouragement. Into commercial transactions the principles of humanity, justice, and

honor have been infused. Rulers have become the fathers of their people, and the people a brotherhood of love. Let any man who doubts of this, go to christianized Africa, and contrast the present state of the converted population there, with what it was when WITHOUT CHRIST. O ye much-injured children of that neglected and outraged country, now just emerging from the squalid loathsomeness and matchless degradation of a condition scarcely human, tell us of the blissful transformation ye already enjoy, and of the visions of future peace, content, and social comfort which dawn upon your rejoicing eyes. With you the winter of slavery is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear to adorn your parched desert, and the voice of the turtle is heard in your land; civilization has put forth her tender bud, and religion, in her virgin bloom, has exhaled a fragrance so powerful as to have reached across the ocean to the British strand; while, from your lately bleeding shores, resound the notes of joy and gladness, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody; all this ye owe to Christ. Without Christ, no missionary embassy had ever visited your inhospitable desert, to pour upon you the refreshing dew and fruitful showers of evangelical blessing; without Christ, Britain had never been touched by a sense of your woes, nor felt those "compunctious visitings," those tender relentings which your sorrows have awakened; sorrows which we are now most anxious to redress and compensate. Without Christ, the name and virtues of a WILBERFORCE, whose discreet, indefatigable, and persevering labours in your cause have been crowned with a success which all futurity will hail with feelings of ineffable gratulation, had never graced the archives of Britain, had never fallen like music on your ears, and magic on your chains. And who can mention that name, so profoundly revered, so tenderly beloved, without giving vent to the burst of hallowed sympathy, which every enlightened and Christian assembly must find it impossible, at the present moment, to restrain. Let him know in those* distant shades

* At the time this discourse was delivered, the distinguished philanthropist alluded to, was understood to be in the West of England, seeking, at a distance from his usual residence, recovery

where he seeks restoration from debility and exhaustion—an exhaustion contracted in the service of his country, of his Saviour, and of the human race, that he is followed by the respect and the prayers, the love and the blessings of his countrymen, and of the world. What though time may have scattered its silver honours on his head; what though intense application to business may have dimmed the lustre of an eye, which benevolence has so often lighted up to radiance; what though the paleness of disease may have settled on a cheek so habitually flushed with the ardour of a well-directed zeal; what though the sweet flowing eloquence which instructed—charmed—delighted, may have been less frequently heard in our assemblies,—he has accomplished, in one short life, the labour of ages. His work is with the Lord, and his judgment with his God. These labours shall follow him through all the succeeding periods of time, and angels shall chaunt at his exit (God grant that it may be at a day still very distant) “Well done good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” And of this, Christ, and his grace, and his gospel, shall have all the glory.

Nor are the religious institutions of unenlightened nations in any degree better, than their civil ordinances. The whole system of idolatrous worship, intended as it is to placate an offended Deity, only serves to offend him the more highly, and to leave the conscience really more heavily burdened, and more foully stained, instead of affording it relief. The various modes of propitiation resorted to, are alike impious and vain. The ablutions and the penances—the blood of bulls and goats—the immolation of human victims,—all proclaim the truth of the statement I have made, while they confess their own inadequacy to take away sin, or to satisfy the conscience. Our own ancestors were accustomed to offer their children in sacri-

from lassitude and languor, brought on by an unremitted attention to the duties of the Senate, and by various benevolent exertions. His absence from the Annual Meetings of those Societies whose interests he has so essentially contributed to support, was feelingly and generally deplored, and by no one more sincerely than the writer of these pages.

face; and "those British youths which had the fairest persons, and the best commendations of mind and body, were selected as most fit for the purposes of expiation; while it is well known that the captives taken in war were commonly enclosed in a frame of wicker work, and burned, with all the rites of druidical abomination, in honour of the goddess of victory. The whole system of the Hindoo superstition is, at this moment, framed upon the same principle; and how any individual, favoured with a better dispensation, can look coldly on, and become the apologist of such degrading and murderous offices, is itself monstrous. For what is the sum and substance of the religion of the heathen? "Instead of loving, serving, and adoring the true God, they have worshipped devils, the vilest of beings, alike his enemies and their own; they have worshipped each other; they have worshipped brutes; they have worshipped vegetables. The smith has molten a god of gold, and the carpenter has shaped a god of wood; and millions, yea, hundreds of millions, have prostrated themselves in prayer and praise. To these gods they have offered up countless hecatombs, and butchered, tortured, and burnt their own children. Before these gods their religion has enjoined and sanctioned the unlimited prostitution of virgins and matrons to casual lust and systematised pollution. The same religion has also sanctioned war and slaughter, plunder and devastation, fraud and perjury, seduction and violation, without bounds. Its persecutions have reddened the earth with blood, and converted its countries into catacombs, and all this to placate their deities, or to entitle themselves to their favour and protection."* These are the melancholy consequences of being without Christ.

6. We must consider the relation of our subject to the *immortal destiny* of man. To live without Christ is dreadful; but, oh! what must it be to die without him? There is so much of overpowering solemnity in this view of the subject, that one is at a loss how to approach it. To all men it is appointed once to die, and all men need con-

* See the sermons of President Dwight, of New England.

solation (if ever) in a dying hour. But, alas! if, when the vail of the flesh is rent asunder, the mind can see no brightness beyond it, no solid ground of hope, no certain assurance of blessedness, the gloomy vale will be covered with a tenfold obscurity, and darkened with an irremediable sadness.

Think of a mind turning back upon the guilty recollections of an unprofitable and ill-spent life, tossing in the agonies of an unwelcome separation from the body, and pressing forward it knows not whither, and to something, it knows not what. Is not this a heart-rending scene? and it is only that which every death-bed may be expected to exhibit without Christ. And as to the future state, I shall content myself with saying, in the language of Scripture, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." "The redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." And those "fewer stripes" which are threatened by the Judge of all, to him who, imperfectly acquainted with his Lord's will, did it not, will, in my judgment, be such as no man could be willing to endure himself, and therefore should be most anxious to avert from others.

II. The duty of cherishing a distinct and constant remembrance of this condition.

1. The light of reason, and the custom of mankind, are sufficient to show that we should cherish the grateful remembrance of eminent deliverances. All men have agreed in preserving the memory of the founders of states, the benefactors of their country, the heroes of the age. Hence pillars, statues, temples, trophies, and monuments have been reared, as so many commemorative ensigns. In every square and almost in every street of a great metropolis, we recognise these memorials of grateful feeling. All these prove how reasonable a thing it is to remember our original degradation, that we may adequately estimate the advantages of an improved condition.

2. The express direction of Holy Scripture. On the Jewish church such recollection was frequently and solemnly inculcated, Exodus, xiii. 5. "And Moses said unto the people, remember this day in which ye came out from

Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand, the Lord brought you from this place." Deut. v. 15. "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence." Deut. viii. 2. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee." chap. xv. 15. "And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God redeemed thee." These are a few only, of those exhortations which enjoin the duty under consideration. To the same effect is the direction of the prophet Isaiah, chap. li. 1. "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness; ye that seek the Lord, look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." The language of our text is precisely of the same force, and indeed, the whole structure of the Gospel dispensation, and above all, the institution of the Sacramental Supper, are designed to preserve a lively recollection of our former wretchedness, as contrasted with the rich advantages to which the divine mercy has advanced us.

3. We may appeal to the impulse of good feeling in every mind that is *rightly*, by which I mean *religiously*, constituted. It will be found consonant to every dictate of ingenuous sensibility, that we should keep in abiding recollection the state of degradation and misery from which divine grace has rescued us, whether individually, in our religious connexions, or in our national character. That man is chargeable with a brutish negligence, and must carry a heart of adamant in his bosom, who can erase from his mind the recollection of so great a benefit.

III. The practical effects which should flow from this remembrance.

1. This recollection should be productive of deep humiliation and self-abasement. What pride studies to forget, humility delights to remember; whenever we are tempted to grow vain of our high distinctions, let us check the risings of self-esteem and self-admiration, by considering what we once were—untutored barbarians, savage idolaters, fast bound in

the fetters of a mental and moral slavery ; yet, with maniac infatuation, “ dancing in our chains.” If I could bring before you a group of our deluded forefathers, assembled under the broad shadow of our native oaks, and adoring the sacred mistletoe ; their naked bodies stained with dyes of various colours, ferocious in their habits, and enslaved to the blind superstition of their druidical priests, it might serve to check and chastise those overweening pretensions into which we are sometimes betrayed. Most assuredly boasting is on this ground, altogether excluded. So totally lost were the females of those days to all the softness and sensibility of their sex, that Strabo, after remarking of the Kimbri that their wives accompanied them in war, says, “ that many hoary priestesses of their oracle followed, clothed in white linen vestments, bound with a brazen girdle, and with naked feet. These women, with swords in their hands, sought the captives through the army, and threw them into a brass vessel of the size of twenty amphora ; then one of the prophetesses, ascending an elevation, stabbed them, singly, as suspended above the cauldron, and made her divination, from the manner in which the blood flowed into it ; the other assistants of the horrible superstition opened the bodies, and predicted victory from the inspection of the bowels.” Plutarch describes the women as placed on their wagons in the conflict with Marius, and when the men gave way in battle, as killing those who fled, whether parents or brothers. They strangled their infants at the same time, and threw them under the wheels, when fighting with the Romans, and at last destroyed themselves rather than survive the calamity. In confirmation of these statements, Tacitus, speaking of the inhabitants of this island at the period of the Roman invasion, describes women with firebrands in their hands, running like furies among the army of the Britons in Anglesea, and adds, that they stained their altars with the blood of their captives, and consulted their gods by the quivering fibres of human victims. Diodorus mentions that they made images of wicker-work, of an immense size, and filled them with living men, whom they burned alive ; the Druids teaching that the life of man was to be

redeemed by man's life, and that there was no other mode of conciliating their gods. "At some of their sacred rites," says Pliny, "the British women went naked, but stained dark like Ethiopians, by a vegetable juice." Upon such a retrospect as this, well may we say, "Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul has them in remembrance, and is humbled in me."

2. This recollection should excite sentiments of the liveliest *gratitude*, for the happy change which has taken place in our condition. Through the tender mercy of God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us; Britain has heard, through all her coasts, the heart-cheering congratulation, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord hath risen upon thee." The temples of idolatry have been overthrown; Dagon has fallen before the ark; the long night of pagan superstition has given place to the splendours of a Gospel day. O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever; he hath pitied us in our low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever. Never let us open the volume of inspiration, nor tread the threshold of the sanctuary, nor approach the sacramental board, but under the most lively and grateful reminiscence of our former miseries, connected with our present immunities and blessings.

3. This recollection should endear to us our native land, which the name and religion of Jesus have hallowed and blest. A residence in Britain during the horrid reign of idolatry, would not have been worth accepting on any terms; what we have seen of the existing state of things at that time, is enough to make us loathe the island of our birth, and the nature of man. But blessed be God, the introduction and prevalence of Christianity amongst us, have caused the wilderness to rejoice and blossom as the rose; to us has been given the glory of Lebanon, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon. From what a depth of abasement has the Son of God raised us! How greatly are we indebted to his Gospel for the influences it sheds upon the understanding, the conscience, and the character; on the institutions of our country, and our prospects for eter-

nity! It has intertwined itself with all our national habits, and so far as it is allowed to act, it is found to be sanative and beneficial; softening what is rugged, smoothing what is harsh, and dignifying and adorning all that is commendable, and it only requires a more extensive and unlimited range of operation, to make the state of society amongst us as perfect as the present world will admit; and to realize the prophetic picture, instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar, the myrtle-tree. "England with all thy faults," and faults there are many, "I love thee still"—with all the disadvantages of a changeful climate and uncertain seasons, with fewer external pretensions and attractions than other lands may boast, with all the sternness of thy national character, and all the spots which mar the beauty of thy general aspect, I still cleave to thee, as the home of Christianity, the residence of God, the spring of blessings to the farthest nations of the earth. How does this one consideration raise patriotism to its highest level, and place it on its surest ground.

"I would not change my native land
For rich Peru and all her gold:
A nobler prize lies in my hand
Than East or Western Indies hold."

The lines are fallen to us in pleasant places, yea, we have a goodly heritage!

4. This recollection should engage us to demean ourselves in a manner answerable to the great change which, through the favour of God, has taken place in our moral situation. The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. As the children of light and of the day, much is expected of us; let us then labour to profit, to the utmost, by the privileges we enjoy; let us be concerned to exercise that faith which shall appropriate the blessings of salvation; to exemplify that holiness which shall strictly accord with our obligations and advantages; to display that generosity and activity, which will diffuse around us the happiness we ourselves possess; in a word, let us cultivate personal piety, family religion, and social usefulness. Alas!

my Brethren, are there not some standing here, who, as to all saving purposes, are as much without Christ, as though they were Tartars or Arabians, Madagascans or Hindoos, Heathens in the very bosom of Christian Britain, loving darkness rather than light, and groping their way through the noon-tide splendours of a Gospel day, to the land of darkness and interminable night? If there be an impenitent and unbelieving sinner present, this day, who is still without Christ, in a land that is full of Christ, let him know, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Tyre and Sidon, in the day of judgment, than for him. "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment, with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here."

5. This recollection should excite in our bosoms, the tenderest compassion for those nations who are yet without Christ, deep plunged in all the miseries of which we have been hearing. It should generate pity for human souls—immortal souls, labouring under the infelicities of an unchristianized state. O, that my head were rivers, and my eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain among the people, for men, for our brethren, slain as among them that go down into the pit. Let us be excited to more fervent and constant prayer, and to more laborious and persevering efforts for the restoration of a dying world. Let not ours be a dormant, inanimate, inoperative pity; but active, stirring, generous, pouring itself out in all the disinterested services of a genuine philanthropy, and a christian compassion.

Finally, this recollection will supply the amplest justification of Missionary efforts, and urge us forward in the prosecution of Missionary labours. There is no objection brought against this species of active benevolence, which the case before us does not refute and annihilate. The attempt to convert the heathen is rational, scriptural, and

mus, by God's blessing, be effectual. If it be asked, "Why all this excitation and vehement stir?" We reply, to convert those who are without Christ to the knowledge, love, and profession of his adorable name. "But they are fast bound under the cruel despotism of idolatrous rites and usages;" so once were we; "but they are so remote from this favoured seat of religion and morality, that it is next to impossible to afford them available relief"—so remote were we from the light and privileges of the Gospel; but some adventurous Missionary, prompted by compassion, and winged with zeal, traversed the ocean, and planted the tree of life on British ground; and that tree has survived the successive generations of the oaks of our island, and superseded the worship of them, while it has administered to the refreshment and salvation of millions who are now with God. O, when I think of the little bark, which, scudding before the gale, touched upon the shores of Britain, and gave to her white cliffs the first cargo of Christian Missionaries, I am ashamed that we were not earlier, that we are not more ardent in this glorious work. To the Missionary spirit we owe it, that, by the grace of God, we are what we are; and every thing I see around me this day, convinces me anew of the necessity, of the practicability, of the certain success of the Missionary cause. The same Gospel, with the same influences to render it effectual, will produce the same effects, in spite of all the obstacles which the depravity of men, or the rage of devils can interpose. "Go ye, therefore, into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature"—go, "reveal the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, is to be made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."

And this conducts me, at once, to the interests of the Society, for which I stand amongst you, to-day, the willing, though unworthy and insufficient advocate. Allow me to state, what I conceive to be, some of its peculiar claims to your affectionate regard and liberal support; then, to suggest some motives to engage you to steadfast perse-

verance in this work of the Lord, and, finally, to offer a few encouragements to animate your faith and patience, in your career of Christian benevolence. The circumstances which marked the *origin* and birth of the London Missionary Society, are such as, in my judgment, ought never to be forgotten. At a moment when infidel philosophy had succeeded in prostrating the human understanding, and demoralizing the human heart, and, in producing a general convulsion amongst the nations of the European continent; when thrones were shaken, and sceptres tossed as feathers on the billowy breeze; when political changes were arising with a succession so rapid as to perplex the wisest, and confound the most experienced observers; and when the eyes of all were fastened on the awful drama of revolutionary devastation; then arose in the metropolis of Britain that spiritual confederacy, of which it was the sole and simple object, to give a more universal extension to the Gospel of Christ, and thus to bring glory to God in the highest, to restore on earth peace, and establish good will among men; then, amidst distress of nations and perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, and while the hearts of men were failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that were coming on the earth, did this rainbow of mercy appear in the clouds. All who piously and attentively beheld these things, laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be, rocked by the tempest, and cradled in the storm? From a birth so portentous, much might be expected, and the event has more than realized the expectations which were formed. Forcing the consideration of the wise and good, from themes of secular and sublunary interest, all men were invited to apply, with increased energy and united strength, the only remedy for human corruption and human wretchedness. "Come," said this Society, "behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth; He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I *am* God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of hosts *is* with us ; the God of Jacob *is* our refuge."

The *Catholic basis* upon which the Institution is founded, constitutes one of its highest recommendations. It invites all, who call themselves Christians, to co-operate in this glorious enterprise, for God and his Christ, against his and our enemies. There is no bar that I am conscious of, in the way of any real Christian, lending us his cordial assistance. This has been called by some, the *Dissenting Society*, but we determinately refuse the appellation ; it never was formed with a view to distract the unenlightened nations with the little distinctions of discipline and economy, to which too much importance has been attributed in lands where Christianity has been long established.—No, the object of our association is, to give Christ's Gospel, and that only, to the whole world. There is no impediment to the Episcopalian ; he may come with the incomparable forms of his venerable liturgy, and welcome ; and he will meet with none who are not disposed to join him in that devout intercession."—"Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word, and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord." Nor is there any bar to the Presbyterian, to the Methodist, to any of the described, or undescribed, sects of Protestant Dissenters, who hold the head, even Christ. A vessel this, which covets to have all real Christians of its crew, with only one commodity as a cargo, the Gospel of peace, and he will be accounted the best haul on board, whatever be his name or persuasion, who brings the vessel into port, with the least possible detriment, and with the greatest degree of celerity and success.*

* Upon this part of the subject the author may be allowed to *repeat* his admiration of the particular feature in the constitution of the London Missionary Society, to which he here alludes ; and, while he would cherish an affectionate desire for the abundant success of every similar Institution, he has never yet been able to discover why

The patient and steady *perseverance* with which the Society has conducted its labours, amidst hindrances, checks, and discouragements, entitles it to sympathy, commendation and support. In the islands of the Pacific Ocean many a dreary winter passed over the heads of the toiling husbandmen, who having, for a long season, ploughed, and sowed, and waited in hope, were almost driven to despair, fearing lest they had laboured in vain;—but their recent experience has proved, that they who sow in tears, shall reap in joy, and he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Behold the Otaheitan Monarch sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, while his once barbarous subjects casting their idols into the depths of the sea, or burning them on the funeral pile, glory in the cross of Christ, and hymn the praises of Jesus, their Lord and ours. The surrounding islands catch the melodious strain, and Britain sends across the ocean, the cry of transport—“What hath God wrought?”

all Christians, who are agreed in the essentials of religion, might not be more entirely *one*, in their efforts to evangelize the heathen. Strictly speaking, the respectable class of Antipedobaptist Christians in this country, are not *excluded* from co-operation with us by any thing in the constitution of this Society—because, their own valuable Missions were undertaken antecedently to our own; and all that our Society has done is to throw open the door wider than they could, and to invite believers of all parties to unite in conquering the world for Christ. It is the writer's deliberate, and fixed opinion, that God, in the arrangements of his providence, will put more abundant honour upon this Society in consequence of its enlarged, unexclusive, and anti-sectarian spirit. How congenial is this principle with the intercessory prayer of the Divine Mediator, “That they all may be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one^s in us: THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE that thou hast sent me!”

That can hardly be termed a “Dissenting Society;” at the annual meetings of which the Liturgy of the Established Church is read in *three* of the services out of four, which are held at the anniversary festival; and for which, on those occasions, a clergyman of that church always stands up as the public advocate.

The *impulse* given by this Institution to kindred societies deserves particular notice. It is not arrogating too much to this Society, because it is matter of fact; and ought, in all soberness and truth, though with deep humility to be stated, that it was the means of reviving Institutions already existing, and originating others, which in all human probability would never have blessed the world, but for the holy zeal and active labors of this.

The *present undertakings*, and *opening prospects* of the Society, entitle it, this day, to your particular consideration. I need not specify the variety of its stations, the number of its Missionaries, the unavoidable extent of its disbursements and engagements, for these are universally known; but let me beseech you, never to lose sight of the magnitude of the object, when you are told of the magnitude of the funds. No overgrown capitalist urges to-day his avaricious and insatiable claim—but a hallowed firm, whose capital is all afloat, and busy; and whose efforts will extend, as means are supplied, till the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as waters cover the sea.—Come forward then with your accustomed liberality, yea, with more than your accustomed liberality. We look to Surrey Chapel to give the tone, as well as to take the lead, in this march of charity. Trained as you have been under the teaching of your venerated and beloved Pastor, to deeds of uncommon liberality and kindness, I beseech you to show, this day, before the Churches of Christ, the proof of your love, and of our glorying on your behalf. 2 Cor. viii. 24.

MOTIVES to unwearied and increased exertion press in upon our attention, and assail our hearts from every side—the love of Christ; compassion for the souls of men; the tried efficacy of evangelical means, and the promised benediction of Almighty God, all, all urge you forward in the race set before you. The goal is the salvation of a ruined world, and the reward a crown of life that fadeth not away. Who does not feel anxious to assist and accelerate the triumphs of the Prince of Peace—to deck his way with flowers—to enliven his march with songs—to

hang upon his chariot—and to witness his sublime and bloodless conquests?

There are so many young faces in this assembly, as to form a pledge—that the work will not cease, when we who are no longer young, shall disappear from the stage of activity. No, there are hundreds in this assembly, who have issued “from the womb of the morning,” all covered “with the dew of their youth,” who will be found ready to succour this cause, and advance its victories, when we are called to our rest. “There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah, and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. The singers have passed on before, the players on instruments followed after; amongst them were the damsels playing with timbrels. Thy God hath commanded thy strength; strengthen O God that which thou hast wrought for us.”

With respect to the ENCOURAGEMENTS which offer themselves to your notice, this day, they are almost too numerous to admit of distinct enumeration, and too powerful to require elaborate illustration. Let me remind you,

1. Of the character of the age in which you live. An age marked by the progress of discovery, by the growth of commerce, by extended intercourse amongst the nations of the earth, by admirable facilities for maintaining that intercourse both by sea and land, and by a state of general and profound peace, which affords, in all places, an unobstructed march to the consecrated band of missionary agents. A high way is prepared for our God. Many are running to and fro that the knowledge of the Lord may be increased, and we entertain a confident hope, that, under a combination of circumstances so auspicious, the word of the Lord will have “free course and be glorified.”

2. It is most encouraging to observe the mighty and consentaneous movements of the Christian Church, with respect to the great object of evangelizing the world. The eyes and the hearts of the whole Catholic and Apostolic Church, appear to have been simultaneously directed towards this desirable consummation. Forming themselves into

several distinct bodies, they are nevertheless acting as one compacted mass, against the prince of darkness, and in favour of the Prince of Peace. It is gratifying to observe the various Societies whose energies are all concentrated in this one holy cause.

The Moravian Missionaries who have acted like the pioneers of the Christian army, and have done the roughest work in the mildest spirit, and with the happiest success, are above all praise. Their characteristic simplicity, their unostentatious modesty, their approved efficiency, entitle them to the highest consideration, and the warmest support. The Baptist Missionary Society we have already mentioned with profound respect; that respect which all must readily concede to it, who are acquainted with its useful labours in the East, and are capable of appreciating their value, and tracing their results. The Society, supported by the body of Wesleyan Methodists, is a zealous and powerful co-adjutor, in this noble enterprise, and has received blessing from God in a very abundant measure, especially with regard to the negro population of our western colonies. Upon the important labours of the Church Missionary, and Jewish Societies, it is impossible to look, without sentiments of admiring gratitude, for what they have already accomplished, and high-raised expectation, as to their future success. May God prosper their labours, in a degree transcending their most sanguine hopes! "We have blessed you out of the house of the Lord!" All these Institutions, with our own, are brought to act in friendly concert, and conjoined with the powerful aid of the Bible Society—that brightest star in the bright constellation—are calculated to scatter every mist of darkness, error, and superstition, and to fill the whole earth with light and gladness. All these, like so many different regiments marshalled under one commander, bearing down at once, by a vigorous and concentrated effort, upon the opposing force, are likely to make the triumph complete, and to take the prey from the mighty. Only let us each do his part, and, by God's blessing, we will not leave one stone upon another, till the shout be universally heard,

“Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

The very re-action of the adverse powers plainly shows, that these blows have not been idly dealt; they have told home upon the enemy; and the rallying shout, the horrible yell, the desperate charge made by Satan and his disconcerted legions, in all the forms of infidelity and blasphemy, profaneness and immorality, certainly indicate that the battle of the great God is hastening to its crisis. What that crisis is, we all happily know—“The Lamb shall overcome them.”

3. The closer union amongst the revered and beloved agents, who are employed in conducting the affairs of these Societies, is an auspicious omen. “Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” I believe I am divulging no secret, when I offer my congratulations to the Christian world upon the important fact, that the Secretaries and Committees of our several Societies are one; they can meet as the members of the same family, to compare their plans of operation, to strengthen each other's hands, and comfort each other's hearts, and to call down, by fervent intercession, the blessing of the Highest on their mutual exertions. This was the very thing that was wanting to render the enterprise complete—and to this, thanks be to God, we have now attained—The “charity which is the bond of perfectness.”

Finally.—The sure promise of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost is the *vital* principle of encouragement in Missionary labors. Though this is last mentioned, it is of the first importance, and has all along filled the mind, and impressed the heart of the preacher. It behooves us habitually to recollect, and distinctly to acknowledge, the absolute necessity of the Spirit's influence, in order to give effect to our Missionary efforts. All that we attempt will be utterly abortive, unless “the Spirit be poured out from on high.” Then, and not till then, “the wilderness will become a fruitful field,” and the fruitful field assume the

verdure and majesty of the forest. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Yet, while this is most cheerfully admitted, let it be remembered, that the promise is infallible, and that in the use of instituted means it cannot fail of accomplishment. With the union of eligible means, and invincible influences, the world must fall before us. Let this consideration urge us to ceaseless prayer and unremitting exertion. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him!"

It is encouraging to mark the extraordinary apparatus which is actually provided for the operations of the sacred Spirit, upon the unenlightened part of the earth's population. Such a system of arrangement has obviously taken place, in the state of christian and heathen lands, as is peculiarly favourable to the Spirit's work. Millions of copies of the Divine word have been scattered upon the face of the world. Hundreds of Missionaries are, at this moment, lifting up their voices together. A thirst has been excited, amongst the remotest tribes, for the water of life, while you, at the same moment, have been excited to prepare the pipes and conduits for conveying it to those who are afar off, and ready to perish. We contend for no influence of the Spirit without the word of faith, the truth of the Gospel. This is the "*vehiculum spiritus*"—the chosen instrument in, and by which, He works. When, therefore, we see such a *chain* of instrumentality prepared, we cannot doubt that the Almighty Operator is at hand.

We have, moreover, palpable evidence that He has already begun to work. He has stirred up the spirits of men towards this great object; multitudes are yielding themselves to God; they are consecrating their silver and their gold—the gains of their merchandize, and the patrimony of their fathers—the powers of their minds, and the vigour of their services, to the advancement of the Saviour's glory. Patrons and friends are raised up—a wide and effectual door is opened—a golden opportunity is afforded.—God grant that we may not neglect to profit by it! And is it

not, my brethren, a thing to be heedfully observed, that the minds of the people of God seem to be, more powerfully than ever, drawn towards *this* subject, at the present juncture? The work of the Holy Spirit, has, by common consent, been made prominent in prayers, in sermons, in speeches, in tracts, to a degree unprecedented, at least in modern times.

An increased desire for the promised effusion of the Holy Ghost, in larger measures, is becoming more general through the Christian Church; and all this comports most strictly with sobriety, with truth, and with the sacred scriptures. We look for no new miracles, no exertion of the Divine influence, irrespectively of existing means; but we expect, as we are fully warranted to do, a more copious communication of those ordinary and established influences which are indispensable to our ultimate success. We wait for the latter, as the first disciples waited for the former rain. We also look for "the promise of the Father;" and are persuaded that we shall not look, nor wait in vain. "Let Him come down like rain upon the mown grass, like showers that water the earth." "Awake thou north wind, and come thou south, and blow upon this garden, that our spices may flow forth." Come Holy Ghost, the glorifier of Christ, the reprovcr of the world, the comforter of the Church, descend in all the manifestations of thy light, and power, and love, and give the consummation and the crown to our feeble prayers, to our worthless efforts!

"Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon the slain" of the earth's population, through all the dark and dreary recesses of this valley of vision, and they shall live! And to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three persons, but one God, be glory and worship, by all on earth, and all in heaven, both now and for ever. Amen!

THE PROPER SENTIMENT AND AIM OF THE
CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

AT

The Tabernacle,

ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, MAY 9, 1821.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS CRAIG,

OF BOCKING, ESSEX.

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1821.



A SERMON,

8c. 8c.

ACTS, XX. 24.

But none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.

IF words ever derived peculiar interest from the character and circumstances of the person who uttered them, this may be safely affirmed of the language of the Apostle, now read to this numerous and respected assembly. From no one had the Gospel ever encountered more determined opposition; by no one had the claims of the Saviour been held in greater contempt, and in no one was the grace of God more gloriously displayed. He had been a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious,—a blasphemer of no common malignity, for besides pouring forth himself reproaches on the Redeemer and his cause, he even compelled others to blaspheme. Nor was he a persecutor on particular occasions merely, or to a limited extent. The persecution of the followers of Christ was an employment on which he entered early in life, and to which he devoted himself with the greatest ardour. It was congenial to his temper, and favourable to his worldly interests. “He breathed out threatenings and slaughter.” Judea did not afford sufficient scope for his murderous rage; he solicited letters of authority from the High Priest to the synagogue at Damascus, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. He entered every house, and spared neither age nor sex, pur-

suing them even unto death. "I was exceedingly mad against them," he observes, when speaking of his former career; "beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it."

But when the Lord Jesus appeared to him in the way to Damascus, a flood of light was poured into his mind, which discovered to him the greatness of his guilt, and at the same time, the riches of the Redeemer's grace. From that instant his deeply-rooted enmity against the Saviour and his Gospel was completely slain, and his whole heart captivated to the obedience of Christ. Immediately he renounced all his pharisaic pride, and sacrificed all his hopes of influence, fame, and wealth. From that memorable day, Jesus had not a more devoted servant, the Gospel a more zealous champion, nor the doctrines of grace a more able and intrepid defender.

Survey the countries over which he travelled; number the churches which he planted and watered; advert to the perils which he unhesitatingly encountered; think of the privations which he willingly endured, the sufferings he cheerfully bore, the labours he perseveringly sustained, the readiness in which he held himself to submit to martyrdom, in any form, whenever the honour of his Master and the interest of his cause required it; and tell me where we shall find a greater than St. Paul?

At the period when the words of the text were uttered, he was growing old in the service of his Divine Master. Long had he been engaged in fulfilling the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus. He was now on his way to Jerusalem, and had a presentiment, too decisive to be mistaken by one accustomed as he was to preternatural monitions, that bonds and imprisonments awaited him; nevertheless, he possessed his soul in perfect calmness and resignation, and declared to the elders of Ephesus, on taking his final leave of them, "none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

This passage will not appear, I trust, unsuitable to the occasion of our meeting, whether we consider the subject which it embraces, or the example which it exhibits.

How would the heart of the Apostle, my brethren, have glowed with gratitude and love, and zeal and hope, could he have addressed at once so many elders and pastors as are now assembled! A privilege which, at that period, and in that state of the church, he never could have enjoyed, is conferred in the providence of God on those who address you on these interesting anniversaries. When I think what the cause, which I have undertaken to plead, deserves and demands, I feel as I never felt before the force of those words, "Who is sufficient for these things?" and I entreat you to pray for me, that I may hear the Saviour say with almighty power, "my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

Attend, First, To the subject of the Apostle's preaching.
Secondly, To the manner in which he fulfilled his ministry.

Thirdly, To the motives by which he was actuated.

I. The subject of his preaching was the "Gospel of the grace of God."

Grace was his constant and favourite theme. Nor should this excite our surprise, for he was himself the most striking monument of Divine grace; and the recollection of his obligations to it, was so constantly present to his mind, so deeply engraven on his heart, so inwrought into his very soul, that it pervaded all his discourses, and gave a colouring to his whole style. Does he speak of his conversion? His language is, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and *called me by his grace*, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Does he refer to his attainments? He acknowledges, "*by the grace of God I am what I am.*" Does he find it necessary, in vindication of his character and authority, to advert to his labours and success? His lan-

gnage neither exceeds the bounds of truth nor of modesty ; “ I laboured more abundantly than they all,” referring to the other Apostles, “ yet not I but the *grace of God* that was with me.” He uses the word on all occasions, and seldom employs it without discovering, in more elevated language, the powerful feelings and delightful associations which it awakened in his breast.

Grace includes every modification of the attribute of goodness. Goodness flows to us as dependant creatures, which all are, angels as well as men. Bounty has relation to the extent of our necessities, and the measure in which they are supplied. Mercy views us as guilty ; and compassion yearns over us as miserable ; but grace includes all these. What the Apostle meant by grace will be best understood from his own words, (Rom. xi. 6.) “ And if by grace, then is it no more of works ; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace : otherwise work is no more work.” With this agrees the remark that grace is grace in no respect, unless it be grace in all respects.

All our knowledge, my brethren, of the grace of God is derived from the Bible. Much has been said by a certain class of writers to extol the light of nature. But how far it can guide us to just sentiments concerning the Divine Being, would be better learned from facts than from speculations ; if facts could be ascertained with sufficient correctness, to form irrefragable data on which to build our reasonings. We cannot ourselves judge of the assistance it would yield, because we cannot shut out from our minds all the information we have obtained from Scripture. We cannot place ourselves in a state of complete ignorance, under the pupilage of this lauded instructor. We cannot possibly say what the human mind would be, and what would be its conceptions, if it had no other guide than the mere light of nature ; because it never has existed in this state, neither before the fall of man nor since. It was the inspiration of the Almighty that gave Adam the knowledge he possessed of his Creator ; and tradition, more or less obscured, but derived originally from Revelation, has been

diffused universally throughout the Gentile world—in nations the most barbarous as well as the most civilized. Facts are more authoritative than mere reasonings; and to them alone can we safely appeal. Now we ask, what consistent, settled, or influential ideas of the benevolence of the Deity, were the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands found to possess, when our Missionaries visited them? Were not human sacrifices offered to appease their false gods? Have not such sacrifices prevailed throughout the Heathen world to a most awful extent? What ideas of the benevolence of Deity have the Hindoos, whose superstitions lead their devotees to inflict upon their own persons every imaginable torture?

It is true that we behold the tender mercies of Jehovah over all his works, and see the earth to be full of his goodness; but it is because the Sun of Righteousness has arisen upon our hemisphere, and shed his illuminating rays on the beautiful and varied face of creation. The book of nature would have been unintelligible to us had we been destitute of the sacred volume. What would this world of ours be, were the natural sun withdrawn from it? All the beauty and fragrance which delight the senses would be lost; all the creatures that live and rejoice in his light and warmth would die, and universal desolation would reign. In a moral state resembling this are, the heathen represented who have not the word of God. They are sitting in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death. The same heavens indeed every where declare his glory, and all his works praise him in *all places* of his dominions. Sunk, however, in a state of moral death, they have eyes, but they see not his glory; they have ears, but they hear not his praises ascending to his throne from every part of his creation; they have affections, but he is not the object of their love. They are living without God in a world which is full of God, because they have neither the medium nor the faculty of spiritual vision, by which alone he is rightly and devoutly seen in his works.

Were we to surrender much that has been stated, and suppose man far more capable than he really is of forming

just notions of Deity from his works, without the aid of Revelation, he would, at least, be exceedingly perplexed by the different appearances, which nature and Providence exhibit. He would every where behold noxious weeds growing in wild luxuriance, to impede the growth of useful plants, and would often see the hopes of the husbandman blasted, just as he thought himself about to reap the fruit of his labours. If he directed his view to the human race, he would shudder at the universal reign of vice, and misery, and death. Since also a conviction of guilt as invariably prevails as the belief of a Supreme Being, he would feel those apprehensions which the light of nature can do nothing towards removing. It can give no satisfactory answer whatever to the important question, How can I, a guilty creature, find acceptance with a holy God? For however extensive the instruction we may suppose it capable of affording, on the general benevolence of the Almighty, not one syllable of Christ, or of grace, can be read in all its expanded and diversified page. Here then, where the book of creation entirely fails, the Gospel comes to our relief with the clearest, amplest information.

The Gospel was indeed preached to the Israelites, but it was under types and shadows. It reveals to *us* the grace of God, with a clearness, and to an extent as far excelling the discoveries made to them, as the brightness of noon surpasses the faint twilight of the morning dawn. The Apostle, referring to the New Testament dispensation, speaks of the grace of God which bringeth salvation having *appeared*; of the kindness and love of God our Saviour towards man *appearing*; as if nothing on this great subject were known before. It has burst forth upon our world like the light of day, dispersing the darkness and the shadows of night.

The Gospel is so full of grace, as to receive from it its distinguishing appellation. "Ye are not under the law but under grace." "We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." The God it reveals to us is the God of all grace; the Saviour it exhibits is full of grace and truth; the Spirit it

promises is the Spirit of grace; the throne to which it invites us is the throne of grace; the salvation it offers is a salvation entirely of grace, from its first rise in the divine mind, before the foundation of the world, to its consummation in the fadeless glories of eternity.

The Gospel may be denominated the Gospel of the grace of God, as it reveals the wonders of his grace; as it offers the blessings of his grace; as it discovers the designs of his grace; and as it accomplishes the purposes of his grace.

(1.) The Gospel reveals the wonders of his grace. That God should so love the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life; that he by whom all things were created, and are upheld, should come down to this earth clothed in a mortal body, that he might, by his own death, atone for the sins of fallen, guilty, ruined man, is a manifestation of mercy, which fills all heaven with wonder, and will fill eternity with praise.

Had the bright intelligences, who dwell amidst the splendour of celestial light, attempted to devise a way of saving lost sinners of the human race; had they consulted upon it for innumerable ages; never could they have discovered such a plan as that which the Gospel reveals, which provides a Saviour in whom Deity and humanity are united; and by whose atoning sacrifice sin is both punished and pardoned;—the highest mercy is exercised without justice being offended, and the strictest justice displayed without mercy being wounded. So far were they from discovering such a method of redemption, that the faintest conception of it never entered their minds; and ever since this great mystery, which so long lay hid in the bosom of Deity, was unfolded to them, they have never ceased to adore the infinite mercy in which it originated, the infinite wisdom by which it was planned, and the infinite power by which it was executed. It is as true now as it ever was, that into these things they desire to look; and not in the smallest degree has their wonder abated, or their admiration diminished. Beholding, as they do, unnumbered worlds in the boundless dominion of Jehovah, and acquainted as they

probably are with all the various laws and dispensations which relate to them, there is nevertheless no subject so attractive of their regard as the wonders of the cross.

It is by revealing these wonders, that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; for how calculated are they to arrest the attention, to fix the thoughts, to possess and transform the whole soul. So ignorant, sensual, and debased is the mind of man, that nothing short of these celestial wonders can arouse him from the destructive lethargy into which sin has thrown him. But when they are revealed to him in demonstration of the Spirit, they fill him with astonishment, with terror, and with joy. What would be the feelings, think you, of a heathen, on seriously listening to a Christian Missionary, declaring to him that he who was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, for the salvation of the apostate children of Adam?—Would not the first be a feeling of surprise? And what would be the second? would it not be a feeling of alarm? Would he not say with himself, How deplorable must be the state of man to call for such a remedy? What a dreadful thing must sin be to require such an atonement? What must become of me, if I neglect so great a salvation, and die with all my sins upon my head? And would not this alarm quickly give place, as the Missionary unfolded the wonders of redemption, to a feeling of joy—the joy of gratitude—the joy of hope? How rich, would he say, must be that love which provides such a remedy! How valuable the privileges which result from such a sacrifice! how glorious the heaven purchased at such a price! Has the Saviour revealed his will as well as his love? O tell me what I can do for him, who has redeemed me to God by his blood. Nothing can produce such effects as these, my brethren, but the Gospel, under the direction and influence of the Holy Spirit. We may urge for ever the beauty of virtue, and the deformity of vice,

the satisfaction of well-doing, and the painful reflections accompanying unworthy conduct; such representations, however useful in their place, will never change the depraved heart, or induce the ungodly man to renounce his sins. Man is the same fallen creature, in whatever latitude he is born. His depravity is too inveterate to be subdued and eradicated by mere ethical discourses, abstract reasonings, or declamations the most embellished, from which the great subjects of the Gospel are excluded. God permitted the efficacy of such means to be tried in the heathen world, for many ages, with every advantage arising from the light of science, and what was the result? In ancient Greece and Rome, where philosophers delivered their moral lessons, where poets sang in such captivating strains, and where orators lived who seemed to have full control over the passions of their auditors, what could mere human reasoning and persuasion accomplish? In the most polished cities the mass of the people were sunk in the most awful ignorance; deities were multiplied without number, the most abominable rites of worship were practised, and vices not fit to be named prevailed amongst all classes—amongst the rich as well as the poor, the learned as well as the illiterate. My brethren, we must *evangelize*, if we would *reform* mankind. We must preach the doctrines of grace, if we would promote the interests of morality. Nothing but the grand distinguishing truths of the Gospel is sufficient to arouse the heathen abroad, or the ignorant and careless at home, to serious thoughtfulness and inquiry, to produce adequate convictions of sin, to subdue the rebellious will, and to fill the heart with gratitude, hope, and devotion.

When the Moravian Missionaries first visited Greenland, and spoke to its inhabitants on the more general subjects of religion, such as the being of God, the creation of the world, the fall of man, and the way in which that event took place, their preaching produced no effect. It was not unusual for the natives, after hearing such statements, to bring forward their own traditions upon the same points, which they thought entitled to the same degree of credit. But when the Missionaries made the glory, the incarnation,

the love and sufferings of the Redeemer, the prominent subject of their discourses, many of their hearers were fixed in attention and wonder, and the most salutary impressions were made. I think I see Hajarnak, one of their hearers, pressing forward to the table where the Missionary stood, and exclaiming, with all the eagerness of one who felt, for the first time in his existence, emotions of love to the Saviour, and desires for the welfare of his immortal soul, "How was that, tell me once more, for I wish to be saved too." It was when this change had taken place in their preaching, that these rude and uncultivated people exclaimed, "What things have come about now! Your present discourse makes quite another impression upon us than when you told us of God, and our two first parents. We continually said we believed it all; but we were tired of hearing it, and thought what signifies this to us; but now we find there is something interesting in it."

2. The Gospel is rightly denominated in the text, as it offers to us the blessings of Divine grace.

These are admirably summed up in the well-known language of the Apostle—"Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" corresponding with the four-fold state of degradation and ruin in which man is involved by the fall—and constituting, in their combination, that salvation throughout the whole of which grace is so eminently glorified. Man is ignorant, and it offers him wisdom to guide him to God, and to heaven. He is guilty, and it assures him of forgiveness and justification, through the righteousness of Christ. He is depraved, and it makes provision for his sanctification, by the influences of the Holy Spirit. He is a dying, perishing creature, and it brings him a redemption, extending both to soul and body, while it is commensurate in its duration with eternity.

The Gospel offers these blessings freely. The Christian Minister or Missionary is not merely to exhibit the wonders of Divine grace, but to make also an immediate and direct offer of all its blessings to every human being, whom he has the opportunity of addressing; crying, in the language

of holy writ, "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." He is to consider himself the bearer of a message full of mercy to every son and daughter of Adam; for "the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon him;" and he must assure every one in the name of his Master, that him who cometh unto Christ he will in no wise cast out.

It offers these blessings munificently. Does Jehovah give wisdom? He gives it liberally. Does he pardon? He pardons abundantly, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, according to the multitude of his mercies. Does he sanctify? He sanctifies us wholly, in body, soul, and spirit. Does he give peace? It is great peace, peace which passeth all understanding. If he strengthen us, it will be with all might by his Spirit in our inward man; and if he give us the victory, he will make us more than conquerors. He communicates these blessings collectively, not separately, as he distributes earthly favours; giving to one wisdom, but withholding riches and health; to another riches, but neither wisdom to improve nor health to enjoy them. If he bestow one blessing of redemption upon an individual, he bestows *all* the things that accompany salvation, "blessing him with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." It is this grace, whose offers are so liberal and free, that constitutes the subject of all others, the most effectual through God, to fill the heart with penitential sorrow, and with fervent gratitude, to him whose love passeth knowledge. We have the decided and repeated testimony of the excellent Brainerd, that his preaching never produced such deep and useful impressions, how forcibly soever he dwelt on the awful subjects of religion, as when the riches of Divine grace were his theme. Then the tears of his auditors often bore witness to the powerful

emotions of their breasts. Those hearts which resisted every impression of terror, were softened and subdued by love.

(3.) It is justly called the Gospel of the grace of God, as it unfolds the extensive designs of his grace.

It wears the same benignant and inviting aspect towards the whole human race; declaring, in terms the most explicit, that God will have all men, men of every country, of every rank and description, to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth; and setting before us an atonement of infinite value, sufficient for the salvation of every one who through grace confides in it.

There were many things in the Jewish religion, which showed it to be a local and temporary dispensation; but the Gospel is adapted to the wants of man, in every part of the globe; and calculated to promote his interests and his happiness, under every form of government. The Mountain of the Lord's House is to be established on the top of the mountains, and all nations are to flow unto it.

The vast forests of America shall resound with the songs of salvation. Many a pious individual will commence a new settlement, in those extensive tracts of country, in the spirit of Christian David, who began to build a church for the United Brethren, in a wilderness in Lusatia, and exclaimed, as he struck his axe into a tree, "Here hath the sparrow found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, even thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God." The wilds of Africa under the culture of evangelical Missionaries, shall be transformed into the garden of the Lord. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Throughout the burning plains of the East shall the wells and springs of spiritual consolation send forth their salubrious and refreshing streams, to comfort and invigorate the weary pilgrim, as he travels on to the heavenly Zion. And even the frozen regions of the north shall be warmed with the love of Christ, and cheered with the hope of celestial glory. They shall beguile their long

and dark winters by singing the Lord's song, and anticipating that blessed state where there shall no more be night.

God formed the earth to be inhabited; but how far is this design of Jehovah from being yet accomplished! How many millions of men is sin continually destroying, not allowing them to live out half their days! How many will religion save from temporal destruction, by putting an end to the devastations of war, and arresting the desolating ruin caused by those diseases which result from sinful indulgences! How will it contribute to health and longevity, to spread the arts of civilization, and promote every work of benevolence. The cultivation of the soil will conduce to the amelioration of climates; the earth will be full of people, as well as full of the knowledge of the Lord!

(4.) The Gospel accomplishes the purposes of Divine grace. Listen my hearers to those words of the Saviour, which ought to be continually in our recollection, as our great encouragement and motive to Missionary exertions; "I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep" (referring to those who are to be collected from the Gentile nations) "I have, which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." They are to be brought to a humble faith in the Redeemer, for there is salvation in no other; "there is no other name under heaven given amongst men whereby they must be saved." How is this purpose of mercy then to be accomplished, but by the publication of the Gospel, which exhibits that Saviour who is lifted up that he may draw all men unto him? "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?"

Besides being thus brought to Christ, there is a grand moral transformation to be wrought in them. They have derived from Adam a corrupt nature, and must be made partakers of a divine nature. They are dead in trespasses and sins, and must be created in Christ Jesus unto good

works, which God hath before ordained that they should walk in them. They are vessels of dishonour, and must be made "vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use." They are now unprofitable, and must be made the willing servants of the Redeemer, the light of the world, and the salt of the earth. They are to be prepared for the glory to which they are appointed. Now the Gospel of the grace of GOD is the means whereby this great change is wrought, through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the voice of the Lord which the dead are made to hear and live; it is by beholding in this glass the glory of the Lord, that they are changed into the same image. In short it is the word of his grace which is able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified.

A firm faith in the divine decrees, far from paralyzing our exertions, will urge us to the most strenuous efforts. For as we cannot assign limits to his purposes of grace; as we dare not say 'thus far they extend and no further;' there should be no limits to our endeavours to spread abroad the savour of the knowledge of Christ in every place. There is no one so far from God that he cannot be brought nigh to him. There are no minds so blind, and so debased by error, that we are to despair of their being enlightened and elevated. There are no hearts so steeled by the cruelties of superstition, so intrenched in prejudices against the truth, that they cannot be conquered, softened, and impressed with the Divine image. Who among the disciples that lived in the persecuting days of Saul of Tarsus, and that trembled at his name, and fled at his approach, ever imagined that he was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Christ unto the Gentiles, that he was destined to be the first in the list of Missionaries, the first in knowledge, the first in zeal, the first in success? We must, therefore, if we would act consistently with the profession of our faith in the purposes of GOD, go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. In the same chapter, it has been observed, in which the redeemed are spoken of

as numbered, they are declared to be a "multitude which no man can number of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."

Believing, therefore, in the purposes of God, and complying with his command, we are animated to proceed by the absolute certainty of success. Wherever we have an opportunity of sending the Gospel, we can indulge the cheering thought that it goes, accompanied by a life-giving power, to accomplish the gracious intentions of the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. We know who has said, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

II. Let us attend to the manner in which the Apostle fulfilled his ministry.

Throughout this branch of our subject allow me to request, that he may be considered as an example which all ministers and missionaries should emulate.

1. He preached the Gospel with simplicity of aim and language.

How far from him, my brethren, was the unhallowed intention of displaying *himself*. His only desire was to display the glory of Christ, and the riches of divine grace. These topics formed the prominent part of every discourse, and constituted the life and power of his ministry. He seemed continually to say, "If I forget these subjects, let my right hand forget its cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth." He felt that he had only one thing to do, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God, persuaded that God would sanction and bless his own word. Possessed of ample stores of learning, and gifted with the highest powers of eloquence, he could have enraptured his audience, whether consisting of Jews or Gentiles, by his eluci-

dations of those subjects which were most agreeable to their prejudices; but he determined to know nothing amongst men save Jesus Christ and him crucified. He had seen the glory of the Gospel through the medium of Divine instruction, had felt its power and tasted the blessedness it imparts; and afraid of dimming its lustre, and of lessening its efficacy, by oratorical arts, he preached it not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, though with that eloquence which can only flow from genuine Christian feelings. "He never goes out of his way for ornament; never interrupts the race to pick up the golden bait. He is too devout to be ingenious, too earnest to be fanciful, too humble to be inventive." Whether in the most polished cities, and the most celebrated seats of learning; at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Corinth, at Rome; to the Jew and the Greek, to the Barbarian, the Scythian, the bond, and the free, he preached the same Gospel, and preached it in the same manner. He was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

Let us make the constant theme of the Apostle's discourses, my brethren, the constant theme of ours; and like him "use great plainness of speech." If our eye be single, our whole discourse will be full of light and power. If our aim be right, and the fervour of Christian zeal be directed to one object—the honour of God in the salvation of immortal souls; by manifestation of the truth we shall commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. A greater sin there cannot be, than for a man to make the pulpit, the stage on which he endeavours to exhibit himself to the best advantage; considering his object attained, if he gain the applause of his audience, instead of being absorbed in the desire of instructing the ignorant, of awakening the careless from their destructive slumbers; and of so exhibiting the glory and the grace of the Redeemer, as to draw the attention of all to his Master; content so to stand behind the picture that he himself shall be unseen and forgotten.

(2.) The Apostle preached with earnestness and affection.

He *testified* the Gospel of the grace of God. The word signifies to bear earnest witness, to testify earnestly and repeatedly. (Luke xvi. 28, Acts x. 42, &c.) His constitutional ardour impelled him to pursue whatever he thought right with all his heart, and soul, and strength. How zealously, alas, did he persecute the Church of God when he thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth! And when he devoted himself to the service of Christ, all that is grand in religion, all that is awful in the condition of apostate perishing man, all that is solemn in judgment, all that is affecting in the love of Christ, and all that is glorious in the heavenly inheritance, urged him to "testify both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." How strenuously did he warn men of their danger, with what yearnings of compassion did he entreat them to accept the offers of Divine mercy, with what joyful promptitude did he direct the inquiring into the way of life, and how eager was he to administer the consolations of the Gospel to the wounded spirit.

Can any reason be assigned, why we should not be as earnest for the propagation of the Gospel as the Apostle was? Are immortal souls less valuable than they were? Are they redeemed by a less costly price, or are they to be enlightened and renewed by any other means than the Word and Spirit of our God? Is the glory of Jehovah less displayed in their salvation? Has the pit of destruction been closed so that no more souls can fall into perdition, or the gates of heaven shut, so that, use what instrumentality we may, none can enter thither? Should not our spirits be stirred within us, when we contemplate so large a portion of the world wholly given to idolatry, although eighteen hundred years have rolled away since the Saviour commanded his disciples to teach all nations? Who can think of six or eight hundred millions of people yet lying in the wicked one, and not be overwhelmed with grief at the supineness and unbelief of the Church of God, with anguish at the deplorable condition of so many of our fellow men,

and with remorse that we have not been more zealous in the cause of Missions!

(3.) He preached the Gospel diligently.

He considered himself as having a *ministry* or service to accomplish, of the most extensive nature. The field of labour assigned to him, like our's, was the whole world. The Apostle of the Gentiles was a designation in which he gloried. He was a debtor, indeed, both to the Jew and the Greek. He knew that souls were every where perishing in ignorance and sin, and he hastened from city to city, from kingdom to kingdom, from continent to continent, to proclaim to them the Word of life. The propagation of the Gospel is the service of dying men, as well as the King's business, and on both accounts it requires haste.

He had a *course* to pursue, and from the moment that he first entered upon it, he never cast one wishful look behind, as to any disposition to abandon it; but without relaxation forgot the things which were behind, and reached forth unto those which were before, considering himself to have done nothing while any thing remained to be done. Not one feeling had he to spare for any other object, not one moment for any other pursuit. The success with which he had been honoured, his bitterness of regret on recollecting his former conduct in persecuting the Church of God, and the hope which animated his breast on looking forward, continually accelerated the rapidity of his progress, the further he advanced;—time rising in value as his *ministry* drew to its close, and his celestial crown appearing with a brighter lustre, and operating upon him with more powerful attractions as his *course* approached to its termination.

(4.) He preached the Gospel with the most undaunted courage, and with the most entire self-devotion. "None of these things move me," referring to the bonds and imprisonments, which awaited him. "I make no account of them, they do not produce a moment's hesitation as to the path I should pursue." From whence arose this unbending determination? Not from insensibility to the pleasures of

friendship. He was as distinguished for the amiable, as for the sterner virtues. If any thing could have moved him from his purpose, it would have been the tears and entreaties of those who venerated and loved him as their spiritual father, and who earnestly endeavoured to dissuade him from exposing himself to the threatened dangers. "What mean ye," said he to them, "to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." Of no one, might it be more truly said, that he lived only for one thing. He had placed his life at the disposal of his Master; and, therefore, he felt as Pompey did, when he exclaimed, on being told of the dangers of a hazardous enterprise, "It is necessary for me to go; but it is not necessary that I should live." May no Missionary proceed to foreign lands, under the sanction of this Society, who does not possess the Apostle's courage and devotedness! Every candidate for such honourable, but arduous, employment, had better stay at home, if when told of all the discouragements and dangers that may attend his course, he is not ready, in the Spirit of the Apostle, to say, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."—Observe,

III. The motives by which he was actuated.

(1.) He was influenced by the desire of saving the souls of men. He became all things to all men, if by any means he might save some. A nobler object, my brethren, than the salvation of the immortal soul, there is not, to call forth the utmost energies of the pious and benevolent. It occupied the thoughts of Deity before time began. It was the subject of the covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son. For this God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up according to his determinate counsel. For this the Redeemer paid no less a price than his most precious blood. For this the Spirit is promised, and his influences are poured out;—for this the Scriptures

have been written by Divine inspiration, and the ordinances of religion appointed. The dispensations of Providence in all their endless variety and combination, move in subserviency to it. It is the soul which connects us with the world of spirits, and constitutes us the subjects of God's moral government,—which originally bore the fair impress of his image, and is capable of having it restored. It is the soul which capacitates us to know God, to contemplate his works, to offer Him a reasonable service, and to enjoy the pleasures of communion with him on earth, and the felicity which flows from his immediate unclouded presence in heaven. But how faintly can its value be known in the present state! Its infinite, endless, happiness, contrasted with all the horrors of that destruction which awaits the ungodly, as they will appear in the light which eternity throws upon them, declares the unutterable magnitude of its salvation. “Duration gives importance,” and endless duration stamps an infinite value on the soul, compared with which all the things of time, relatively valuable as they may be, are the mere toys of children, the small dust of the balance, less than nothing, and vanity. What is the temporal condition of millions of men through successive generations, even from the beginning of time to the end of the world, compared with the eternal destiny of one immortal spirit? It is not as a grain of sand to the universe; it is comparatively nothing.

All the powers of darkness are confederated to destroy the soul. Shall not all who know its worth, and love the Redeemer, combine their energies in dependance on Him to save it? When all the mighty heroes who have dazzled their own and succeeding ages by their exploits are forgotten, together with their achievements, those who have been instrumental in leading one soul to glory, will be found to have accomplished an infinitely greater work. If the time employed, and the strength consumed, by all the Missionaries who have been, or shall be engaged, in propagating the Gospel,—if the money expended, and the efforts made by the various Societies that have existed, or that may hereafter arise, resulted in the salvation of only one

soul, it would be an ample recompense; for what proportion does that which is finite bear to that which is infinite,—that which is perishable to that which is imperishable! Think, then, my hearers, on the myriads of souls perishing for lack of knowledge! Reflect on what has been accomplished, on what remains to be done, and on what we know from inspired prophecy and promise, shall yet be effected; and permit me to ask whose purse will be closed, whose hand will be slack, and whose heart will continue cold, when our instrumentality, if rightly employed, may have an influence on the salvation of thousands of never-dying souls!

(2.) He was animated by a firm conviction of the efficacy of the Gospel. When he contemplated the glorious effects which it had produced, so that he could say to the Corinthians, after enumerating the vices to which they had been formerly addicted. “Such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God”—his confidence in its future triumphs over prejudice, error, and depravity, was augmented by the victories it had gained. Never had any one a deeper conviction of his own insufficiency, or a firmer persuasion of the efficacy of the truths he preached, through the power of the Holy Spirit; and therefore no one laboured more zealously or relied more entirely on Divine aid for success. We cannot possibly maintain conceptions too exalted of the efficiency of the Gospel, as the ministration of the Spirit. Every operation on the soul ascribed to the Holy Spirit, is ascribed also to the word of God. Is it his office to convince of sin? “The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Is he the author of regeneration? “We are born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of the Lord, which liveth and abideth for ever.” Is genuine faith the effect of his power? “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Is hope the fruit of his influence? It is the hope of the Gospel,

and can no more exist independently of it, than a building can stand without a foundation.

To sum up the whole, the engrafted word is able to save the soul. It cannot convert one person we are well aware, if the power of the Holy Spirit be withheld; but there is no saving effect in any of the human race, which through that power it cannot accomplish. Let us then send it to every part of the earth, not considering what our Missionaries can do, but what he can do by them, who has put the "treasure into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of men;" and who is still pleased by the preaching of the Gospel "to save them that believe." Never let us forget whose word it is that we are sending to the benighted heathen; whose ordinance it is that we are employing, and what an Omnipotence he can, and will impart to it. In his strength, let us attempt far greater things than we have yet attempted; and from his faithfulness, mercy, and power, expect far greater success than we have yet seen. There is no presumption in our adopting the motto, "Great is the truth, and it shall prevail." Yes, it shall prevail over all that the sophisms of designing men, the influence of the rich, the authority of magistrates, the power of princes, the terror of persecution, the machinations of evil spirits, or the passions of the depraved heart can oppose to its all-conquering progress, till the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God, and of his Christ. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee."

(3.) He was constrained by a principle of gratitude and obedience. He counted not his life dear unto himself, that he might fulfil the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus. He had received it at a time, which most strikingly evinced the sovereignty of Divine mercy in his conversion. He received it immediately from the Lord,

whom he had so awfully blasphemed, and so cruelly persecuted in his members; whose power could have hurled him instantaneously into everlasting perdition, and whose justice would have been glorified in such an act of summary vengeance, inflicted on the most implacable enemy that had risen up against the church of God. You, my hearers, whose conversion has been attended with extraordinary circumstances, who have been miraculously, as it were, rescued from the destruction, to which you were urging your way, best can tell what gratitude he must have felt, when the Saviour assured him of forgiveness, and committed to him a ministry which angels would have felt honoured in executing—"to testify the Gospel of the grace of God."

He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. It was impossible that he should be. The love of Christ constrained him to devote his whole life, and all his powers, to the service of his Redeemer. Whatever may have been the circumstances of our conversion, professing to hope that we have obtained mercy, we may here advantageously pause to ask ourselves, Why should Paul, and the other Apostles, or such men as Luther, Swartz, Brainerd, Wesley, Whitefield, and other eminently devoted servants of the Lord Jesus, love the Saviour more ardently than we? Do we not profess to be redeemed by the same invaluable price, to be called and renewed by the same sanctifying Spirit, and to be looking for the same infinite, eternal, blessedness? If our obligations, like theirs, are incalculable, should not we also resemble them in zeal and devotedness. Different situations of the church call for corresponding duties. Many of the servants of Christ have been required to glorify their Master, by submitting to years of incarceration in damp and gloomy dungeons; by bearing with fortitude the tortures of the rack, or by expiring at the stake.

The noble army of martyrs and confessors laboured, and suffered, and we reap the fruit of their labours and sufferings. They won the field for us by dying on it. Our rights and privileges as Protestants have been obtained at the expense of their blood. We may well tremble for ourselves on considering the part we should act, were we called

to so severe a test of our gratitude and obedience. Their duties were of the most painful nature, ours are all of a pleasing kind. What joy and gladness reign in such an assembly as this! Who ever attended Missionary Meetings in a right spirit without feeling constrained to say, "It is good for me to be here?" Who ever gave a portion of his property, or endeavoured to stimulate the zeal of others, without experiencing a happiness proportionate to the purity of his motives and to his success? Surely, then, thankfulness to God for calling us to a line of service so opposite to that, in which others have been required to manifest their love to Christ, should stimulate us to the most unwearied, active, self-denying efforts to advance his kingdom. I might refer you also to those faithful and devoted Missionaries, who have bid adieu to their kindred and home; who are submitting to many privations, and braving many dangers; who are enduring much painful fatigue of body in travelling and preaching, as well as spending the midnight oil, and consuming their health and spirits in translating the Holy Scriptures; and ask you, Why should their love to Christ or their zeal for his honour be greater than ours? If we cannot all go as Missionaries, how constantly should we support them by our prayers, and by the contributions which are necessary to advance that cause, which should be as dear to our hearts as it is to theirs.

(4.) The Apostle was induced to persevere by a regard to his own happiness.

He wished to finish his course with joy. Fully persuaded as he was of the stability of that covenant which secures the interests of every believer; and of the Omnipotence of the arm which defends and supports him, he felt at the same time, the necessity of a humble and patient perseverance in the course prescribed to him. He could feel no happiness independently of the vigorous exercise of Christian graces, and of the faithful and zealous discharge of his apostolic and ministerial duties, or separate from the success of his Mission and the approbation of his Lord and Saviour. He could take no pleasure in the applause of men, in the riches or honours of the world; but he

could take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. If souls were converted, if Jesus were honoured and his cause advanced, Paul was happy; whatever might be his personal privations and sufferings. No general or sovereign ever anticipated so glorious or joyful a triumph as he did, when turning to the multitudes whom he had been the instrument of subduing to the faith of Christ, and of enriching with all the blessings of the Gospel of peace, and looking forward to the period when he should present them to his Divine Master, as the trophies of his own grace, he could say, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." He did finish his course with joy, though he finished it on a scaffold; for he could say as he submitted his neck to the stroke of the executioner,—“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing.”

In proceeding further to apply the sentiments of the Apostle, to the course of service in which we are engaged, as the friends of Missions, I would endeavour to impress upon your minds individually, as I would upon my own, the necessity of personal religion. We may be liberal from ostentation; and from vain-glory be emulous of surpassing the exertions of our neighbours. We may catch by sympathy something of the ardour excited at Meetings of this nature, and yet have no real love to Christ; we may animate others by our exhortations to run the Christian race, and like Demas afterwards abandon it ourselves. Were such the case unhappily with any of us instead of finishing our course with joy, we shall close it amidst the perishing illusions of self-deception, the sullenness of unsanctified remorse, or the agonies of despair; and awake to everlasting shame and misery, when the humble followers of the Saviour shall arise to hear him say, “Well done good

and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Let us be active and zealous, but let us be so on Christian principles, first giving ourselves to the Lord, and then giving him the work of our hands, and the first-fruits of all our increase. Let us beware of having to mourn at last over our own vineyard being neglected, while we have endeavoured to keep the vineyard of others. But embracing the Gospel of the grace of God for our own salvation, let us, my friends, not consider our time dear unto ourselves, nor our property, nor our comforts, nor life itself, so as not to be willing to part with them, rather than the cause of Christ should be impeded in its progress throughout the world. And having done all, we should remember that we are unprofitable servants, that our best services require the exercise of Divine mercy, and that if we are saved, it must be because "Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Allow me to mention the inducements we have to persevere, with increasing zeal in the course on which we have entered.

1st. The command of Christ renders it imperative upon us to proselyte all nations.

While there is one spot upon the globe unenlightened, one habitation unvisited, one individual unaddressed, this command will be binding upon the Church of God, and upon every individual who knows the way of salvation. Let our zeal be constantly cherished by the recollection of former deficiencies, and by the consideration that every passing day shortens the term of our service.

2nd. Our personal obligations should urge us to press forward.

To the light which the Gospel diffuses we are indebted for our exemption from the dominion of the absurd, filthy, cruel, and debasing superstitions by which heathen nations are enslaved. Had not "the day-spring from on high" visited us, instead of assembling in this place to worship the God of holiness and love, we should have been falling down before dumb idols, or paying our adorations to the sun and moon. Superstition would have hardened these hearts of

ours against the strongest and best feelings of human nature. Mothers in this assembly whose life is bound up in the life of their children, would have abandoned or sacrificed their helpless offspring. Children who now feel so much reverence and affection for their parents, would have left them to perish in their old age through neglect. Fathers would have been inquiring shall I give my first born for my transgression; and the husband would have refused to sit down to eat with his wife, regarding her as belonging to an inferior species of beings. Our country, instead of being so eminently the land of security and freedom, would have been overrun with lawless tribes, preying upon and devouring each other. The poor would have been slaves, at the absolute disposal of their masters, bought and sold as cupidity or caprice directed; and if treated better in any respects than the cattle which graze in the fields, it would only have been because they were regarded as a more valuable property.

Such have been, and such are the effects resulting from ignorance of true religion in heathen nations, and such would have been its effects also among us, for what are we better than they? Are we not partakers of the same fallen and depraved nature? Who then has made us to differ? and what has made us to differ? The answer to the first of these questions is, God; and the answer to the second is, Christianity. The history of the world clearly shows that civilization, freedom, and happiness, follow the track of Divine Revelation, and diffuse their benefits most extensively where the Gospel is best known and most regarded. In how great a degree do we owe to Christianity our country's greatness, our domestic pleasures, the blessings of rational liberty, and all the comforts of civilized life! But what are these to the great salvation which it is the ultimate design of the Gospel to confer?

From that eminence on which Christianity has placed us, where the air is love, and peace, and joy; and the whole scenery immediately around us is fruitfulness and beauty, let us often survey the dark parts of the earth, which are full of the habitations of cruelty and wickedness, though

occupied by beings of the same nature, and capable of the same redemption as ourselves. Observe their degrading superstitions, their bloody sacrifices, their impure rites. Behold them enslaved in the errors of a religion which debases them into demons, whilst ours would transform them into the Divine image,—which makes them hateful, and hating one another, instead of inculcating purity and love. Think of the wars that are incessantly carried on, of the prisoners that are massacred, of the human victims that are immolated on the altars of imaginary deities, and of the self-inflicted tortures by which they vainly hope to expiate their sins, and obtain peace of conscience. We possess the only sure corrective of their errors, the only effectual remedy for their maladies, the only means by which they can be saved. And shall we sit in selfish unconcern, and in ungrateful, inglorious inactivity, whilst millions are as wretched as sin can make them, and are daily perishing by multitudes! Their *miseries* and our *mercies* unitedly address us on their behalf, in sounds which should penetrate every heart. Hasten, hasten therefore to show your gratitude to God your Saviour, and your commiseration for the wants and woes of your fellow men.

3d. I would remind you of your professions and engagements.

When you first fled with trembling anxiety to Christ for refuge and found peace and hope, did you engage to love him subordinately, or supremely; to serve him occasionally or constantly, with some of your talents or with all? How often on reviewing your mercies in your closets have you fallen upon your knees, and said

“All that I am, and all I have,
Shall be for ever thine;
Whate’er my duty bids me give,
My cheerful hands resign.”

I call upon you, Christians, to fulfil the solemn, extensive, and often repeated vows of the LORD which are upon you. We do not wish you to aid the cause of Missions exclusively; we know that if you feel aright your obligations to seek

the salvation of the heathen, you will also be more intent on benefiting your relatives, neighbours and countrymen. The history of the Missionary Society fully proves this. It has hitherto, perhaps, done more good at home, even than it has done abroad. It is your readiness to every good work that we wish to cherish, convinced that the immensity of the object at which this Society aims, will ensure to it a proportionate share of your regard. No one should think that he has yet done enough. We may still ask where is our zeal for the Lord of Hosts? Where is our faith in his promises? Alas! our lukewarmness discovers our unbelief, more than our zeal demonstrates our faith. Christians are only beginning to feel as they ought towards the cause of God. We are yet far too unbelieving, too secular, too selfish—and our exertions are nothing compared with what the exertions of our successors will be under the more abundant effusion of the Holy Spirit, which bears to Christian zeal the double relation of cause and effect.

We should retrench every superfluity of the table, in dress, in furniture, in recreations; and besides these savings in our expenditure, faithfully proportion our donations to this Christian treasury, to our income, laying by in store for this purpose, according as God hath prospered us. We should also consider ourselves Missionaries to all within the circle of our influence and acquaintance, embracing every opportunity of conversing with them on their own personal concern in the Gospel of the grace of God, and on the duty of all who know its worth to publish it throughout the earth. Never should conversation be allowed to droop in the social circle when the want or the success of the Gospel, in different parts of the world, supplies so many interesting topics. No one can estimate how many may thereby be stimulated to more fervent prayers, to more liberal contributions, to more active endeavours on behalf of all that is connected with the promotion of truth, and the welfare of man.

The rich may diversify their gifts, contributing at one time to the education of a Missionary student, at a second to the endowment of a college, at a third to the establish-

ment of a school for heathen children; or you may have the satisfaction of supporting a labourer in the field entirely at your own expense. Several Hindoo Rajahs have delegates residing at Benares, who perform for them all the requisite ablutions, that place being esteemed peculiarly holy. Let wealthy Christians support delegates, who shall teach benighted idolaters a more excellent way of obtaining pardon and purification; not to atone for their own defects, but to express their gratitude to Him who has brought salvation to their houses and hearts.

Pious females should emulate the holy women, whom the Apostle so honourably mentions as labouring with him in the Gospel; and the young and active in general should be continually endeavouring to bring new ground under cultivation, by extending their applications for aid to the cause of God. By presenting to others the claims of the Gospel, and the tidings of its success, you may essentially contribute to their spiritual welfare, as well as enlarge the funds of the Society.

The ministers of the Gospel should be as so many suns, in their respective spheres of usefulness; imparting by their example, prayers, and exhortations, that warm and attractive influence which will cause the well-disposed and opulent to move with uniform zeal, diffusing the light of life all around them, and by means of this Society, extending it to the utmost bounds of heathen darkness. If we all exerted ourselves in our different stations, according to the hints that have been suggested, what should we do more than act consistently with our frequent professions at the 'Throne of Mercy, and our solemn covenant engagements?

4th. Past success should stimulate us to increasing efforts.

Most unfeignedly would I congratulate the Directors and friends of this Society, on the eminent degree in which it has pleased God to honour your labours. You cannot now regret that your first endeavours were directed to the South Sea Islands. The soil which was most unpromising in the estimation of many, has yielded the richest harvest.

It can no longer be maintained that civilization must precede the labour of Missionaries, in order to ensure their success. The sufficiency of the Gospel, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, to instruct, reform, and save the most rude and barbarous nations, has been fully demonstrated.

5th. Present appearances are calculated to inspire us with new ardour in our course.

These indicate that God is about to do a great work in the earth. Conviction is flashing upon the minds of the benighted heathen, that their Priests are impostors, and their Shasters lying fables. The Almighty is extensively exciting a thirst for the water of life, in those who are destitute of it, and a corresponding desire in those who possess it, to communicate it. Efforts are made to arouse Christians of all denominations to united, fervent, and constant prayer, for the Holy Spirit to be poured out more abundantly on the Church of God. Let us join ourselves, my hearers, to this holy confederacy. If we have but little leisure, slender talents, and a small portion of wealth, wherewith to serve the best of all causes; we may all promote it by earnest and persevering supplications. These should never be withheld. We have the most positive assurance, that God will hear the united requests of his people, for what is so accordant with his promises and designs. The Jews were accustomed to say, there was no true prayer, when the kingdom of God was forgotten. Nor will the influence of prayer on ourselves be inconsiderable. Every argument we employ in our addresses to heaven, will be a support to our faith, an incentive to our zeal.

6th. The rapidity with which the Gospel may be expected to spread, should animate our zeal.

Your friends and fellow-labourers are continually increasing; every convert to Christ becomes an agent in extending the knowledge of the truth. Their efforts are multiplying and enlarging, in a progression resembling the productive powers of vegetation, in which the extension of luxuriant growth, is accompanied by proportionate beauty and fruitfulness.

The eminent devotedness of the lamented Mills, who gave an impulse to Missionary zeal, which was felt throughout the continent of America, took its determined character, under God, from the affectionate inquiries and exhortations of a pious mother. All the benefits which our honoured Missionary, Morrison, is destined to confer on the Eastern world, originated in the humble wish of a Sunday-school teacher to impart religious instructions to this youth, in common with several others under his care. The germ of this Society, which has grown to so goodly a tree, under whose branches so many are enjoying the blessings of the Gospel, existed not many years ago in the compassionate feeling, which an honoured servant of Christ entertained for the situation of the heathen world. All the blessings, both civil and religious, which the Reformation has communicated to so many nations of Europe, may be traced to one solitary, neglected Bible, which Luther found in the monastery in which he was a resident. There was a time when all the piety in Britain, together with all the blessings which this highly-favoured land will be instrumental in giving to the world, existed in the desire which God excited in the breast of a devoted Missionary, to visit this distant island. His reception among its rude inhabitants might resemble that of the Missionaries first sent to Otaheite; and there might be lukewarm, sceptical individuals of that day, who derided the attempt as chimerical and hopeless.

My brethren, if one mother's advice, one Sunday-school teacher's solicitude, the compassion of one benevolent heart, one solitary Bible, and one Missionary, have accomplished so much good, what may be expected from the combined efforts, mutually assisting each other, of all the Societies which are now in full operation to extend the dominion of truth and holiness? Every one who is induced this night to make a larger surrender of his property, to offer more earnest supplications, and to carry away a resolution, formed in Divine strength, and with a soul prostrate in the dust for past deficiencies, to be more active and devoted, to make a better use of his time, influence, and talents,—every one who departs with a zeal not to be damped by the chilling

air of the evening, or to evaporate when the excitements of the Missionary week are over, but to prompt the daily inquiry, what can I give more than I have yet given, consistently with every other claim?—what can I do more in my family, in the congregation, in the circle and neighbourhood to which I belong? will form a tributary stream, swelling that tide of Divine knowledge, which will flow on, continually increasing in strength, and enlarging its influence, till it shall cover the whole earth, and missions be wanted no more.

7th. I would urge upon you, finally, the frequent consideration of the end of our course.

In imitation of the Apostle, we should daily place ourselves in serious thoughtfulness at the close of our period of service, and consider what our feelings will be when we find all our purposes broken off by the irresistible hand of death. How numerous will be our regrets when our opportunities of usefulness are for ever gone by, and we hear the voice of our Master, speaking in accents which will vibrate on every chord of the trembling heart, “Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.” Shall we *then* think, as the world recedes and judgment approaches, that we have been too liberal with our money, or too prodigal of our strength, in the service of God? Let us endeavour to feel and act every day, as we shall then wish we had done all through life.

Yea, let us stretch our anticipations to the period when we hope, through the abounding riches of Divine grace, to join the innumerable throng from every part of the globe, who, standing before the throne, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands, shall cry with a loud voice, “Salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.” What an unutterable joy will fill our souls, when we know what a heaven he has given us, and know also the extent to which he has honoured us, in making us the instruments of bringing others to the same felicity. “Seeing ye look for such things, what manner of persons ought ye to be.”

In the blessed hope of the coming of our Lord, and of

our gathering together unto him, of our meeting *then* with all who have preceded us in the faith and service of the Gospel, with all the Missionaries and servants of Christ, whom we shall never see in the flesh, with all our successors in the work of evangelizing the world, and with all who shall believe in Christ, till the angel shall swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that time shall be no longer,—farewell.—“Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”



ON THE DUTY OF PECUNIARY CONTRIBUTION TO
RELIGIOUS PURPOSES.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

AT

Tottenham Court Chapel,

ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 10, 1821.



BY

THE REV. JOHN BROWN,

OF BIGGAR, NORTH BRITAIN.



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1821.

A SERMON,

8c. 8c.

I CHRONICLES, XXIX. 5.

Who is willing to consecrate his service this day to the Lord?

HISTORY, whether profane or sacred, makes us acquainted with few characters so interesting as David, the King of Israel. Endowed in large measure with those more commanding faculties, and severer virtues which secure respect,—in rare union with those tender sensibilities and gentle charities, which excite attachment; he is regarded with a mingled emotion of esteem and love, by every unprejudiced reader of his history, and his memory is cherished by the tender heart, with feelings akin to personal friendship and religious veneration. His patriotic ardour when, in the bloom of youth, he encountered unarmed, the veteran champion of the enemies of his country and his God; his patient endurance of calamities, severe, protracted and unmerited; the justice and benignity which distinguished his administration after he ascended the throne of Israel; his fortitude in adversity, and his moderation in prosperity; and above all, that sublime, rational and affectionate piety, which gave a peculiar dignity to his conduct in every situation, command our reverential esteem: while the tender lamentations of the affectionate friend, the solemn sorrows of the dethroned monarch, and the still more sacred griefs of the heart-broken father awaken all the softer feelings, and oblige us to love as well as to admire him.* The man must be blind indeed, who would pronounce David a faultless character—THAT is one of the

* 2 Sam. i. 17—27. xv. 30. xviii. 33.

peculiar honours of his Son and Lord. HE was all fair—there was no spot in HIM. In David's character there are blemishes, and some of them foul ones; but still they bear but an inconsiderable proportion to its beauties; and while we pity his weaknesses and blame his faults, we still love the man, venerate the saint, and admire the hero.

The passage of sacred history from which we have selected our subject of discourse, presents this great and good man to our contemplation in circumstances peculiarly interesting. The aged monarch appears attended by his accomplished son the destined successor—and surrounded by all that is illustrious for rank and learning, and valour, and piety among the Israelitish tribes. The design of the solemn convocation is to promote an undertaking which has long occupied David's mind, and preparation for which has been one of his leading objects during the whole of his reign: the erection of a Temple to JEHOVAH the God of Israel. In this assembly of the Israelitish states, their venerable king informs them of the ardent desire, which from an early period he had cherished, “to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of Jehovah,” and of the divine oracle which, prohibiting him from engaging in this work, assigned the honourable service to Solomon his son.* Turning then to the young prince, in a manner the most impressive and touching, he charges him to execute the high commission with which he had been entrusted, and lays before him the plans of the sacred edifice and its furniture, “which the Lord had made him to understand in writing, by his hand upon him.”† He then presents Solomon to the assembled princes as their divinely appointed sovereign—and the destined builder of the Temple of Jehovah—calls them to co-operate with him in so great and honourable an undertaking, and after mentioning the exertions he had himself made in preparing for a work, which he was denied the satisfaction of executing, he invites them to prove their pious regard for the God of their fathers, by their liberal contributions to the erection

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 2—7.

† 1 Chron. xxviii. 9—21.

of an edifice to be dedicated to his honour. "Who then is willing" said he, "to consecrate his service this day to the Lord."*

The scene thus brought before our imagination is without question a grand and a lovely one—and in the estimation of an enlightened mind this convention of the Israelitish states, with their pious monarch at their head, consulting about the erection of a Temple to Jehovah, casts into the shade the most illustrious political convocations of ancient or modern times—the Athenian assembly, the Roman senate, or, more august than either, the British Parliament. But is the scene presented to the fancy more interesting than that to which it bears a strong analogy, and which now presents itself to the senses? No mortal prince graces this large assembly with his presence, but "THE KING OF KINGS," according to his promise, is in the midst of us. Few, if any of the nobility of the land have taken their seats in our convocation, but there are, I doubt not, many of the "royal priesthood" here—many who belong to the peerage of heaven. We are met to promote an object, the magnitude of which cannot be exaggerated, and in comparison of which the erection of the Temple itself shrinks into insignificance. At the command of "Messiah our Prince," we are assembled to unite our deliberations, and contributions, and prayers for the erection of a spiritual temple in which not one favoured people only, but "every nation and kindred, and tongue and people," may present spiritual sacrifices to "the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" and it is HE who now, by the voice of one of the humblest of his ministers, proclaims, "Who is willing to consecrate this day his services unto the Lord?" The voice is on earth, the speaker is in heaven. "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth be silent before him."†

My object in the following discourse is, *to illustrate and recommend the duty of pecuniary contribution to religious purposes*: but instead of discussing this subject in a general

* 1 Chron. xxix. 1—5.

† Habak. ii. 20.

way, I wish to show that “whatsoever things were written aforetime” of the liberality of David and his people, “were written for our learning;” and from the passage of Scripture connected with our text, to collect some *instructions* respecting the manner in which this duty ought to be performed—and some *arguments* calculated to enforce it.

I. The instructions in reference to the manner in which the duty of pecuniary contributions to religious purposes should be performed, suggested by this portion of sacred writ, may be arranged under the following heads,—It teaches us that in contributing of our property to the service of God, we ought to consider ourselves as performing a religious duty—that we should give only what really belongs to us—that we should give liberally—that we should give from proper motives—that we should give with proper dispositions—that we should connect prayer with our donations, and that we should use all our influence to induce others to perform this duty.

1. We are taught by this passage of Scripture, *that, in contributing of our substance to the service of God, we should consider ourselves as performing a religious duty.* It is, as a *service*, an act of duty, and as a *service consecrated to God*, an act of religious duty.

There are too many even among those who bear the Christian name, who look on pecuniary contribution to pious purposes as a matter not of obligation, but of convenience. They consider it as discretionary to give or not to give. To withhold they scarcely account a fault, to contribute they view as a kind of supererogatory virtue. This mode of thinking is utterly unreasonable and unscriptural. Reason plainly teaches us that we are *bound* to devote our property and every thing else to the great purposes of our being—the honour of God, and the happiness of mankind; and as to Scripture, though the quantity and form of our pious obligations of property are not exactly specified, general rules are laid down on these subjects which are sufficiently intelligible to all who wish to understand them, and easily applicable to particular cases; and the duty itself is en-

joined in the plainest and most unambiguous terms. The command “Thou shalt not steal” is not more explicit and authoritative, than the command “Honour the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase.”*

If some overlook the obligation of pecuniary contribution as a duty altogether, still more, it is to be feared, overlook its character as a religious duty. The majority of professing Christians have miserably contracted notions of religious duty; with many, religion is entirely a thing of time, and place, and circumstance—mere “bodily service.” And with others who think more accurately as to its nature, the term is too exclusively applied to strictly devotional affections and services. Christianity connects every thing with Divinity; “Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God.”† It gives a decidedly *godly* and a decidedly *Christian* character to all duty, “whatsoever we do, whether in word or in deed,” we are to do all “in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him.”‡ The whole of the moral as well as of the strictly religious duties is described, as a “presenting ourselves to him a living, unblemished, acceptable offering:”§ and acts of beneficence and alms-giving are, in particular, represented as “*sacrifices*”—religious services.||

The grand radical disease of our nature is ungodliness, and it is fearful to think how morality and religion have been disjoined; and how even in religious services the great object of religion is often utterly overlooked and forgotten. It is the great design of Christianity to cure this moral malady; to bring our minds as it were into constant contact with God, and it is in prosecution of this design, that it gives so decidedly a religious character to every duty, and writes on them all as their motto, “This is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”¶

But the duty under consideration has more of this character than many others. For not only is the divine autho-

* Prov. iii. 9. † 1 Cor. x. 31. ‡ Col. iii. 17.

§ Rom. xii. 1. || Heb. xiii. 16. ¶ 1 Thess. v. 18.

riety the grand source of obligation, and the divine honour the ultimate object, as is the case in every duty, but the direct and immediate object is religious; the support or the diffusion of the ordinances of divine worship—the promotion of man's improvement and happiness, in reference to God and eternity. It is of high importance to have this truth deeply impressed on the mind, for it is this which gives to pecuniary oblation the dignity and spirituality of a religious observance. It is this which makes it grateful to God and conducive to our spiritual improvement.

Let us then in the service we have before us, consider ourselves as a spiritual priesthood, laying on the altar of God, a divinely required eucharistic sacrifice; let us banish from our minds all those secular principles and views which would desecrate the religious service, and as in the presence of the Divinity, with feelings similar to those with which we engage in the holiest offices of devotion, let us “*consecrate our service to the Lord.*”

2. This passage teaches us that in pecuniary oblations to religious purposes, *we should give only what is really our own property.* “I have given of mine own proper good to the house of my God,”* says the Israelitish monarch.

The claims of generosity, even of the noblest kind of generosity, must never be allowed to encroach on the inviolable rights of justice. There is truth in the adage, though often quoted for the unworthy purpose of cloaking selfishness, “We must be just before we be generous.” Few modes of conduct are more base than to endeavour to obtain for ourselves the applause which belongs to Christian beneficence, by converting what is really the property of another into the means of gratifying our absurd ambition. The instances of such nefarious conduct are not, we believe, numerous, and certainly those who are guilty of it are the greatest of fools; they cannot expect God's approbation in a direct violation of his law. “The Lord loves judgment and hates robbery for burnt offering:”† and instead of gaining their desired object in the applause of

* 1 Chron. xxix. 3.

† Isaiah lxi. 8.

their fellow professors, they seldom fail to draw down on themselves universal contempt and execration. Verily in every point of view they do lose their reward.

As, however, there are very few men of dishonest principles who have much ambition for the forms of Christian generosity, it is not necessary to dwell on this enormity: but it may serve a good purpose to caution well-intentioned, but not sufficiently considerate persons, against giving what is really not "their own proper good" in pecuniary contributions. The habits of modern commerce, (whether in all points of view wise or dutiful admits of a doubt,) place much of the property of others in the hands of every man engaged in business: and unless such a person attend carefully to the wise man's advice—"Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks and look well to thy herds,"* he is in danger, without any direct design inconsistent with integrity, to do what is really unjust, and ultimately ruinous.—Now we warn persons of this hazard, chiefly because the good done by all the donations of such individuals is more than counterbalanced by the malignant influence which the bankruptcy of one such individual produces—when in the course of investigation into his ruined fortunes, it becomes apparent that his contributions to religious purposes were disproportioned to his property and other expenditure, a loud outcry is raised by worldly men about the dishonesty of the godly, and the mischievous tendency of religious institutions; and a certain degree of plausibility is given to their declamations, they cannot be called arguments, against Bible and Missionary Societies. It is then a duty which Christians owe to the good and great cause, to support it in such a manner as shall "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."† However much we may deny ourselves in order to increase our pious donations, (it is scarcely possible for us to exceed in this way,) let us never, in the slightest degree, trench on the property of another. Let us here, as in every other part of Christian duty, "provide things ho-

* Prov. xxvii. 23.

† 1 Pet. ii. 15.

nourable in the sight of all men,"* and beware of "letting our good be evil spoken of."†

III. A third lesson respecting the duty of pecuniary contribution suggested by this passage is, *that our donations should be liberal*. The donations of David and his people astonish us by their magnitude. In addition to the immense sums which he had amassed during his reign for the building of the temple, he, on the occasion referred to in the text, devoted to this pious purpose what is equivalent to about *eighteen millions* of our money—and his people's joint contributions considerably exceeded *thirty millions*!

With regard to the measure of our pious contributions, it is difficult to lay down a general rule applicable to all circumstances. It would obviously be absurd to fix on any precise sum, as, in consequence of the inequality of property, that sum might be a very paltry donation from one, which would entirely exhaust the resources of another. It were nearly as ridiculous to fix on any particular proportion of a person's fortune or income, for to a man who has no capital, and whose regular income is little more than sufficient to procure for himself and his family the necessaries of life in that rank in which providence has placed him; the tenth, the twentieth, or even a much smaller proportion of his gains may be a much more liberal contribution than the fifth, or even the half of the income of the wealthy individual, whose possessions are extensive, whose coffers are well filled, and who counts his revenue by thousands and tens of thousands.

While there can be no doubt that a mind enlightened by Christian knowledge, and a heart enlarged by Christian generosity, are the best casuists in resolving questions with regard to the measure of our pecuniary contributions to religious purposes, yet at the same time it may be useful to suggest a few hints respecting the principles, (for no doubt this, like every part of Christian duty, may be reduced to general principles,) which should regulate our conduct in

* Rom. xii. 17.

† Rom. xiv. 16.

this matter. From the circumstance of the *tenth* of the income of the Israelites being appropriated by express divine law to pious purposes, it is surely a fair conclusion, that among the middle and higher classes in all ordinary cases, Christians should not devote a less proportion of their worldly substance to the service of God. The liberal genius of the dispensation under which we live, manifested in rather fixing general principles than laying down particular rules, has certainly not produced in us its appropriate and intended effect, if it be used as a cloak for our avarice, pleaded as an apology for our parsimony, instead of being felt as an appeal to Christian honour—a stimulus to Christian liberality.

Another means of arriving at something like a general principle for determining what constitutes a liberal donation in particular circumstances is, reflection on the portion of our substance which we expend on what may be termed the comforts, the luxuries, the superfluities of life. How far it is consistent with Christian duty to spend any part of our property in what, strictly speaking, comes under the two last denominations, is a subject which deserves grave consideration by all who would live “as ever in the great Taskmaster’s eye;”* but the observation must, I think, carry with it intuitive conviction to every mind, that that person is not liberal in his pecuniary contributions to religious purposes, who does not devote to this object more, much more than he does to what, even in the station he occupies, must be considered as luxuries and superfluities, and that the offering of a man, who devotes nothing to the cause of God and humanity, till almost every demand of “the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,” be gratified, though considerable in itself, partakes not at all of the nature of sacrifice.—I appeal to the common sense, and to the conscience of my audience, if that person is not, in a religious point of view, criminally penurious, who, though he may not withhold the accustomed subscription from religious institutions, can, without hesitation, expend on a sin-

* Milton.

gle ornament for the person or the mansion, on an entertainment or scheme of amusement, more money than the amount of his religious expenses for a whole year.

A third circumstance which must be taken into consideration in forming a judgment of what is a liberal donation in common cases, (and this is the question we are chiefly interested in,) is the degree in which "God has prospered us." This is proposed by the Apostle to the Corinthians as the measure of their alms-giving. "Let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him."* Every improvement in our circumstances should be attended with a corresponding enlargement of our contributions—what was a very liberal donation for an individual when he was commencing business, may be a very parsimonious one now when he is in the high way of realizing a fortune. Christian liberality is intended as a piece of Christian discipline; and hence it cannot be performed aright without a considerable share of thought and reflection. Whatever may be said in defence of accumulation generally, (and we apprehend it will be no easy task, on Christian principles, to defend it,) that part of our income which should be appropriated to religious purposes, and which should be enlarged according to the increase of our gains, ought certainly not to be allowed to accumulate. There is abundance of room for its useful employment; and how can we expect the blessing of God on our increased fortune, if we do not express our gratitude in the way of his appointment?

On few subjects do the majority of the professors of Christianity need more to have their opinions, as well as their conduct, rectified, than on that now under consideration. The sums of money raised in this country for religious purposes, when taken collectively, are, no doubt, very considerable, and, compared with what thirty years ago were devoted to such objects, are astonishingly great; and there are not wanting in every rank of society a few illustrious examples of Christian liberality, who, "to their power, and beyond their power,"† have made sacrifices of their

* 1 Cor. xvi. 2.

† 2 Cor. viii. 3.

property; yet still, to a person who will allow himself to reflect and calculate, it must be obvious that the collective sum is very small in comparison of what it might be, and what it ought to be—that many who ought to give, give nothing—and that a great majority of those who do give, do not by any means give with a due liberality. Under that better order of things which is rapidly establishing itself in the Christian world, and in which the minds and hearts of men shall be brought more thoroughly under the influence of Christian truth, and “the powers of the world to come,” I am persuaded that the religious expenses of a Christian will bear to his other expenditure a proportion better suited to the comparative value of the body and the soul—the comparative length of time and eternity, than they now do, and that it will excite the astonishment of those who live where Christian principle has obtained its legitimate authority over all the human faculties and habits, how good men could think that they not merely did their duty, but were entitled to the praise of generosity, when dedicating to God what must appear to *them* a miserably disproportionate share of their worldly substance.

It is obviously impossible, in a section of a discourse of this nature, to enter at large into an exposure of the futility of those pleas by which men attempt to excuse or defend their undue parsimony with regard to religious objects, but I cannot help noticing two of the most ordinary and plausible of them, as the passage connected with the text seems to me to furnish a very complete answer to them—the necessity of maintaining our place in society, and the duty of making provision for a family; David had the rank of a king to support, and a large family to provide for, and he did not neglect either; but it is plain that he devoted more to the house of his God, than to both. The necessity of a great deal of that expense which is thought requisite to maintain a certain rank in life, and of that accumulation that is thought requisite to provide for children, exists merely in imagination, and it would be well if men would consider that the arbitrary and frequently absurd requisitions of fashion, cannot, in any degree, modify the obligation of “the

holy, just, and good law of God," and that the surest way to draw down God's blessing on ourselves and our families, without which all our exertions will be fruitless, is not to disregard that law, but to obey it.

IV. This passage teaches us, *that we should present our pecuniary oblations from proper motives.* In consequence of the decidedly spiritual character of the religion of the Bible, mere external action is accounted of but little value. It is only as it embodies right principle, that it assumes the form of acceptable duty. Donations for religious purposes, however liberal, if they spring from unworthy motives, cannot be pleasing to God. During the ages of papal ignorance and superstition, it was no unusual thing for princes to make large sacrifices of property to the church to secure the success of their enterprises, the pardon of their crimes, or the salvation of their souls. Such offerings, however valuable in themselves, and though the purpose to which they were devoted had been more useful than it ordinarily was, implying as they did the grossest misconceptions of the divine character, must have been considered as mockery, not worship, by Him, who requires the homage of the enlightened mind and the devout heart. David's munificent donation proceeded from no such unworthy motive—it was the native expression of "the affection which he had set towards the house of his God." The language of his conduct was—"Let the name of Jehovah be honoured, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things."*

In our donations for religious purposes, there is more than a probability of our being influenced by unworthy principles. It is no uncommon thing to give to a religious institution from the mere force of custom—from an easiness of temper which cannot resist solicitation—from the fear of censure—from the love of praise—from a dim indistinct expectation that such an employment of property may have a favourable influence on the final destiny. In every such case, I need scarcely say, the donation, as a piece of religious service, cannot be acceptable to God; and, as a

* 1 Chron. xxix. 3.

piece of moral discipline, must be not only useless but hurtful. They who give from such motives can have “no reward of our Father who is heaven.”

The motives by which we ought to be actuated in making pecuniary donations, are chiefly—submission to the divine authority—regard for the divine honour, and sympathy for the worst miseries of our fellow men. Nothing is an act of religious duty, unless it proceed from an enlightened conviction, that divine authority has been interposed, and unless in doing it, we bow to that authority as the rule and reason of our conduct.—It may be an act of good nature, prudence, or benevolence without this, but it is not an act of religious obedience. Regard to the honour of God is another principle which must animate our religious almsgivings. The display and the corresponding acknowledgment of the amiable and the venerable excellencies of the divine character, is the great object of those Christian enterprises, for the support of which our donations are intended. It is this which gives *them* that character of peculiar grandeur which belongs to them, which renders them fit objects of the divine patronage, and it is only so far as their individual supporters honestly design the promotion of this great object, that their conduct is the fit object of the divine approbation. Sympathy for the worst miseries of mankind, is a third motive which should stimulate our pious liberality. Man’s worst miseries, even in his present state, originate in his character as a sinner. And the design of all Christian benevolent institutions is, to apply in some form or other the sovereign cure to the essential malady of our nature.—It is surely proper then, that all who support these institutions, should have this object full in their view, and, in yielding their support, should exercise all those tender meltings of Christian sensibility, which such a view is calculated to excite.

We are anxious that the duty of pecuniary donation should be performed under the influence of such motives, both for the sake of the individuals who contribute, and the great cause which they support. It is only when performed under such an influence that it is acceptable to God, and

conducive to the spiritual improvement and ultimate salvation of him who performs it. It is the operation of such principles alone, that can secure steady, permanent liberal support to religious institutions; and, strangely as it may sound in some ears, I apprehend there is nothing irrational or superstitious in the sentiment, that a sum contributed from such principles is likely to be far more useful than a much larger sum contributed from inferior considerations. It is the principle which stamps value on the gift in God's estimation, and is it unreasonable to expect, that in the ulterior operations of his providence and grace, by means of these sums, he should pay some regard to what is the real measure of their moral worth?

V. We are taught by this passage, *that our pecuniary contributions to religious purposes should be yielded in the exercise of proper dispositions.* In performing religious and moral duties we must pay attention to the manner, as well as the motive of action, though the shortest and surest way of securing the former property is to secure the purity of the latter.

Every duty has a set of appropriate tempers in which it ought to be performed. *Cheerfulness, humility, and gratitude,* are those which should peculiarly characterize our donations for religious purposes. All these tempers were admirably exemplified by David and his pious nobles. They gave cheerfully. "The people rejoiced for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart, they offered willingly to the Lord."* "As for me" says David "in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things."† It is not always that religious donations are presented in this spirit—They are given, but they are given with a grudge. Prudence, shame, perhaps religion obliges us to give, but if we *durst* we would rather withhold—this is not as it should be. This cannot please him who says, "My Son give me thine heart." "God loveth a cheerful giver."‡

David and his people gave also in the spirit of humility, "Who am I," said he, "and what is my people, that we

* 1 Chron. xxix. 9. † 1 Chron. v. 17. ‡ 2 Cor. ix. 7.

should be able to offer so willingly after this sort.* In presenting our pecuniary sacrifices, especially if they are considerable, we are in great danger of indulging a spirit of pride and self-gratulation. But nothing is more unreasonable. The more we are enabled to give to the cause of God, the more are we indebted to God. The property given, and the disposition to give, are equally, though in different ways, from him. They are his mercies, not our merits, and the very best thing we can say of ourselves is, that we do not make a dishonest use of God's gifts.

Closely allied with humility is gratitude. In offering our oblation, we should not only disclaim all merit, but acknowledge the divine goodness in at once enabling and disposing us to present it, and in so far honouring us, as to employ us and our property in his service. "Now therefore," says David, "we thank thee and praise thy glorious name."†

These are the tempers in which we are called to lay our sacrifice on the altar of God, and if we are enabled in any good measure to exercise them, we shall find that "it is indeed more blessed to give than to receive"—and what seems merely a transfer of a little property, a mere secular, and, in many cases, no very pleasant transaction, will be converted into a religious ordinance—an important act of moral discipline, and while engaged in it, we shall be sweetly constrained to say, "This is the house of God, this is the gate of Heaven."

6th. A sixth lesson, in reference to the duty of pecuniary contribution taught by this passage is, *that we ought to connect prayer with our donations.* The great object to which our donations are devoted, is one, which no donations of themselves, however munificent, can accomplish. Had we money sufficient we might indeed establish missions in every department of the unenlightened world, and leave no individual on our earth unfurnished with the means of obtaining the knowledge of "the truth as it is in Jesus." But all this might be done without the conversion of a single soul. For that purpose, divine agency is necessary—and

* 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

† 1 Chron. xxix. 13.

prayer, believing, fervent, persevering prayer, is the appointed means of securing the exertion of that agency. 'To pray for the conversion of the world, while we do not give, is presumption—to give for the conversion of the world, while we do not pray, is impiety; to give and pray, and pray and give are consistent Christianity.

David added prayer to the liberal donations of himself and his people, knowing, that "Except the Lord built the house, they would labour in vain who build it."* "(O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our Father," said he, "give to Solomon a perfect heart to keep thy commandments, and to build the palace for the which I have made provision."† If David prayed for the divine blessing where the object, the raising a splendid structure for divine worship, was one to which human agency seemed chiefly, if not solely necessary, ought we not to pray with much greater fervour, who have an object in view, in gaining which, all that money, all that human exertion in any form can effect, holds but a very subordinate place?

The donations of Christians are by no means so liberal as they ought to be, but were their prayers more fervent, greater results might be reasonably expected from their expenditure. Were Christians more generally penetrated with a conviction of two truths, most explicitly taught in Scripture, that divine influence is absolutely necessary to the conversion of men, and that this divine influence is never denied to believing, fervent, persevering prayer, surely they would obey the Master's command, to "pray and not to faint." It has been strikingly remarked, by a profound and eloquent writer, that "it is visionary to expect an unusual success in the human administration of religion, unless there are unusual omens: an emphatical spirit of prayer would be such an omen, and the individual who should solemnly determine to try its last possible efficacy, might probably find himself becoming a much more prevailing agent in his own little sphere: and if the whole, or the greater number of the disciples of Christianity were, with

* Psal. cxxvii. 1.

† 1 Chron. xxix. 18, 19.

an earnest unalterable resolution of each, to combine that Heaven should not withhold one single influence, which the very utmost effect of conspiring and persevering supplication would obtain, it would be a sign that a revolution of the world was at hand.”*

Let us then, my brethren, this day, in good earnest commence the glorious experiment; let us, according to his condescending command, “prove” our God.† And while we lay our humble offerings on his altar, let our ardent supplications rise before his throne.—“Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”‡ “Awake, awake, put on strength O arm of the Lord: awake as in the ancient day, in the generations of old.”§ “O! that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence.”|| “Gird thy sword on thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty—and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, meekness, and righteousness.”¶ Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him, flee before him.”** “Come forth out of thy royal chambers, O Prince of the kings of the earth! put on the visible robes of thy imperial majesty: Take up that unlimited sceptre which thy almighty Father hath bequeathed thee, for now the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to be renewed.”††

7th. The last lesson, in reference to the duty of pecuniary contribution taught us by this passage, to which I intend to call your attention is, *that we should not only give ourselves, but use all our influence to induce others to give.* We are to “provoke one another to love and to good works.”‡‡ David did so. He not only presented a most princely offering himself, but he urged all his nobles to fol-

* Foster's Essays, b. ii. p. 103, 104. † Mal. iii. 10.

‡ Isa. lxii. 6, 7. § Isa. li. 9. || Isa. lxiv. 1.

¶ Psal. xlv 3, 4. ** Psal. lxxviii. 1.

†† Milton. Animad. on Remon. def. § iv. Works, vol. 1. p. 184. Lond. 1806.

‡‡ Heb. x. 24.

low his example—"Who then is willing, this day, to consecrate his service to the Lord?"

Influence is a talent of prodigious value. It multiplies a man's power of doing good indefinitely. It is bestowed by the great Master, and improved or unimproved, it must be accounted for. In endeavouring to incline others to contribute to religious purposes, we are to employ both argument and example. Many give little or nothing to such objects from want of information, or from misapprehension of the design and proceedings of religious associations; and much good may be done by exerting ourselves in the circulation of their Reports, and in bringing the arguments in favour of such enterprises before the minds of those over whom we have influence. To render our recommendation effectual, it must be seconded by our example. It is of importance, for their sakes, that we should give, and that it should be known that we give to such institutions. We are not indeed to make an ostentatious display of our Christian liberality, but, in many cases, the sum given is of far less value than the name of the person who gives it. We are not to "do our alms before men that we may be seen of them," but we are to "make our light shine before men, that they, seeing our good works, may glorify our Father who is in heaven."* When no important object is to be gained by publicity, our deeds of religious liberality cannot be too secret; but it is a spurious modesty which leads us to conceal *that*, the publicity of which would glorify God, and do good to mankind.

There is scarcely any individual, however humble, utterly destitute of influence—and it is the duty of every Christian to exert his influence, be it little or great—be his sphere narrow or extensive, in the support of this good cause. But there are particularly three classes, who possess a very large share of influence, and with urging whom to consecrate it all to the Lord, I shall conclude this part of the discourse; I allude to the higher orders of society, to the female sex, and to the Christian ministry.

The distinction of ranks is an ordinance of heaven, as it

* Matth. vi. 1.—v. 16.

naturally rises out of the principles of the human constitution, and the circumstances in which God has placed mankind; and but for the folly and wickedness of men, would be found conducive at once to their mutual improvement and happiness. The upper classes have always possessed, and ever must possess, a great degree of direct, and probably a much greater degree of indirect influence, over those who are beneath them; and it is deeply to be regretted, that the general effect of this influence, in a religious and moral point of view, has hitherto been most decidedly mischievous. This consideration should be felt as a powerful motive by the “not many mighty, the not many noble that are called,” to exert to the utmost the influence arising from their rank and wealth, in promoting the interests of religious institutions among their equals and inferiors. The conduct of David is well fitted to stimulate, and his success to encourage such exertions. Were the nobles of our land generally to devote, as they ought, their time, their talents, and their property, to the great works of Christian charity, which give so peculiar and so pleasing a character to our age, their own contributions, however munificent, would bear but a small proportion to the sums which, through their influence, would be cast into the sacred treasury.

It is of the last importance, however, both to themselves and to the cause, that this support should be honest, springing from no worldly or political views, but from a sincere submission of mind and heart to the authority of Jesus Christ. The most elevated of mortals can communicate no additional lustre to a cause which, like its Author, “receiveth not glory of men.” In supporting such a cause, nobles, and kings, and emperors, are the recipients, not the bestowers of honour, and that kind of patronage, (a word, the very employment of which on such a subject indicates a wrong mode of thinking,) which consists merely in giving the use of their name, attendance at public meetings, and a regular subscription, however liberal, if, at the same time, the general worldly, if not immoral tenor of their conduct, prove that, in truth, they “care for none of these

things," is, to use the softest term, a very ambiguous kind of benefit.

It is one of the best signs of our times, that the number of those in the upper ranks, who are honest and zealous in the sacred cause, is rapidly increasing; that they seem to be aware of the awful responsibility attached to their salvation, and are gladly throwing the whole weight of their influence and wealth into the scale of evangelical truth and Christian beneficence. In the name of my Master, I "charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy—that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."*

To our sisters in Christ, who have it so much in their power to advance the interests of religious institutions by their influence, it is not necessary that I should say much, "for I know the forwardness of their mind, and their zeal hath provoked very many." No portion of the human race has derived more important benefits from Christianity than the female sex.—It has elevated them prodigiously in the scale of social life; it has softened the ferocity of the ruder sex, and converted woman from the despised and oppressed slave into the fondly cherished companion of man. Is it not meet then that that influence, a large part of which, and the best part of which, originates in Christianity, should be employed in promoting the interests of that benignant system. In exciting this influence, it is not necessary, it is not proper, that females should leave the sphere in which it is plainly the will of Providence they should usually move—the sphere of domestic privacy. That is their peculiar sphere, and within it they possess peculiar influence. It is to the influence of mothers on sons, of wives on husbands, of sisters on brothers—the influence arising from the relations and affections of love, consanguinity, and friendship,

* 1 Tim. vi. 17.

that we chiefly look for efficient support of religious institutions from females; we are quite aware that the principle of public association has, in many instances, been applied most successfully in the case of females; but, though we would be far from discouraging such institutions, and, though the objection that they have a tendency to injure the retiring beauties of the female character, and interfere with the order of domestic economy, comes with a peculiarly ill grace from those who generally urge it, from those who have no objection that our women should flaunt it at the ball, the assembly, or the theatre, the atmosphere of which is certainly not less blasting to female delicacy, than that of a Bible or Missionary Association; yet we must confess, that in our estimation, all that is *seen* done by females in the good cause, should bear but a small proportion to what is *not seen* but *felt*. In the mighty machinery of Bible and Missionary Institutions, their place is not that of the more prominent wheels, which seem to be doing all the work, but that of the nicer, yet equally important pieces of mechanism, that in the interior, unseen and unheard, are constantly at work, and contributing most essentially to the steadiness of the movement, and the production of the ultimate result.

No class of men have greater opportunities to promote, by influence, the liberal support of religious institutions than ministers of the Gospel; and it may be permitted to one, whose exertions have been confined within a narrow compass, to say of his more laborious brethren, who have been called to occupy a more conspicuous place in a wide field of operation, that their opportunities have been upon the whole nobly improved. Without any selfish object, and, frequently, in apparent opposition to private interest, have they pressed the duty of pecuniary contribution on their congregations, and to their labours chiefly are the commencement and the support of the great religious institutions of the present day to be traced. The direct contributions from ministers, when their incomes are taken into the account, have been very great; and the amount of unpaid labour to which they have cheerfully submitted, is altogether incalculable. This is as it ought to be.

Ministers owe every thing—their standing in society—their income—their respectability to their being supposed honest, and enlightened, and fervent supporters of Christianity; and where are institutions for extending the blessings of that system to look for active friends, if not among them? A Christian minister, careless about such institutions, and still more, hostile to them, is a monster of inconsistency, and did men think and feel as they ought, would be regarded with a mingled emotion of astonishment and horror.

Honoured Fathers and Brethren—Hitherto ye have acquitted yourselves like good soldiers of Jesus Christ! Persevere in your efforts; where it is possible, increase them—“HE is worthy for whom ye do this,” and HE will not “forget your labour of love.”*—“Be not weary in well doing, in due season you shall reap if ye faint not.”† And let us never forget, that the most efficient, the only permanently efficient, method of securing the liberal donations of the Christian people to religious purposes, is to bring the grand, radical, distinctive peculiarities of the Christian dispensation as a restorative system before their minds, in all the plainness of their means—in all the force of their evidence, and in all the overwhelming grandeur of their importance, in their reference to eternity. If we can but get men to open their hearts to the Saviour, their hands will not long remain shut to his cause. Particular statements and enforcements of Christian liberality, like that in which we are at present engaged, are very proper in their place, and, when properly managed, serve an important purpose; but our principal dependance on any thing in the order of means for securing the discharge of this and every other duty, on the part of our people, must be on the clear exhibition of the great doctrines of evangelical truth. In every sinner we turn from the error of his way, we secure a supporter of Christian Missions. The Gospel is “the ministration of the spirit,”‡ the grand instrument of spiritual transformation. Our general duty to our Master, and the souls of men, thus beautifully coincides with our particular duty to

* Heb. vi. 10.

† Gal. vi. 9.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 8.

support to the utmost religious institutions, and the best resolution we can adopt in reference to both is, that of the Apostle—"I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."*—"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."†

II. The arguments calculated to urge us to the performance of the duty of pecuniary contribution, in the manner now explained, suggested by the passage under consideration, are chiefly derived from the magnitude, the design, and the divine appointment of the work to which our offerings are devoted, the inadequacy of the immediate agents, the pleasantness of the duty, the religious relations of the property, and the short and uncertain duration of human life.

Ist. The *magnitude of the work* to which our pecuniary contributions are devoted furnishes a powerful argument for liberality. "The work is great,"‡ said David to the congregation of Israel. To erect an edifice so costly and magnificent as the Temple of Jerusalem, was, no doubt, a great enterprise for such a people as the Israelites, and called for the co-operation of all. But the work to which we are called on to contribute is immeasurably greater; it is nothing short of *the Christianization of the whole world*.

It is difficult to grasp such an idea. Its simple annunciation rather confounds and perplexes, than instructs or impresses the mind. To make the truth more distinctly evident and more powerfully impressive, we might endeavour to lay before you all that is included in the christianizing of a single individual—and, oh, how many moral miracles does that embrace! And then tell you that this wonderful process must take place in not fewer than six hundred millions of individuals, in order to the completion of the work. Or we might spread before you the details of some one of the many species of pagan superstition by which the children of men are enslaved, the braminal§ for example, and show

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

† Gal. vi. 14.

‡ 1 Chron. xxix. 1.

§ This has been done with matchless force and skill by Foster in his Missionary Sermon.

how completely it has interwoven itself with the whole web of their sentiments, and affections, and habits,—how it has twisted itself around the very heart strings—how it has identified itself almost with their intellectual and moral being, and then tell you in how many thousands and tens of thousands of instances this old man must be put off and “all things become new.”

But it is not so much the magnitude of the work, in a general point of view, that I wish at present to press on your mind, as that particular aspect of it that suggests the necessity of liberal pecuniary donations: and this may be presented to you within a very short compass: of the EIGHT HUNDRED MILLIONS of which the population of the world is supposed to consist, not more than TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS are even nominally Christian. Of course, not less than SIX HUNDRED MILLIONS remain as the proper subject of Missionary enterprise. At present there are about FOUR HUNDRED Missionaries employed among the heathens: that is, about ONE Missionary to FIFTEEN HUNDRED THOUSAND individuals; and all the contributions at present levied from the Christian world, are not more than sufficient to dole out spiritual provision at this absolutely inadequate rate, to a world perishing for want of the food of the soul. Unless the number of contributors is greatly increased, and *the scale of contributions wonderfully raised*, when is the great work to be accomplished? When are four hundred Missionaries to christianize the world? To furnish an instructor to each fifteen hundred heathens would require the number of Missionaries to be increased a hundred fold, and the funds of Missionary Societies to be increased in a corresponding proportion; and even then the labourers would be few in comparison of the immense harvest. Let not overwhelming disproportions dispirit, but stimulate us. Every addition we make to our donations is an approximation of the means of supply to the demand, and, were the facts now stated, allowed, to have their legitimate influence on every mind already impressed with the importance of the subject, still more on every mind that ought to be so impressed, the effect would not, even in reference to the

conversion of the world, be inconsiderable, the addition to the funds for the maintenance of Missions would be prodigious.

2d. A second argument for liberality in our pecuniary contributions, suggested by the passage is to be found in *the design of the work* to which they are devoted. The Temple of Jerusalem was intended to promote the honour of Jehovah, and the welfare of the Israelitish people; and we find David urging its object as a motive to stimulate the liberality of the nobles.—“The palace is not for man but for the Lord God.”*

The design of that great work to which we are this day called on to yield our support, may be viewed in a twofold aspect—in reference to God—and in reference to mankind; and in both, it furnishes us with invincible arguments for cheerful liberal donations. The design of the work in reference to God, is to display the glories of his character and administration to all mankind, and by this means to reclaim them from a state of rebellion, and reduce them to a state of loyal subjection and affectionate allegiance to him as the supreme ruler.

The Divine Being combines in his character and administration, all that is great and good, fair and excellent, venerable and lovely. When we have strained our faculties to the utmost in conceiving of grandeur, and purity, and benignity, we are still at an immeasurable distance from the grandeur, and purity, and benignity, which make his infinite nature their eternal dwelling place. “His is the greatness,” and the highest of his creatures, the totality of his creation is, before him, less than a drop to the ocean, than an atom to the universe of matter. “His is the power,” and all created might is in his hand, to be exerted, directed, restrained, and resumed at his pleasure. “His is the glory,” and all created splendour in his presence fades into obscurity, vanishes into nothing. “His is the victory,” in all his purposes he ever is the overcomer, and all victories gained by his creatures are won by power derived from

* 1 Chron. xxix. 1.

him. "His is the majesty," and all the potentates of the earth, before Him, are contemptible worms, and their loftiest thrones are not worthy to be his footstool. "All that is in the heaven and in the earth is his," he is the Maker, Preserver, and Governor—the supreme and sole proprietor of the universe. "His is the kingdom."*—Unbounded dominion belongs to him, and all powers and authorities are under his feet. And all this grandeur is beautified by absolute moral perfection. His is a purity before which the holiness of angels waxes dim; and his a benignant tenderness, of which the yearnings of a mother's heart over the son of her womb is but a feeble figure. And, is it not meet that all intelligent beings should acknowledge this supreme excellence and loveliness, and in the inmost sanctuary of their intellectual and active natures, yield him to whom it belongs, the tribute of supreme reverence and of love. Who, that has a spark of allegiance to the supreme authority, will not, from the bottom of his soul, breathe out the wish—"Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth."† "Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."‡ But it is not so. Our world is peopled with apostate intelligences, and the great design of revelation, which is as bright a display of the divine excellencies as our limited faculties can bear, is so to bring the truth on this subject before the minds of those infatuated rebels as shall induce them, under an overpowering sense of its matchless grandeur and beauty, to cast down the weapons of their impious revolt, and give to Jehovah the glory due to his name. To answer this purpose, revelation must be generally diffused. "The glory of God in the face of his Son" must be displayed, so that "all flesh may see it together." The truth must be carried to every district of our rebel world, and pressed, in an apprehensible form, on the attention of every individual revolter. This is the great object of Missionary undertakings, and it is surely impossible to conceive an ob-

* 1 Chron. xxix. 11. † Psalm lvii. 5, 11.

‡ Psalm xxxiii. 8.

ject more worthy of every practicable exertion, every possible sacrifice.

Viewed in reference to man, the design of the great work in which we are engaged, involves in it a powerful claim on our liberality. Its object is, to deliver mankind, of every country, and in every succeeding age, from evil in all its forms and degrees; and to make them happy up to their largest capacities of blessedness, and during the whole eternity of their being. It is an overwhelming, yet an obviously just idea, that a single lost immortal, must suffer through eternity incalculably more than has been suffered, or shall be suffered, by the whole race of man, during the continuance of the present state of things; and, that a single saved immortal, shall, through eternity, enjoy more than has been enjoyed by the whole race of man, from the beginning of the world, to the consummation of all things.* Now the design of this great work is, to prevent this suffering, and to secure their blessedness, not in the case of a few individuals, but of “a multitude that no man can number.” Oh, can we grudge to part with our money to save souls from the agonies of hopeless, endless misery—to raise them to perfect wisdom, and purity, and happiness for ever.

These are the great designs which the all-wise God has contemplated with approving delight, through his unbeginning eternity; and has been prosecuting in his moral administration, from the commencement of time to the present hour. To gain these ends, the only Begotten became incarnate, and offered himself, a bloody sacrifice, for man's transgression. To gain these ends, the perfect Redeemer was raised from the dead, and placed on the throne of the universe on the right hand of Him that sitteth thereon. To gain these ends, the Spirit was given, the Scriptures written, and the church established. All the wise and good among God's intelligent creatures are bending the whole force of their minds to promote these high objects, and value their agency chiefly as it enables them to take a part in them; and shall we, thinking of our insignificance as creatures, and

* Bogue.

our demerit as sinners, shall we not account it an honour and a privilege, that we are not debarred from co-operating with beings so exalted, in objects so glorious, and in humble adoring gratitude pour our offerings into the treasury of God.

3d. *The divine appointment of the work*, to which our pecuniary contributions are devoted, should operate as a motive to cheerful liberality.—The building of the Temple was expressly commanded by God. Jehovah said to David, “Thou shalt not build a house to my name—but Solomon, thy son, he shall build my houses and my courts.”* This command, when connected with the circumstance, that the donations of the Israelites were necessary to its being obeyed, was certainly a powerful motive to liberality.

The diffusion of Christianity throughout the world, is plainly the will of heaven.—This is intimated in the very nature of that religion. It has nothing of the air of a local or temporary institution. It is addressed to the essential principles of our nature. It is suited to the unchanging circumstances of our race. It is fitted to be the religion, not of one tribe placed in a peculiar situation, and formed to a peculiar character—but of mankind at large, in all the variety of mental endowments, and external circumstances. It is equally calculated for the Jew and the Gentile, the philosopher and the peasant, the monarch and the slave. Its doctrines may be believed, its duties performed, and its ordinances observed, by men of every country and every age. It may be the religion of man in the rudest state of simplicity, and in the most artificial state of refinement; and, in every case its tendency is, to exalt his character, and ameliorate his condition. In these distinguishing features of Christianity, we have no obscure intimation that it is the will of God, that every practicable means should be employed to diffuse this religion universally among mankind.

But we are not left to deduce this fact from the nature and tendencies of Christianity. In the “scriptures of the

* 1 Chron. xxviii. 3–6.

prophets," we have "the commandment of the everlasting God"—that "the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but which is now made manifest, should be made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith."* "I will declare the decree—ask of me, and I will give the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth, for thy possession."† "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him."‡ The fact, that liberal donations should be among the means of accomplishing this blessed consummation, is expressly stated. "The kings of Tarshish and the isles, shall bring presents:—the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts—Yea, he shall live, and to him shall be given, of the gold of Sheba."§ Many people will consecrate their gain to the Lord, and their substance to the God of the whole earth."|| "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the riches of the Gentiles shall come to thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian an Ephat: all they of Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense; and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. Surely the isles shall wait for thee, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring their sons from far, their silver and gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee."¶ It were a dangerous canon of interpretation, that it is our duty to endeavour to work out the accomplishment of every event predicted in the Scriptures; but, when the event is plainly to be brought about by human agency, and the natural means of its fulfilment are accordant with, and required by the great law of love to God, and love to man, we may fairly conclude, not only that it is the will of God that the event should take place, but also, that if we have probable means of its accomplishment in our hands, we are bound to employ them.

But the clearest and most forcible proof, that the Chris-

* Rom. xvi. 25, 26. † Psalm ii. 7, 8 ‡ Psalm xxii. 27.

§ Psalm lxxii. 10—15. || Mic. iv. 13. ¶ Isa. lxi. 5—9.

tianization of the world is a work enjoined by God, is to be found in what may be termed, the fundamental law of the Christian church, given at her foundation, and remaining yet in all its force. "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*

In attempting the universal diffusion of Christianity, we do no more than our duty, and he, who throws obstacles in its way, is guilty of disobedience to the divine command, and of opposition, equally impious and vain, to the declared divine determinations. To withhold our pecuniary contributions, is a foul crime—it is materially to be guilty of that sin, which brought down "wrath to the uttermost," on the fated nation of the Jews. It is "to forbid" Christian Missionaries "to speak unto the Gentiles, that they may be saved."†

It deserves also to be noticed, that as the only way in which many of the Israelites could be actually engaged in promoting a work, which was the duty of the whole nation, was by pecuniary donation; so, in like manner, this is the only way in which a vast majority of Christians, can take an active part in discharging the great duty of the Christian church: "the holding forth the word of life"—the subduing the nations, to the mild dominion of "Messiah our Prince."

4th. *The inadequacy of the direct agents, to the accomplishment of the work* to which our contributions are devoted, is another argument to liberality, suggested by the passage, "Solomon, my son, says David, is tender, and the work is great." When I speak of the inadequacy of the immediate agents, I do not refer to their incapacity, without the accompanying agency of the Divine Spirit, to gain the desired object: for all the treasures of India could not, in the slightest degree, go to the lessening of this inadequacy. Still less, if possible, do I mean to assert, that there is any thing wanting or wrong, in the constitution of Missionary

* Matth. xxviii. 18, 19.

† 1 Thess. ii. 16.

Societies in general, or of this Missionary Society in particular. On the contrary, I apprehend, a more complete and effective agency of the kind, cannot well be imagined.

The fundamental principle of the Society, is, in the highest degree, Christianly liberal and wise. Its particular regulations bear distinctly the same character—I see a Board of Directors distinguished for their piety and information, their prudence and zeal. I see a host of Missionaries labouring in various parts of the world, obviously with divine benediction, who, for persevering exertion and patient endurance are worthy of the best ages of Christianity. I see a band of ardent youthful spirits, under the eye of a tutor, venerable for his years, but far more venerable for his piety and wisdom, diligently preparing themselves for the holy warfare, and eagerly panting for the period when they shall enter the lists with those evil angels who have so long usurped divine honours and enslaved the heathen world. When I see all this, I must do violence to the strongest convictions of my judgment, and the best feelings of my heart, if I could utter a word, which, even by implication, could be supposed to reflect on the *fitness* of the agents for the work in which they are engaged.

But still I insist, that without the support, the liberal support of the Christian public, all this admirably adapted agency will be utterly inadequate. The machinery is complete, but there must be the power to put it, and to keep it in motion. Missionaries cannot be taught; Missions cannot be established and maintained without great expense, and though all immediately concerned should “bestow all their goods” in the enterprise, it would be utterly unavailing. The Directors see many most promising fields of Missionary labour; there is no want of Missionaries every way fitted for cultivating them; and they look to you and say, “Shall the mighty work be arrested for want of funds to carry it forward? Shall the everlasting interests of thousands suffer because self-called Christians will not part with their superfluous money?”

5th. A fifth consideration suggested by the passage calculated to enforce the duty of pecuniary contribution, is

its pleasantness, as exemplified in the experience of David and his people. "The people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly, and David the king also rejoiced with great joy."* It is one of the noblest triumphs of religion over the natural selfishness of the human heart, to convert the parting with money without any prospect of personal interest in the ordinary sense of the term, into a source of pure satisfaction and delight. Wherever the duty is performed from right principles, and with right dispositions, it is productive of pleasure. In this case the general maxim holds true: "In keeping of God's commandments there is great reward;"† and "the words of the Lord Jesus" are verified—"It is more blessed to give than to receive."‡

The Christian benevolent principles which give origin to the gift, are themselves "wells of living water springing up unto everlasting life." Ardent zeal for the divine honour,—melting sympathy for the worst miseries of mankind,—gratitude to God, that by his good providence we are enabled, and by his good spirit disposed, to present such an offering—and anticipation of the blissful consequences which may result from our exertions: these are feelings not more ennobling than delightful. Money laid out on worldly, and especially sinful pleasures, produces regret and remorse, but money wisely expended in the service of God is a perennial source of pleasing reflections. It is a present enjoyment to give, and it is a permanent enjoyment to think that we have given. The conscious sincerity of attachment to God, which accompanies a donation to his service made in a right spirit is highly delightful. David found it so. "I know also my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy, thy people which are present here, to offer willingly to thee."§ We must not for a moment harbour the proud, the foolish, the impious thought

* 1 Cor. xxix. 9.

† Acts xx. 35.

‡ Psalm xix. 11.

§ 1 Chron. xxix. 17.

that our most liberal donations can purchase for us the divine favour, or the heavenly inheritance; but if they flow from right principles, they are satisfactory evidence that we are possessed of the one, and secure of the other; and it is not the part either of Christian wisdom or humility to shut our eyes to what the grace of God has wrought in us, or to shut our hearts against the comfort which this is naturally fitted to communicate. Humility does not consist in our being insensible to our good dispositions or conduct; but in a deep abiding impression of our obligation to God for all we are, or have, or do. It is delightful to feel the frost of selfishness melting under the benignant beam of the Sun of righteousness, to feel the love of God and the love of man triumphing over the love of the world, to have the evidence in ourselves that we are "getting more and more emancipated from the present evil world," and more and more subjected to "the power of the world to come."

6th. *The religious relations of property*, as stated in the context, furnish another argument for liberality in our contributions to religious purposes. The most important and interesting aspect in which any thing can be contemplated, is its reference to the Divinity; every thing is related to Him, and the clear apprehension, and the habitual recollection of these relations are closely connected both with the duty and happiness of man. Owing to the radical ungodliness of his nature, this is the very last aspect in which the unregenerate man is disposed to view any object. He considers it in reference to every thing, rather than to God, "God is not in all his thoughts." This is remarkably the case with property. He has no idea that God and religion have any thing to do with his property, or the manner in which he employs it; he accounts it his own, and asks, "Who is Lord over me?" If he gives any thing to religious purposes, he does it under the impression that he is doing what he is under no obligation to do, and has no conception that in withholding it, he would be chargeable at once with ingratitude, injustice, and impiety. Yet such is the truth, and it will obviously appear to be so, if we attend to what, for want of a more appropriate phrase, I call *the religious rela-*

tions of property. Some of these are admirably stated in the context as motives to liberality. "Both riches and honour come of thee—all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. All this store which we have prepared to build a house for thee cometh of thine hand, and it is all thine own."*

It is God who gives us whatever property we possess. It is "a good gift," which, like every other, "comes down from above." If we have inherited a fortune, it is by the arrangement of his providence that it has come into our possession. If we have amassed wealth, it is he who gave us the faculty and the opportunity of acquiring it. In whatever way we have obtained it, it is He who "gives us all things richly to enjoy." Through whatever medium it has arrived at us, it has come originally from the hand of God. Were there no more in it than this, surely gratitude would require us to devote no inconsiderable part of that wealth, all of which is the gift of God, to the honour of the munificent giver.

But this is not all. God is not only the giver of wealth, but in strict correctness of speech, he is its proprietor. He is possessed of the supreme property of all things, of which it is as impossible for him to divest himself as it is to lay aside his essential excellencies. He can never cease to be the proprietor of the universe, for it can never cease to be true, that he is the Creator of the universe. He gives us wealth, not in property but in trust. Our wealth, if honestly acquired, is our own, in reference to other men; but in reference to God, it is not our own. "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts."† "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein."‡ The rich are but the stewards of "the manifold grace of God,"—and "it is required of stewards that they be found faithful." Riches are a talent committed to the possessor, and the charge is, "Occupy till I come." Our heavenly Father allows us a liberal use of his property, but he requires us to remember

* 1 Chron. xxix. 12, 14, 16.

† Hag. ii. 8.

‡ Psalm xxiv. 1.

that it is his, and of course that justice requires us to spend it all in the way which, in our enlightened conscience we are persuaded is most likely to promote *his* objects, and meet *his* approbation.

But even this is not all. We are not left to collect generally from the facts that God is the giver of wealth, and that he gives it as a trust, that therefore we ought to devote a considerable portion of it to his service. An express commandment is interposed—"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase;" "To do good and communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." These views of worldly property lead us to connect the employment of it with a day of reckoning. The Master will come to take an account of his servants, and will say, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou must be no longer steward."

If these views are just, is it not obvious that he who withholds altogether, or who withholds more than is meet of his substance from the support of religious institutions, is guilty of ingratitude and injustice, awfully aggravated by impiety. He is guilty of that "covetousness which is idolatry." "He makes the gold his hope, and the fine gold his confidence. He rejoices that his wealth is great, and that his hand has gotten much." And, in doing so, he is guilty "of an iniquity to be punished by the supreme Judge." "He has denied the God that is above."* "Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl, for your miseries that shall come upon you.—Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days." The miseries of perishing heathens, millions who remain in ignorance because the means of their illumination are "kept back by you" have a voice loud and piercing, and its "cries have entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth."† Make to yourselves friends

* Job xxxi. 24, 25, 28.

† James v. 1—4.

of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*

7th. Finally, *the short and uncertain duration of human life* is suggested in the context as a motive to liberality in our contributions to religious purposes. "We are strangers before thee," says David, "and sojourners, as were all our fathers. Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding."† What a beautiful picture of human life! Our days on the earth are as a shadow—so unsubstantial in its nature—so variable in its incidents—so uncertain in its continuance—so sorrowful in its tenor—so short in its duration—so soon, so certainly to vanish for ever into the pure light of heaven, or into the blackness of darkness for ever and ever. Is it not high honour done by the eternal God to creatures so frail and short lived, to permit them to co-operate with him according to their discretion, in his high designs of mercy. He might have carried them into accomplishment without any subordinate agency, or he might have employed only the agency of angels, mighty in strength, flourishing in immortal youth and beauty; but he has thought fit, in the greatness of his condescension, to call on us, who "are but of yesterday," and who to-morrow must descend into the grave, to exert our feeble energies in a work which bears the deep impress of divinity and eternity upon it; and are we, indeed, so mean-spirited, so destitute of all worthy ambition, as not eagerly to embrace the offered privilege?

The period for exertion is extremely limited. Yet a little while and our property shall have passed to others, and over its destination we shall have no longer any control. Of those who laid the foundation of that mighty structure, which we are endeavouring to uphold and carry forward, not a few have gone to their final audit, and, we doubt not, to their immortal crown. EYRE, and HARDCASTLE, and HAWES are no more. And think ye, my brethren, the perfected spirits of these just men are now regretting the

* Luke xvi. 9.

† 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

evils they submitted to, and the treasure they expended on the cause of Christ's glory and the world's salvation?—No. Were there room in heaven for regret, which there is not, it would be founded on opportunities for honouring God unimproved and irrevocable. “Our fathers, where are they and the prophets, do they live for ever?”* Many of those who, at the earlier celebration of this our British annual festival of Christian benevolence, took a part in the solemn joyful services, are gathered to the congregation of the dead. Some of the venerable forms who occupied the station where I now stand, are resolved long since into their original elements, while the sanctified spirits which animated them are, we trust, engaged in the higher services of the heavenly sanctuary. Yet a little longer, and we too shall be no more seen among mortals. Yet a little longer, and the lips which now address you shall be sealed in the silence of death, and the thousands of hearts now simultaneously agitated by the warm emotions of Christian charity will be cold and motionless as the turf that covers them. Let us work, while it is called to-day; the night is coming in which no man can work. Let us cheerfully give a portion, a liberal portion, of that wealth to our God, the whole of which, ere long, we must surrender into the hands of his dread messenger. “Whatsoever our hand finds to do, let us do it with our might, for there is no device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither we are going.”†

It is our consolation and joy that the progress of the work does not depend on the inferior agents—whose days are as a shadow and have no abiding, but on the supreme agent, HIM who is “the same for ever, and of whose years there is no end.”—“JESUS is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”‡ And he will raise successive generations to carry forward his glorious designs. “A seed shall serve him.” One generation shall praise his works to another, and shall declare his mighty acts. The magnificent structure shall continue to extend and advance till it reach its destined dimensions; and then shall the “cope-stone be brought

* Zech. i. 5.

† Eccles. ix. 10.

‡ Heb. viii. 8.

forth," amid the plaudits of all the innocent and restored intelligences in the universe of God, and it shall stand through eternity, the fairest monument of the power and wisdom, and holiness and love of the Divine Author.—As it rises and extends under our hands, let us raise the first notes of that anthem, which, on its completion, shall peal through the universe, loud as the thunders of heaven, sweet as the music of angels "GRACE, GRACE—to it."*

The discourse has been confined hitherto, to what I apprehend is equally the subject of the text, and the object of our present meeting—*Pecuniary contribution for religious purposes*. But I cannot conclude without remarking, that there is an oblation far more valuable than any pecuniary donation, which some in this audience are called on this day to consecrate to the Lord. Men as well as money are necessary to carry on this sacred war. Are there not here present some young men of talent, education, and property, whose hearts God has touched with zeal for his glory, and love for the souls of their perishing brethren. Oh, let them, turning their backs on all the flattering prospects which the world may be opening with fascinating influence before them, devote themselves to the service of God in the Gospel of his Son. Under the influence of Moses' faith Oh, make Moses' choice, and "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures" of the world. — Put not away from you the *grace* which kindled in the bosom of the Apostle Paul, such an ardour of adoring acknowledgment—the *grace* which the Redeemer now proffers you—"the grace to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

Of all functions known among men, that of a minister of Christ is the loftiest ("I magnify my office"), and next to the apostolic, the Missionary is the highest order of the Christian ministry. Were an angel to become incarnate, the station he would choose to fill would be the pulpit, rather than the throne—he would prefer being a minister of the gospel to being a minister of state, or the master of

such ministers: and were he left to choose his own sphere of labour, it would not be in the high places of hierarchical dignity, but in the humble busy walk of missionary exertion. In the estimation of those pious intelligences whose minds are unclouded by earthly prejudices, the fame of a CAREY is more enviable than that of a NEWTON and HENRY MARTYN, breathing out his last sigh amid the deserts of Tartary, unheeded and un comforted but by the unseen Lord he served and his ministering spirits, is an object of higher admiration than a WELLINGTON, triumphing amid all the sanguinary glories of WATERLOO. It is one of the favourable signs of the times, that juster sentiments are beginning to prevail with regard to the dignity of the Missionary character, and the talents and acquirements which are requisite in those who are to sustain it—and that much of that odium of vulgarity and meanness which irreligious ignorance and malignity had fixed on the highest and holiest name which can belong to mortals, has been wiped off: and we trust the period is at hand, when Christians, with every extrinsic advantage of rank and talent, and education and accomplishment, in addition to the more essential qualities of Christian piety, and patience, and prudence, and love, shall be found eagerly crowding to the standard of HIM whose name is the WORD OF GOD, and devoting themselves wholly to the service of Him who devoted himself wholly for their salvation. To use the words of him who bears the first name in our English literature; “God can stir up rich fathers to bestow exquisite education upon their children, and so dedicate them to the service of the Gospel: he can make the sons of nobles his ministers, and princes to be his Nazarites: for certainly there is no employment more honourable, more worthy to take up a great spirit, more requiring a generous and free nurture, than to be the messenger and herald of heavenly truth from God to man, and by the faithful word of holy doctrine to procreate a number of faithful men, making a kind of creation like to God, by infusing his spirit and likeness into them to their salvation, as God did into him; arising to what climate soever he may turn him, like that sun of righteousness that sent him

with healing in his wings, and new light to break in upon the chill and gloomy hearts of his hearers, raising out of darksome barrenness, a delicious and fragrant spring of saving knowledge and good works.*

Let us then, my brethren, proceed to offer our sacrifice to † God—a sacrifice, not of expiation but of Eucharist: “NOW BLESS THE LORD YOUR GOD! ALLELUIA! THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH. SALVATION TO OUR GOD WHO SITTETH ON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB. BLESSING, AND GLORY, AND WISDOM, AND THANKSGIVING, AND HONOUR, AND POWER, AND MIGHT, BE UNTO OUR GOD FOR EVER AND EVER.” †

“O LORD GOD OF ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND ISRAEL, OUR FATHER, KEEP THIS FOR EVER IN THE IMAGINATION OF THE THOUGHTS OF THE HEART OF THY PEOPLE, AND PREPARE THEIR HEARTS UNTO THEE.” †

* Milton. *Animad. on the Remonst. Class. Works.* v. i. p. 196. Lond. 1806.

† Rev. xix. 6.—vii. 10. 12.

‡ 1 Chron. xxix. 18.

THE COMPASSION OF CHRIST FOR THE MULTITUDE.

A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

AT

St. Bride's Church,

ON FRIDAY MORNING, MAY 11, 1821.



BY THE

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1821.

A SERMON,

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MATTHEW, IX. 36.

But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

How deeply interesting and strikingly beautiful, are those brief sketches of character, which the holy Evangelists have given of our adorable Redeemer, and the varied scenes of his unceasing benevolence. In their plain unvarnished tale, there are some of the finest touches of the historic pencil; and were we left to conjecture in what school they had acquired so much ingenuous frankness, that seeks no palliation for the basest conduct, and so much genuine simplicity, that uses no embellishment for the sublimest scenes; we should be constrained, without any poetical license, to exclaim—

“ By *Heaven*, and not a *Master*, taught.”

It is to one of those fine outlines of character, that I would invite your attention on the present occasion. The Holy Spirit, who best knows how to touch, and how to interest the feelings of the heart, here holds forth the Lord Jesus as an example of tenderest sympathy. Most accurately and intimately acquainted with all his circumstances, he felt for man, and manifested the most exemplary benevolence, condescension and regard for a ruined world.

The pensive mind, that loves to trace him in his humble walks, may imagine itself for a moment, transported to one of those cedar-tufted heights that environ the land of

Judea; and there, with holy awe and profound veneration, contemplate the great Teacher of his people, thronged around by listening multitudes, impelled by active curiosity, or athirst for the waters of life; whilst some are climbing the rugged steep or winding their narrow way along the sheep-walks of the mountain, anxious to join the crowd, and to hear what this all-wise and wonder-working prophet may have to advance on the redemption of Israel, and the glories of a future kingdom; others are scattered abroad listless and indifferent to this interesting scene, amusing themselves with worse than juvenile trifles, unconscious of the dignity of his person, the import of his mission, or the tender sympathy of his benevolent mind. No priest, no scribe is there, to guide the inquiring throng, to chide the loiterers in the king's high road, or with his spiritual counsel to corroborate the doctrines which our Lord inculcated; but he alone looks round, witnesses their deplorable ignorance, their deep-rooted prejudices, their contracted views, their worldly expectations, their ruinous prospects; and, though no pity moved another's breast, he felt for Israel. Wherever he travelled from city to city and from village to village, preaching the Gospel, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people, when he saw the multitudes, thronging around him from every quarter, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.

How forcibly doth this teach us to commiserate our fellow men, who are involved in gross idolatry, or gloomy superstition, scattered on the wide mountains of sin and error, as poor wandering sheep having no shepherd, no guide, no protector, no kind friend to care for their souls, to instruct them in righteousness, or to direct them in the road to happiness and God. Such a reflection cannot but call forth, under Divine blessing, the best feelings of the heart; and, therefore, we cannot do better than make this tender sympathy of Christ for the multitude, the subject of our meditation on the present occasion.

We therefore propose to draw your attention,

- I. To the compassion of the Lord Jesus.
- II. To the multitudes that interested his compassion.
- III. To the deplorable state of these multitudes.

As we proceed we shall endeavour to apply the subject for the purpose of engaging your minds not only to contemplate, but to copy his great example ; and may the God of all grace aid our design and inspire your hearts with a sympathetic feeling for the poor benighted Heathen, that the blessing of him who is ready to perish, may come upon you.

We wish to draw your attention, under the blessing of God, *first*, to the compassion of the Lord Jesus—a theme that awakens rich melody in angelic circles, that raises to ecstasy the mind of every glorified spirit, and shoots a thrilling rapture through the breast of every true believer. The compassion of Jesus! O what a field for thought! Here, as in a wilderness of sweets, the enlightened mind may rove from flower to flower, for ever gathering honey from this inexhaustible source. But where shall we make our entrance upon the theme? If we roll back the records of everlasting date, there we shall find that this darling attribute was embosomed with him in his own eternity. If mercy lives, 'tis when compassion melts the heart, and warms it into action. Before the scythe of time was forged or the huge mountains sprang from the dark womb of chaos, the eternal God foresaw that man would fall; that man would plunge himself and his posterity in deepest misery; foreseeing this vicissitude of things, he felt for man; and this emotion of the heart, arising from another's woe, we call compassion; which, then, like some sweet flower, that long lay hidden in the parent stock, for the first time shot forth its germ, and unfolded into blossom, the welcome harbinger of future blessings. And who can tell what glorious attributes may still lie latent in the eternal mind, reserved to be developed to our view in other worlds? Be this as it may, there never can be one more dear to man than the compassion, the unparalleled compassion of our Emanuel. The vital source of every mercy, grace and bles-

sing, that cheers, and warms, and animates the heart. Oh, for a stronger thirst, than David ever felt for the sweet waters of his native Bethlehem, after those living streams that flowed from Jesu's breast, when it was melted down with sympathy for man!

There is not a temporal, spiritual, or eternal blessing enjoyed by man, which is not derived from the compassion of Christ. We have forfeited every claim upon his love and goodness, but mercy reigns above. My fellow sinners, ye who have slighted his counsels and abused his grace, who have dishonoured his laws, impugned his authority, and grieved his Holy Spirit—to whom are ye indebted for the breath ye breathe, the blessings spread upon your daily hoard, the exercise of all your rational faculties, and the strong pulse, bounding with health and vigour through your veins? To whom are ye indebted? To him, whose long forbearance should lead us to repentance—to him, who has compassion on the ignorant, and on them who are out of the way.

The compassion of Jesus not only inclined him to view man with sentiments of benevolence, but induced him to leave the glory which he had with the Father before the world began. He became incarnate that in the flesh, he might suffer for sin committed in the flesh to redeem us from all iniquity, and to reconcile sinners to God. Not only are we indebted to his compassion for all the blessings of providence, but for all the blessings of redemption and grace—these glorious blessings which in this highly favoured isle we daily experience.

Permit me to direct your attention to an object that cannot fail to interest the feeling and considerate mind. Behold yon dying man, suspended on a transverse stake, with iron spikes driven through his hands and feet; see the cold sweat of death trickling down his naked body, mingled with streams of blood; see his distended sinews writhe with agony; his back and shoulders but recently ploughed into furrows by the bloody scourge; his hair clotted with gore and entangled with the twisted thorn; mark how his wide breast swells as with the struggling gasp of death! Is

it a dying effort to supplicate some powerful arm to avenge his wrongs? Is it to ask the thunderbolts of heaven to strike his murderers dead? Ah, no; it is the swelling throb of sympathy; compassion fills his breast and beams with mildest lustre in his every look. It is Christ, the Saviour, by this agonizing death, atoning for the sins of rebel man; and the warm prayer, that drops in mildest accents from his quivering lips, is—"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Behold him, sinner! It is a scene in which thou hast no inconsiderable interest; a scene which ought to fill thy soul with deep compunction. Thy sins, thy crimes, thy follies nailed him there; yet thus he suffers, thus he bleeds for thee, a voluntary victim. He not only condescended to sympathise, but were content to die for man. When thou wert doomed to hell, and justice meditated the tremendous stroke, his pity brought him down; and when no remission could be made without the shedding of blood, when no ransom could be paid without the sacrifice of life, he freely gave his own. O how overpowering, how overwhelming is so august a theme! To one self-convicted, self-condemned, how sweet is the hope of pardon through his blood! How sweeter still, by the unchanging promise of his word, to have that hope confirmed! But, oh, by far the sweetest joy, to walk in fellowship with him, to interchange a mutual friendship, with the Son of God. Oh, privilege divine! all privilege beyond! To such a chartered right, (O wondrous grace!) the pardoned sinner is preferred through the compassion and unbounded love of his incarnate God.

My aged fathers, my brethren in the common faith of Jesus, ye, who have long trodden in the road to Zion, and have far preceded me in experimental knowledge of things divine, tell me by what kind hand thou wert first led from the pursuit of sinful pleasure or worldly aggrandizement, to seek redemption through his blood; to seek the sublime and ennobling enjoyments of which we speak. There was a time when you were in darkness and had no light; when guilt sat heavy on your conscience, and unbelief excluded

you from the cheering hope of pardon; when you lay exposed to the fiery shafts of Satan, and every fresh remembrance of your crimes made conscience bleed afresh. When such a state was yours, who pitied you? who staunched the wound which sin had made, and poured the balm of Gilead into your aching hearts? Who pressed you to his bosom and bade you live? Who still leadeth you beside the living streams of grace and gladness, and causeth you to lie down in green and flowery pastures? And who is he, that after all your perverse wanderings, base declensions, and wayward dispositions, reclaims your soul? After you had long been the subject of keen remorse, and had long been harassed by the powers of darkness; your sides torn as it were by the brambles of the wilderness, and your hearts despairing of all pardon and mercy—who is he that sought you out, and brought you home on his shoulders rejoicing? It is your compassionate Saviour, your unchanging friend, the good Shepherd, that layeth down his life for his sheep, O learn from him to pity your fellow men.

Are there any here of Christ's stray sheep this morning, who are too conscious of secret declensions or open backslidings—must you despair? A cheering beam still penetrates the cloud that darkens your prospects and threatens your destruction. It is the compassion of Jesus that still throws a ray of light upon your path, that prevents you from being overwhelmed in total darkness. Though deep your stains and aggravated your offences, there still is hope. *Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.* Isaiah, l. 18. There is no room for despondency, whilst there is a compassionate Saviour, in whom we may find salvation and peace. *If ye, being evil, (saith he), know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them who ask him.* Luke xi. 13. What a consolation is this to a dying sinner, burdened with external trials and internal corruptions, with bodily pain and spiritual disquietude!

See the believer on the bed of death, how greatly is his soul supported in the prospect of eternity! The man who has lived near to God feels a confidence that animates his hope and repels alarm—even whilst in the dark valley and shadow of death, the morning of eternal day sheds its beaming radiance on his mortal existence and gilds the cloud that overspreads the horizon of his earthly tabernacle. Through the compassion of his Redeemer, he can welcome the approaching scenes, and with holy transport in his soul triumph over death, hell, and the grave.

Such, my friends, are the effects of the Gospel of peace, which have been revealed unto us through Christ Jesus. Through this abounding grace are we preserved and called, justified and sanctified, and thence made meet for everlasting glory. If such a bliss be ours in enjoyment or in prospect, surely we shall wish every child of Adam, if possible, to share with us the inestimable blessing. Oh! my friends, if we had a spark of this genuine compassion kindled in our breasts, we should more deeply commiserate the perishing millions that people the globe; nor should we suffer the hard hand of worldly prudence to withhold the silver and the gold, which, when well employed in Missionary exertions, might make them eternally happy. And is there one here present that can thus pertinaciously and cruelly refuse the key of knowledge that unlocks to them, who are ready to perish, the fountain of eternal life? O banish these horrid thoughts, these selfish feelings, and come thou blessed Spirit, thou eternal source of heavenly fire, and warm our cold hearts to love and sympathy. When Jesus saw the multitudes, his bowels yearned with pity for them; and if you have felt the effects of his compassion, learn from him to pity others; learn to make some sacrifices to promote the welfare of perishing millions.

We proposed, in the *second* place, to direct your attention to the objects of his pity—the multitudes that interested the compassion of Christ. We cannot suppose for a moment, that he only commiserated the few thousands who flocked around him as he passed from village to village, or from Galilee to Judea to preach the word of his

grace, no; he saw in them an epitome of the whole world, lying in wickedness, ignorant of their ruined state, and alienated from happiness and God. If Christ has left us an example to tread in his steps, may our hearts be moved with a kindred compassion, and feel for the multitudes.

To say nothing of *Europe*, where there are wide fields, that need the Missionary sickle, behold the vast continent of *Africa* before you—here are facilities of access, here are invitations for your services—barbarian kings are willing to become the nursing fathers of a Gospel ministry among their tribes. The veteran chiefs of interior Africa, whose country has been explored by the indefatigable Campbell, have expressed their readiness to receive Christian Missionaries, promised their protection, and solicited your interference. Radama, King of Madagascar is also desirous, that his people should be instructed in the Christian religion. One of the royal house of Ova is at present in this great city, making inquiries on the subject of general education, and was yesterday at the Missionary Meeting—O what an encouraging sight to see an heathen prince, in a Christian assembly, soliciting Missionaries to instruct his people! And can you refuse to promote this great work? Permit me, here to pause, and read a letter from the said Radama, now recognised as the sovereign of that large and populous island Madagascar, to the Directors of the Missionary Society.

[*Here the letter was read, published in the Appendix of the Report for 1821.*]

Now, my friends, it is yours to dictate what answer the Directors shall make to this interesting letter—it is yours to command the labourers to thrust in the sickle, for the fields are white to the harvest; but nothing can be done without pecuniary assistance. Be encouraged from what has been already done to expect the Divine blessing. The Hottentots have already tasted the sweets of civilization, and not a few have experienced the blessings of the Gospel of peace. Egypt and Abyssinia are also wide fields for

labour, which invite your benevolence, your sympathy, and research; and were there a Missionary planted in every considerable sea-port town on the shores of Africa, in the Mediterranean, much good might be anticipated, and, with the blessing of God, glorious would be the result. You have pitied the poor negro on the western coast, and in some measure redressed his wrongs. Sad indeed was his destiny to be dragged from the sweet society of home, (for home is ever dear, however humble the hut, or scanty its supplies,) to be carried across a perilous ocean, to be transported to a foreign land; there to waste his life in slavery, parched by the burning heat of an equinoctial sun, and lashed by the knotty scourge of a cruel master; harnessed like a beast to the yoke, to be bought or sold like cattle in the market. Thousands were annually transported across the Atlantic to satisfy the pampered appetite of luxury or the insatiable demands of unfeeling avarice. British philanthropy commiserated their hapless lot and has spared no efforts to liberate them from the cruel injustice and galling manacles of their oppressors; but to little purpose have we emancipated them from the slavery of the body, if left to the still more wretched and pernicious slavery of the mind. Do not, therefore, suffer the wily slave merchant to assert, and to assert it also with some degree of plausibility, that it is better for them to be carried to the West Indian plantations, where they may have an opportunity of Christian instruction, than to perish for lack of knowledge, according to your own hypothesis, on their native hills. Your work is but half done. Send them not only an edict of freedom from the British Senate; but the glorious charter of redemption from the Lord God of hosts.

It is for multitudes we plead—in Africa alone, on a moderate calculation, there are no less than 150 millions of inhabitants, of which number scarcely any in comparison have heard of the name of Christ. And, oh, my friends, what a painful consideration, that Satan should maintain a quiet possession of such a vast territory; and little or no efforts be made to rescue the many millions that people it, from ignorance and vice, degradation and ruin.

Behold the multitudes, not only those who are scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd; but the multitudes prostrate at your feet, exclaiming with earnestness, *Come over and help us.* The harvest truly is great, but labourers are few. Think you that Christ hath no commiseration for these perishing millions? Yes; it is he that hath influenced and still is influencing the hearts of thousands to aid this glorious work; and it is indeed a sad sign of innate depravity, if your heart be insensible to their miseries and wants. O pray the Lord of the harvest to send more faithful labourers into the vineyard, deeply taught and richly qualified by the Holy Ghost, for this great work. Show the sincerity of your prayers by the liberality of your donations. To pray for the spread of the Gospel—for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom—and not to assist with all your might, in promoting it, argues that insincerity and dissimulation, which cannot stand the scrutiny of heaven, or the decision of the judgment day—as you love Christ, promote his cause.

When I hear of successful efforts among the negroes and the Hottentots, when I hear that the cords of Zion's tent are extended to Lattakoo, methinks a voice is heard from the straits of Magellan and the regions of Patagonia, saying, are we less worthy of your notice? have we no interest in your benevolence? have we no share in the bread of life? may not a Missionary settlement be planted on our coast, as well as in the South Sea Islands? or is there not a friend in Britain to plead our cause? Must papal superstition succeed to pagan darkness? Have we not always welcomed your visits and caressed your commanders? Did not Byron—did not Wallis—have not other navigators met with respect? What deters from the enterprise? Our hearts are as warm as that of the Hottentots, and as susceptible of the melting power of the Gospel as that of the Otaheitan. If you could spare some thousands of pounds to send Christian Missionaries to the South Seas, O spare a few thousands to send us also a vessel richly freighted with the blessings of the Gospel of peace.

Surely the religious world might do something, under

Divine blessing, to evangelize the benighted natives of America, far south of the Spanish settlements, where no European colonies have ever been established. It has been stated that these people have probably heard something of the Christian name, through the zeal of the Jesuits; but I strongly question the supposition, and earnestly hope and fervently pray, that the friends of Missions will yet feel an interest for their welfare—will yet have compassion on the multitudes, which are scattered abroad in these desert wilds, as sheep having no shepherd.

The poor slaves in the West India Islands, and the aborigines of North America, are also ready to receive from this or some other kindred Society the glad tidings of salvation by Christ crucified—the numerous islands that are scattered abroad in the Pacific Ocean, want each a colony of faithful Missionaries. O for more frugality, self-denial, and charity among professing Christians to effect this great work.

Asia alone would employ a numerous host of Christian Missionaries. China itself is said to contain 4,400 populous cities, treaties are made with this vast empire, for a free commerce; but why not for a free religion? We are much too supine, and have been for centuries in this great work. Every man, saith the Apostle, seeks his own, but none the things of Jesus Christ. India has submitted to the British sceptre, and a Missionary stationed in every village, would meet with no opposition, but be respected and heard—all we want are the means, O that the Lord may open every heart to contribute towards evangelizing British India, where 150 millions of inhabitants are waiting your overtures to instruct them in the knowledge of the true God.

More than 900 millions of immortal beings inhabit this small province of Jehovah's boundless empire; and are no sacrifices to be made, no labours to be undergone, no energies to be employed to communicate to the immense hoards of Pagans, Mahometans, Jews and Papists, the genuine and salutary doctrines of the cross. Little did our fathers of the last century imagine, that there were so

many chosen vessels of mercy to be found, as have been set apart for the glory of the Lord, in the sordid kraals of the Hottentots, in the distant islands of the South Seas, on the borders of Tartary, and on the coast of Labrador. And who knoweth, how many an heir of glory may now wander in some remote region, where the Gospel banners have never yet been unfurled, whose responsive rocks have never reverberated the all-cheering name of Jesus, and whose shores have never been trodden by Missionary enterprise.

If the inhabitants of our globe be divided into *thirty* equal parts, it is calculated, that *eighteen* of those parts are Pagan, *six* Mahometans, and *one* Jew, leaving only a ratio of *five* to *thirty*, who profess the Christian religion. And of this small portion, how many are involved in the superstitions of the papal hierarchy, or in the absurdities of the Greek Church; not to mention those who, in Protestant countries, have a name to live, whilst dead in trespasses and sins. If an unbelieving heart should suggest—with such a disproportion of numbers, alas! what can be done? To obviate this objection, recollect what has been done for Britain. Had the first Missionaries to our native shores argued in this manner, we might still have revelled in ignorance, brutality, and lust; without one gleam of hope to cheer us in the prospect of death, or the knowledge of a superintending Providence to support us in the trials of life; but these Christian worthies had compassion on the multitudes, lost in the grossest idolatry, and the most degrading vices—annihilating all the endearing charities and relative duties of life in promiscuous concubinage; so that fathers were brothers to their own sons, and daughters sisters to their own mothers. Nature revolts at the reflection and hurries to cast the mantle of oblivion over the obnoxious scene. These days with us are past; the altar of the true God is erected in our houses, and our domestic enjoyments are rendered doubly sweet, by the blessed effects of the Gospel. O may the same spirit, that induced the primitive Missionaries to visit our native isles, induce others to communicate the light of life to the benighted

heathen. Learn to imitate your Saviour, and cherish a fellow feeling for the perishing multitudes.

But we are to consider *thirdly*, the deplorable state of those multitudes. Here we have in part anticipated our subject. To be destitute of the knowledge of Christ is the greatest calamity that can possibly befall any human being. There were two things, that more immediately in the scene before him, must have moved the friend of sinners to the compassion of which our text speaks. On the one hand, there was a criminal inattention and disregard to the interests of his eternal kingdom; and, on the other hand, an hungering and thirsting after righteousness, but no one to care for their souls.

He had compassion on them *because they fainted*. However painful and oppressive this state may be to the body, it is much more so to the mind. O how sickening must this world appear to one who has no hope or no knowledge of a better! O how chilling to stand on the shores of eternity, and to see nothing beyond the narrow boundaries of time, but a wide, wild, and trackless deep, where dark uncertainty sits brooding over the vast abyss, amidst impenetrable shades! O how fearful to be destitute of that life and immortality, that are brought to light through the Gospel! O how pitiable to be exposed to all the storms and temptations of life, and not know where to find a refuge! To be sinking beneath a weight of worldly care or writhing with the anguish of keen remorse, and to be ignorant of the supports and consolations of the Gospel—to have no kind friend at hand to bind up the broken heart, and to revive the fainting spirit. Another consideration also excited his compassion—*because they were as sheep having no shepherd*; exposed to the wild beasts of the wilderness; to hunger, thirst, and divers diseases. Behold the nations, in a spiritual application, thus exposed, hungering, and thirsting, and diseased, having no shepherd to lead them in paths of righteousness, to refresh them from the well-springs of salvation, or to heal the maladies of a sin-sick soul.

Do we not condemn in our own minds those who pro-

fessed to have the key of knowledge that unlocks the fountain of life, and yet would not enter in themselves, nor suffer others to enter! But where doth the censure fall? Mount on the wings of the morning and survey the different nations as they meet the solar beam, and when from this height you behold so large a field open for Missionary labours, and so little done to supply the world with a saving knowledge of Christ crucified, where doth the censure fall? You have the key of knowledge, O do not withhold it; but contribute of your substance to those who are willing to undertake the task, to forego the endearments of home, and to hazard their lives in barbarous regions and sickly climes, that they may preach among the heathen the unsearchable riches of Christ.

If scenes of awful depravity, of blind idolatry, of horrid cruelty, would be necessary to melt you into sympathy—behold on the banks of the Ganges, the infatuated mother devoting her infant to the demon of the stream, sacrificing her first born to propitiate his favour. Mark the deluded devotee casting himself beneath the blood-stained wheels of Juggernaut, whilst the frantic crowd rend the air with horrid yells to express their approbation. Survey yon funeral pile—the fire is kindled, and on the blazing faggots are placed a host of widows devoted to the flames, whom custom urges to this act of suicide, because the man whom they esteemed their husband, is no more. With his dead corpse they must meet the all-devouring fire. Amid the melancholy group, warm with the glow of youth, and, with the love of life too warm, see one whose desperation cannot meet the flames; down from the pile she leaps, and seeks protection in a stranger's arms; but, torn from this fond refuge, she is compelled to meet her fate and perish in the fire. Behold a scene yet more appalling, a poor fellow creature doomed by the savage laws of his country, to be by his fellow men still more savage, absolutely eaten alive. With horrid pleasure they devour the writhing sinews and palpitating vitals of the victim, whilst warm and quivering between their teeth. It is a fact not to be questioned, that this is a punishment inflicted on criminals for capital offences in the

isle of Sumatra, which is wholly under British influence, if not under British laws.

And are there no means to be adopted to alleviate their wretchedness to rescue our fellow men from the dominion of such horrid brutality and infernal superstition? Are you seriously persuaded that it is right, just, and meritorious, not to interest yourselves for their salvation? That it is a laudable duty to suffer them to live in ignorance of the true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? Do not treat this subject with a light and trifling spirit; weigh the merits of the case; the high demands of duty, the awful responsibility of negligence, not to calculate upon absolute omission. It will not avail with bloody Cain to say at the last day; am I my brother's keeper? O learn to commiserate the lot of the perishing heathen! O learn to make some sacrifices for God! You may have contributed a few pounds; but that cannot be called a true sacrifice, that is not made in the spirit of self-denial and of good-will.

At the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness, the Israelites came forward *both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, and brought bracelets and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold;* (mark the close of the verse, *Exod. xxxv. 22*), *every man that offered, offered an offering of gold.* An example well worthy of imitation to those who hoard gold and silver, lying in their coffers without interest, which might be much better employed in the consecrated treasury of the Missionary Society.

The expenses of Solomon's temple and its appendages, (1 Chron. xxii. 14), were valued *at 100,000 talents of gold, and a thousand talents of silver,* that is, saith a leary, 534,859,784 pounds sterling. What a display of wealth and magnificence is here! But we have still a more magnificent temple to build; beneath whose arches and within whose courts may be environed the numerous millions that people the globe, upon whose altars, daily and hourly incense shall arise to the Lord God Omnipotent.

What a privilege is yours, my brother, who have entered into the full enjoyment of the gospel of peace; though sometimes afraid, you meditate with holy sweetness on the

compassion of Jesus. The recollection of your former, compared with your present state, rolls a tide of sacred joy, through the inmost recesses of your heart. You can rejoice, that whereas you were once darkness, you are now light in the Lord; whereas you were afar off, you are brought nigh by the precious blood of Jesus. Faith brightens up the prospects of eternity, and, as on Pisgah's top, you can look across the stream, and hail the glories of the eternal world. Death with you has lost its sting, and the grave its victory. And are you not desirous, that others may be made partakers of these inestimable blessings? And will you hesitate to present the cup of salvation to the heirs of life? Shall they perish on the distant mountains, and you feel no regard, no brotherly affection, no common sympathy? Is this copying the example of the compassionate Jesus, who felt for the scattered multitudes? Is this imitating the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who *endured all things for the elect's sake, that they might obtain salvation.* 2 Tim. ii. 10.

O how many thousands of glorified spirits will thank the Lord Jesus in the realms of bliss and immortality for the salvation obtained, through the instrumentality of this Society! The song is already begun; the hallelujah's are already raised; the heavenly chorus swells with the enraptured strain. The spirit of him whom we called *Negro* seizes the golden lyre, and sweeps the responsive string, to the praise of Him who taught your hearts to pity and your hands to give. Yea, multitudes of the heavenly host join in the acclamation, and share in the universal joy.

You have, no doubt, already heard, from abler advocates than myself, what hath been done for the poor Hottentot, the Hindoo, the Tahitian; but do not imagine, that nothing more remains to be done. These achievements are nothing in comparison with what may be done, and will be done under Divine blessing. Remember, *the word of God is not bound,* 2 Tim. ii. 9. Great indeed is its power, when attended with the demonstration of the Spirit; O may we all unite to direct it against the holds of Satan, and triumph over his infernal might.

“Friends,” said the Tahitian warrior “there have been

many from among us, who have been pierced with balls, let us have no more of it: let our guns be rotten with rust, and, if we are to be pierced, let it be with the word of God." Who can hear the simple pleas of these Southern Islanders for the cause of Missions and not feel a kindred flame, and not feel a growing desire to renewed exertions, and to make fresh sacrifices for Christ?

"It would be well," said Paumona, a Taheitan convert, "if all the world knew the word of God as well as we know it; if all could read it, as we read it; if all could hear it every Sabbath, as we hear it; if all would bow the knee to Jesus; if all knew him, as the only sacrifice for sin; then there would be no fighting, no war; we are to give our property, that other lands may know the true God and his word; that they may have teachers. It is not to be given to the false gods, as we used to do; let us be diligent and spend our strength in this good work."

Hear, Britain, hear! friends of religion hear! Otaheite is become your rival in the Missionary cause. He, who was lately an untutored savage, emulates your benevolence, your piety, and zeal. If there be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, if angels love to pry into those affairs, what holy transports must have filled their breast, when hovering on the wing, they witnessed the savage chieftain, giving new laws to his people; laws founded on the word of truth; and devoting himself and his nation to the imperial sway of the Gospel; when they witnessed the general acclamations of the multitudes, among whom were many whose hearts were glowing with love to Jesus, and with compassion for others, who might be *scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd*.

Now, my friends, what are *your* feelings? what sacrifices have *you* ever made to promote the cause of Christ? what comforts have *you* ever denied yourselves, what deprivations have *you* endured to further this glorious work? O how the tender heart melts into sympathy, when it reflects on the forlorn and wretched state of the perishing multitudes. Surely you cannot go away without contributing towards their amelioration, and thus shut up your bowels of compassion towards your poor brother; if so,

how dwelleth the love of God in you? My rich brother, what is a solitary guinea in so great a cause? Feel for the heathen, feel for suffering millions; ye almoners of heaven, discharge your important trust. And ye, whose scanty earnings but scarcely provide for the wants of a growing family, if such be present, omit not the opportunity of sharing the luxury of doing good; though small your mite, your prayers and your pence shall redound to the glory of God. The Apostle, speaking of primitive benevolence, saith, *according to their power they gave; yea, and beyond their power, they were willing of themselves, praying us with much entreaty, that we would receive the gift.* 2 Cor. viii. 3. *But this I say,* saith the same Divine authority, *he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; and God is able to make all grace abound towards you.* 2 Cor. ix. 6—8.

By all the sympathies of the human heart, by all the prospects of Christian hope, by all the agonies of Gethsemane, and all the dying pangs of Calvary; by the inestimable value of immortal souls, by all the solemnities of death and eternity, let me entreat you—in the name of the eternal Father, whose providence has given you a better lot; in the name of his holy Son Jesus, who spared not his life to redeem you from everlasting death, and hath left you an example to tread in his steps; and in the name of the blessed Spirit, whose grace consoles, supports and animates every believer; let me entreat you to pity the heathen. O have compassion on the perishing multitudes, and may that day, which will develope the secrets of every heart, demonstrate how much you loved, and how much you imitated the Friend of Sinners, who had compassion on the multitudes, *because they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.*

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.



